
Consumers' Attitude towards Digital Marketing

*Rekha Dahiya**

Abstract

In today's world of digital media, the Consumer behavior is changing fast as their purchase decisions are influenced through easily available on line information. The consumer is shifting from the "push" to the "pull" world of commercial messaging. The present study aims to investigate the consumer attitude towards digital marketing in Indian Car Market. The paper uses the "Theory of Planned Behavior" as the basic model to study the attitude of people towards digital marketing. Data were collected from Delhi area with the help of a structured questionnaire and then analyzed on the basis of statistical techniques viz. independent sample t-test. The results of the study indicate that people have positive attitudes towards various aspects of digital marketing. However, they remain cynical about the technicality and authenticity of information available on digital channels.

Keywords: *Digital Marketing, Attitude, Car, Belief, Outcome Evaluation.*

Introduction

Digital advertising and its influence are growing much faster than other categories as the internet has become a place to reach out to a large segment of customers. Marketers have also expanded their horizons through various use of internet to reach out to the customer who also are increasingly getting engaged on social media. Hence, marketers who are avoiding social media may have put their business at risk. Moreover, the advantages of these emerging techniques of marketing are that their impacts are effective and easily measurable compared to traditional media (Christopher Meyer, 2008).

The influence of the traditional marketing tools has lately diminished as customers have become accustomed to interactive and virtual connections with the marketer (Wertime & Fenwick, 2008). Digital technologies make marketing more effective because they allow for individual attention, better campaign management, better product, marketing

design, and execution (Glen Urban, 2003). It is organized around an easy-to-understand flow diagram for formulating marketing strategies such as understanding customer needs, formulating a strategy, implementing the strategy and building trust with customers.

Consumers are increasingly relying on other consumers' reviews to make decisions for the online purchase (Stephan Ludwig et. al, 2013). Moreover, consumers who influence others are themselves influenced by fellow consumers and this influence is contingent on their product experience (Shrihari Sridhar & Raji Srinivasan, 2012).

*** Ms. Rekha Dahiya**

*Assistant Professor, Marketing
Banarsidas Chandiwala Institute of
Professional Studies,
Dwarka. New Delhi*

The Consumer behavior is changing today as customers have been using the internet to investigate purchases under consideration. They are shifting from a “push” to a “pull” world of commercial messaging. The Research has shown that today, customers typically complete most of the purchase journey before having any contact with sales representative. Buyers start the process of market mechanism without anybody’s help and persuasion. Now, the consumer is far more informed than those who are actually in the business of selling the product. The consumer learns about the product to be purchased through on-line activities such as reading blogs, reviews and holding online discussions about products and services. Thus, the management of these online processes requires involvement in social media. Customers are scanning YouTube videos, participating in FocusForums, and tweeting. They trust their peers for referrals and warnings (Barbara Giamanco, Kent Gregoire, 2012).

The social media’s greatest potential is at the front end of the sales cycle i.e. during the prospecting stage opportunity qualification and pre-sales-call research that lead up to a face-to face meeting. Internet Social Platforms also offer means of maintaining customer relationships and building brand loyalty throughout (Barbara Giamanco, Kent Gregoire, 2012).

Companies have also realized the importance of digital marketing and have recently started encouraging consumers to “share” prototypes of their self-designed products with friends through these media and review feedback before finalizing their choices (Christian Hildebrand et. all, 2012).

Digital Consumer Behavior in Automobile Sector

On-line activities of customers generate digital footprint and critical information that drives the brand perception and influence purchase decisions in the digital age. The Customer in the car market is extensively using digital media for deciding car purchases. Recent studies show that the automobile sector is the largest generator of the on-line conversations. Millennial Media (2011) found in recent market research that more than 30 percent of consumers who receive automobile content, view it weekly and an additional 21 percent do so daily.

Creative and engaging contents marketing campaigns offer a simple way for businesses to drive conversions. A leading on-line research company’s survey shows that 62% of the people in the near future will use internet as a primary source of information before purchasing a car.

Internet surfers are becoming active and proud members of web forums of the respective car companies where they share their experiences with the like minded people. Many vent off their dissatisfaction on some brands on the social platforms. Customers utilize various digital methods offered by the company as the strategy of personalized marketing like banner advertising, on-line booking of the vehicle as well as test drive, etc. Thus, digital technologies and digital marketing are transforming the consumer behavior in the car market. Companies have also realized the immense potential of digital marketing and maintaining the digital marketing portfolio along with providing a digital edge to their products and services.

McKinsey (2012) conducted a study of about 24 touch points of customers while purchasing a car on over 9000 customers and it was found that digital experience was placed at 2nd point just behind the live experience. It was also found in the study that digital channels dominate the purchasing “journey” of the car market. The purchasing journey for cars involves a number of different phases such as awareness , short listing , purchasing , servicing, and repurchase. In this journey, customers increasingly rely on digital channels, e.g., checking brands’ Web sites, reading reviews, visiting social networks and community forums during consideration phase. Recent insights have actually revealed that more than 50 percent of customers make their decision online, emphasizing the importance of managing the online channel by the car makers.

It has been noticed that while on line engagements of car purchasers have increased considerably, the average number of showroom visits prior to purchase has dropped from about four in the past to one at present. This situation illustrates that role of the dealer has significantly reduced as far as information is concerned. Now, people focus on direct product experience and price negotiations.

Research Methodology:

Drawing from the conceptual framework of the "Theory of Planned Behaviour" the paper assumes that attitude is influenced by the belief of the individual and its expected consequence (outcome). Attitude is defined as the individual's positive or negative feelings about performing a particular behaviour. It is determined through an assessment of one's beliefs regarding consequences arising from a behaviour and an evaluation of the desirability of expected consequences. In this context, behavioral beliefs are that "the Digital marketing gives more personalized information which helps in making more informed and valued decision" and expected outcome evaluations is "Now customers have less time to spend, so it makes sense to give them personalized and quick information". Two separate sets of factors influence beliefs and expected outcome. Finally, attitudes are assessed as the sum of the scores of belief factors multiplied by desirability assessments factors for all expected consequences of the behaviour (Ajzen, 1985).

Data were collected from 80 car owners in Delhi area using structured questionnaire based on 5 point likert scale. Questionnaire includes questions on beliefs as well as on expected outcomes. Reliability of data was checked with the help of Cronbach alpha. Independent sample t-test was used as the test of significance.

Objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to study the consumers' attitude towards digital marketing in Indian Car Market.

Data Analysis

.2: One-Sample Statistics for Behavioral Beliefs

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Huge quantity of information	80	4.49	.551	.062
Expert advice	80	4.14	.590	.066
Customer reviews	80	4.39	.665	.074

Data were analyzed with the help of SPSS version 17.0. Reliability of data was checked with the help of Cronbach's Alpha. Questionnaire prepared for gathering data contained 25 statements and a pilot study was undertaken by getting the questionnaire filled from 25 respondents in order to check responses. Reliability of data was checked with the help of Cronbach's Alpha and the value of .739 (see Table 1.1) indicated high reliability of sample size.

Table 1.1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.739	22

Analysis on Behavioral Beliefs:

Beliefs were judged by asking respondents questions regarding various aspects of digital marketing. The results are presented hereunder. Table 1.2 shows the one-sample t-test. It is clear from the table that all the parameters have mean value more than 3 in the likert scale of 1 to 5. This indicates that people have positive feelings towards the digital marketing in the Indian car market. Table 1.3 shows that the one way sample t tests results is significant.

price comparison	80	4.45	.593	.066
Doubt the authenticity				
of information	80	3.59	.589	.066
Technical nature	80	3.89	.421	.047
Interactive	80	4.04	.371	.042
responsive in nature	80	3.88	.369	.041
Personalized content about car	80	3.84	.489	.055
attractive in nature	80	3.98	.355	.040
Reduced time in information Searching	80	4.25	.516	.058

1. Hypothesis on beliefs of the Car owners on digital purchase of Cars

H_0 : Consumers have neutral beliefs on the consequences of using digital media for buying a car.

H_a : Consumers do not have neutral beliefs on the consequences of using digital media for buying a car.

Hypothesis was tested using one way sample t-test at 5% level of significance. The significance value of .000 for all the parameters showed that the test was found significant. (see Table 1.3). So it can be concluded that consumers find digital marketing effective as it facilitates easy comparison among various brands of cars and quick decision making. It also offers personalized contents, customers' and experts' reviews. Moreover, customers believe that digital marketing is responsive and attractive in nature. However, customers doubt the authenticity of the information available on various digital channels.

Table 1.3: One-Sample Test for Behavioral Beliefs

Test Value = 3						
					95% Confidence of the Difference	
Huge quantity of	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
information	24.145	79	.000	1.487	1.36	1.61
Expert advice	17.248	79	.000	1.138	1.01	1.27
Customer reviews	18.648	79	.000	1.388	1.24	1.54
price comparison	21.863	79	.000	1.450	1.32	1.58
Doubt the authenticity of information	8.925	79	.000	.587	.46	.72

Technical nature	18.865	79	.000	.888	.79	.98
Interactive	24.997	79	.000	1.037	.95	1.12
responsive in nature	21.216	79	.000	.875	.79	.96
Personalized content about car	15.320	79	.000	.837	.73	.95
attractive in nature	24.573	79	.000	.975	.90	1.05
Reduced time in information searching	21.685	79	.000	1.250	1.14	1.36

Expected Outcome Evaluation

Questions were asked to respondents about the evaluation of the expected outcome in the likert scale where -3 indicates strongly disagreed with the statement, -2 disagreed, 0 the neutral option, +2

agreed with the statement and +3 strongly agreed with the statement.

Table 1.4 again shows that mean value of all the parameters is above 0 except for the "at ease" which has the value of -1.53.

Table 1.4: One-Sample Statistics for Outcome Evaluation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
informed decisions	80	2.06	.663	.074
Easy selection of car	80	1.80	.719	.080
reviews help in car brand selection	80	2.28	.811	.091
best value deal is obtained	80	1.39	1.073	.120
decision can't be based on DM only	80	1.54	.954	.107
Not at ease	80	-1.53	1.102	.123
Participation in on-line discussion	80	1.85	.597	.067
No wait to get the query solved	80	2.06	.536	.060
Relevant content	80	2.03	.317	.035
Quick decision making	80	1.45	1.078	.121
Love searching information on-line	80	1.66	1.043	.117

Hypothesis

H0: Customers are neutral towards the expected outcome of digital marketing while buying a car.

Ha: Customers are not neutral towards the expected outcome of digital marketing while buying a car.

Hypothesis was tested with the help of one way sample t-test at 5% level of significance. Table 1.5 shows the results of one way sample t-test which was found significant with value of .000. So we can conclude that customers value the outcome of using digital communication while buying a car. Customers confirmed that they are able to take informed decision

because of digital marketing. Reviews of customers and experts help them in easy selection of the car. Customers also expressed their viewpoints that they can participate in on-line discussions about car because of interactive nature of digital media. Attractive nature of digital marketing motivates customers to search for information on-line.

However, some customers don't find themselves at ease regarding the use of digital communication while buying a car because of technical nature involved. Some people also doubt the authenticity of the information over digital channels. According to them it is not possible to take decisions solely on the basis of digital marketing.

Table 1.5 : One-Sample Test for Behavioral Beliefs

Test Value = 3						
					95% Confidence of the Difference	
Huge quantity of	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
informed decisions	27.840	79	.000	2.063	1.92	2.21
Easy selection of car	22.403	79	.000	1.800	1.64	1.96
reviews help in car brand selection	25.093	79	.000	2.275	2.09	2.46
best value deal is obtained	11.564	79	.000	1.388	1.15	1.63
decision can't be based on DM only	14.416	79	.000	1.538	1.33	1.75
Not at ease	- 12.377	79	.000	-1.525	-1.77	-1.28
Participation in on-line discussion	27.695	79	.000	1.850	1.72	1.98
No wait to get the query solved	34.424	79	.000	2.063	1.94	2.18
Relevant content	57.095	79	.000	2.025	1.95	2.10
Quick decision making	12.031	79	.000	1.450	1.21	1.69
Love searching information on-line	14.261	79	.000	1.663	1.43	1.89

Attitude: Behavioral Belief factors multiplied by expected Outcome Evaluation factor

The score for the behavioral belief statement was multiplied by the expected outcome evaluation to get

the attitude attribution. Results were checked for significance using independent one way sample t-test. Table 1.6 again shows that the mean value for all the parameters were more than 0 which implies the neutral state of the respondents.

Table 1.6 : One-Sample Statistics for Attitude

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Information 1	80	9.43	3.507	.392
Expert Advice 2	80	7.61	3.200	.358
Customer Reviews 3	80	10.23	4.346	.486
Best Price 4	80	6.31	5.041	.564
Doubtful Authenticity 5	80	5.80	3.777	.422
Technical Nature 6	80	-5.93	4.406	.493
Interactive 7	80	7.51	2.460	.275
Responsive 8	80	8.03	2.164	.242
Personalized Content 9	80	7.79	1.770	.198
Reduced Time 10	80	6.40	4.775	.534
Attractive 11	80	6.74	4.389	.491

Hypothesis on the Consumer Attitude about Digital Marketing

H_0 : Consumers have an indifferent attitude towards digital marketing.

H_a : Consumers are not indifferent towards digital marketing.

Hypothesis was tested using independent one way sample t-test. Table 1.7 shows that results are significant for all parameters.

Table 1.7: One-Sample Test for Attitude

Test Value = 3						
					95% Confidence of the Difference	
Huge quantity of	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Information 1	24.038	79	.000	9.425	8.64	10.21
Expert Advice 2	21.277	79	.000	7.613	6.90	8.32
Customer Reviews 3	21.045	79	.000	10.225	9.26	11.19
Best Price 4	11.201	79	.000	6.313	5.19	7.43
Doubtful Authenticity 5	13.736	79	.000	5.800	4.96	6.64
Technical Nature 6	-12.028	79	.000	-5.925	-6.91	-4.94
Interactive 7	27.317	79	.000	7.513	6.97	8.06
Responsive 8	33.169	79	.000	8.025	7.54	8.51
Personalized Content 9	39.361	79	.000	7.788	7.39	8.18
Reduced Time 10	11.988	79	.000	6.400	5.34	7.46
Attractive 11	13.732	79	.000	6.738	5.76	7.71

Here, we can state that people have a positive attitude towards the digital marketing as they value the characteristics of digital marketing like personalized contents, reduced time, expert advice, responsiveness and interactivity. Although, they are cynical about the authenticity of the information available on digital channels and technical complexity of the digital marketing.

Findings of the study

Major findings of the study are as follows

- Consumers find digital marketing effective as it facilitates easy comparison among various brands of cars and quick decision making.
- Digital channels offer personalized contents, customers' and experts' reviews.
- Customers believe that digital marketing is responsive and attractive in nature.
- Customers are able to take informed decision using the digital marketing.
- The reviews of other customers and experts help customers mainly in initial purchase decision. Customers can participate in on-line discussions through interactive nature of digital media.
- Attractive nature of the digital marketing motivates customers to search for information on-line.

- Customers don't find themselves at ease regarding the use of digital communication while buying a car because of the technical nature involved.
- Customers also doubt the authenticity of the information on the digital channels.

Overall, consumers have positive attitude towards the digital marketing in Indian Car Market.

Suggestions

- Experience of purchasing a car should be made interesting with the help of digital media by companies. While devising a digital marketing strategy, companies should focus more precisely on the online evaluation as consumers give very high importance to online evaluation of the car before buying.
- Consumers doubt the authenticity of the information available, so it is advisable for the automobile companies to constantly review the content that is presenting over digital channels about them. Moreover efforts should be made to make the content more authentic.
- Consumers also resist using digital channels because of technicality involved. So, some consumer awareness programme regarding use of digital media can be initiated by the automobile companies for marketing their product effectively.

Conclusion

With the rapid adoption of online modes and social media platforms, the Digital Marketing has grown significantly. In fact, it is being widely used these days by business from all spheres of the society. It can be concluded from the study that people have positive attitude towards digital aspects. Technicality and authenticity of the information over digital channels are two areas that need to be improved in order to strengthen consumers' attitude towards the Digital Marketing.

As on today, only a few players in the Indian car market have begun to approach the digital opportunity from a holistic perspective. Still having a YouTube channel or innovative strategies should be understood as a good start to fully leverage the digital opportunity. Reasons for slow growth of these channels is inertia at the part of management and advertising agency (Christopher Meyer, 2008). We believe digital marketing budgets in the automotive sector will experience the largest increases compared to other industries in next few years.

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