



THE ROLE OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN INFLUENCING YOUTH E-SHOPPING TRENDS FOR SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of digital marketing has had a significant impact on consumer behavior, particularly among young people who actively make online purchases. This study examines the impact of digital marketing on shaping young e-shopping habits, with a focus on sustainable consumption in alignment with SDG 12. Using a descriptive research approach, data were obtained from 219 respondents in Chennai via structured questionnaires and analyzed using percentage analysis and chi-square tests. While most respondents spend in the low to mid-range, internet marketing is largely regarded as effective for identifying items and services. The chi-square test reveals a substantial relationship between monthly expenditure and reactivity to limited-time offers, with mid-range spenders being the most impacted. The research shows that personalized digital marketing techniques emphasize affordability and authenticity. The study explores that specialized digital marketing techniques, emphasizing cost, authenticity, and environmental consciousness, can effectively encourage sustainable consumption among young people.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Youth, E-Shopping, Sustainable Consumption, SDGs, Online purchasing Behaviour

Introduction

The rapid evolution of digital marketing has changed customer behavior, especially among young people, who are the most active online buyers. Initially geared toward promotional outreach, digital marketing has evolved into a personalized, interactive medium that incorporates social media, influencers, and e-commerce platforms. Governments around the world, including India, have implemented policies such as "Digital India," "Make in India," and "Sustainable Consumption and Production" to promote eco-friendly behaviors and digital inclusion. These initiatives urge brands to align with sustainability objectives while using digital tools. Affordability, convenience, peer influence, eco-consciousness, and the legitimacy of information exchanged via online platforms are all important elements affecting young people. Affordability, convenience, peer influence, eco-consciousness, and the legitimacy of information exchanged via online platforms are all important elements affecting young people. Current trends show that eco-labels are becoming more popular, influencers are driving green initiatives, and young people choose firms that demonstrate transparency and accountability. As a result, digital marketing not only encourages e-commerce, but it also serves as a catalyst for promoting sustainable consumption behaviors among younger generations.

Review of Literature

1. **Nekmahmud et al. (2022)** social media marketing has a significant impact on green purchase intentions among youth. Content quality and engagement are strong predictors, while trust in eco-brands mediates the relationship. This highlights social media as a powerful tool for sustainable e-commerce.
2. **Liu et al. (2024)** observed that Generation Z's green garment purchasing intents are influenced by environmental awareness and personal norms, with environmental incidents amplifying sustainable choices, which can be described by integrating TPB and NAT.



3. **Houf et al. (2024)** credible and simply understandable eco-labels in online shops can boost sustainable product selection and bridge the attitude-behavior gap in digital buying among young people.
4. **Do et al. (2025)** influencer marketing improves sustainable purchasing intentions among Gen Z. However, perceptions of greenwashing can diminish this benefit, emphasizing the need for authenticity and openness in digital initiatives.
5. **Wu et al. (2024)** found that social media's usefulness and green trust significantly predict eco-friendly purchasing intentions. Trustworthy information minimizes skepticism and promotes sustainable e-shopping among adolescents.
6. According to **Stofejova et al. (2023)**, there is a considerable attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable e-commerce. While youngsters may have positive sentiments towards eco-products, they do not consistently purchase them.
7. According to **Mehta and Sharma's (2024)** study of Indian youth, eco-consciousness, perceived quality, and cost determine sustainable purchase behaviour. Digital marketing emphasizing responsibility and local identity also influences green purchasing.

Objectives of the Study

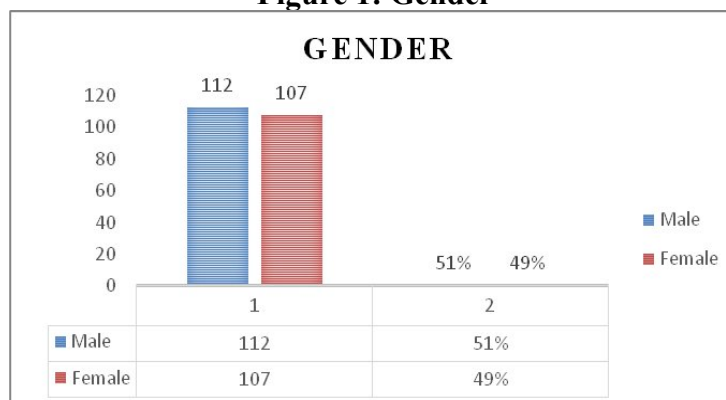
1. To investigate the role of digital marketing in influencing youth e-commerce trends.
2. To study the relationship between gender and purchase decisions influenced by social media
3. To determine whether current trends in young e-commerce are consistent with SDG 12: Responsible Production and Consumption.
4. To provide digital marketing techniques for encouraging young people to consume sustainably.

Research Methodology

The current study uses a descriptive research approach to investigate the role of digital marketing in shaping young e-shopping habits for sustainable consumption. The data was gathered through convenience sampling, with an emphasis on respondents from Chennai, who are digitally active and youth-driven consumers. A total of 219 samples were gathered using structured questionnaires. The acquired data was examined using percentage analysis to identify demographic patterns and consumer preferences, and chi-square tests were used to investigate the relationship between digital marketing methods and long-term e-commerce activity. This analytical approach ensures a thorough grasp of the elements influencing teenage purchasing decisions in terms of sustainable consumption.

Analysis and Discussion

Figure 1: Gender

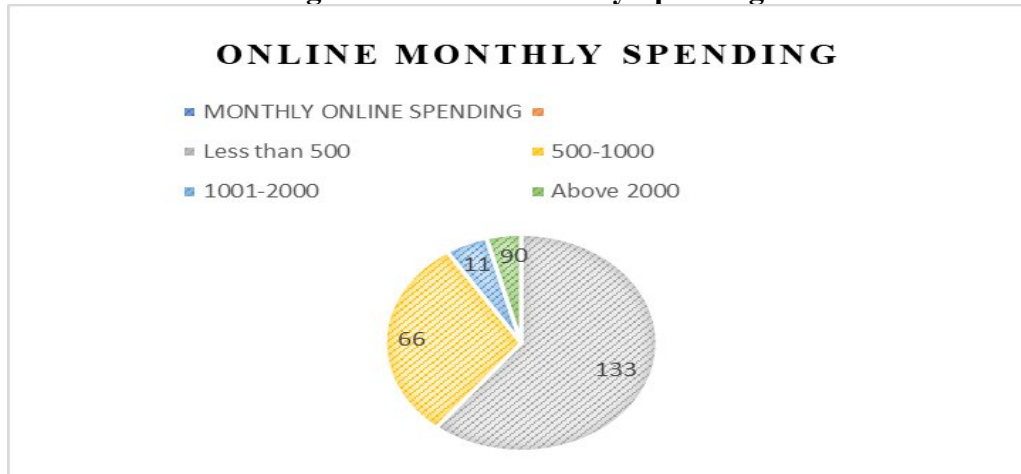


Source: Primary Data



Figure 1 represents the gender of youth, with a total of 219 respondents, 51.1% males and 48.9% females, indicating a nearly equal gender distribution. This balanced representation ensures that the analysis accurately incorporates both groups' opinions.

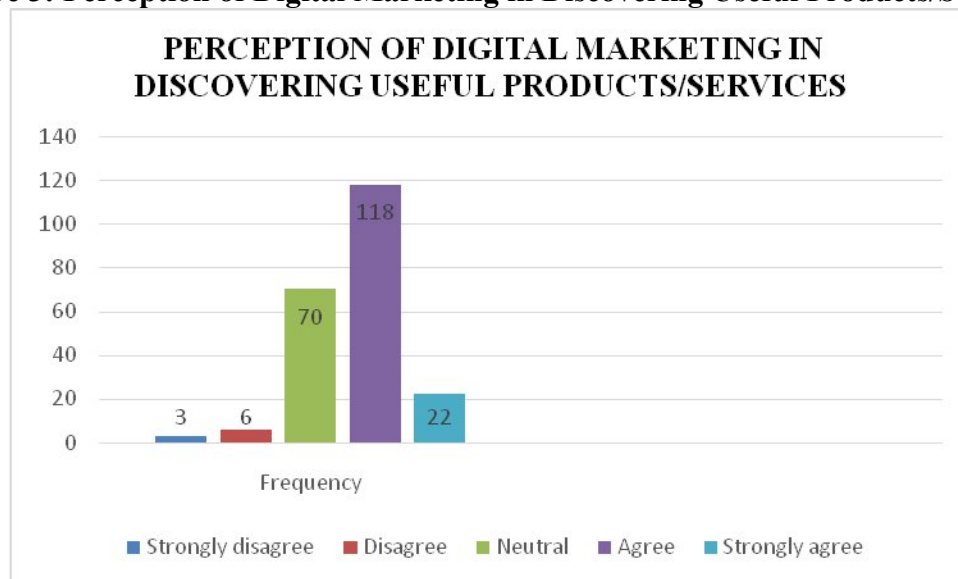
Figure 2: Online Monthly Spending



Source: Primary Data

The bulk of responders (60.7%) spend less than ₹ 500, while 30.1% spend between ₹ 500 and ₹ 1,000. Only a tiny proportion spends ₹ 1001-2000 (5.0%) or more than ₹ 2,000 (4.1%), indicating that the majority of individuals spend less.

Figure 3: Perception of Digital Marketing in Discovering Useful Products/Services



Source: Primary Data

The majority of respondents (118) believe that digital marketing helps them discover useful items and services, with 22 strongly agreeing. A significant amount (70) stay neutral, suggesting mixed feelings, with only a tiny fraction (9 in total) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. This demonstrates that digital marketing is widely regarded as a useful tool for product and service discovery.



CHI-Square Test

The chi-square test reveals that monthly online spending determines whether respondents are drawn to limited-time offers. Only 45.9% of those spending less than ₹ 500 are persuaded, indicating that low-income consumers remain wary. In the 500-1000 group, 62.1% acknowledged to being persuaded, but this jumps to 90.9% for those spending ₹1001-2000, indicating that mid-range spenders are the most sensitive to such advertisements. Interestingly, just 22.2% of respondents who spent more than ₹ 2,000 reported being impacted, implying that high spenders already buy based on their preferences and are less attracted by temporary reductions. Overall, 52.1% of all respondents have been impacted by limited-time offers, while 47.9% have not, demonstrating a modest bias towards positive influence. These findings imply that e-commerce enterprises should target time-limited offers on mid-range spenders, who are more likely to respond, while employing other techniques such as affordability and trust-building for low spenders and premium loyalty or exclusivity incentives for high spenders. This demonstrates that targeted promotional methods based on spending capacity can improve consumer engagement and conversions more successfully than a one-size-fits-all approach.

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.585 ^a	3	.002
Likelihood Ratio	15.948	3	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.555	1	.212
N of Valid Cases	219		
a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.32.			

Source: Primary Data

The Pearson Chi-Square test produces a result of 14.585 at a significance threshold of $p = 0.002$, which is less than 0.05. This shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between the variables being studied. The probability Ratio ($p = 0.001$) supports this strong connection. However, the Linear-by-Linear Association test ($p = 0.212$) is not significant, indicating that there is a general relationship but not a persistent linear trend. Overall, the findings indicate that the variables are connected and that changes in one are likely to have a significant impact on the other.

Limitations Of the Study

1. The study is limited to the respondents in Chennai only.
2. The sample size is limited to 219.
3. Self-reported answers were used in the analysis, which could be biased due to overstatement, understatement, or incomplete knowledge on E-Shopping trends.

Conclusion

The study found that digital marketing has a substantial impact on young e-shopping behaviour while also promoting sustainable purchasing. Most respondents spend in the low to mid-range, with internet marketing commonly regarded as beneficial in discovering items and services. The chi-square results show that mid-range spenders are most influenced by limited-time incentives, while low and high spenders react differently. These findings imply that personalized marketing methods outperform a



one-size-fits-all approach. Overall, digital marketing not only encourages youth e-commerce but also can promote ethical and environmentally friendly consumption in accordance with SDG 12.

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