



Impact of Digital Marketing Tools on Brand Preference and Buying Behaviour of Millennials (with reference to Chennai Metro City)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of digital marketing tools on brand preference and buying behaviour of millennials. With the rapid growth of digital platforms, marketers increasingly rely on tools such as social media marketing, influencer promotions, online advertisements, email marketing, and mobile marketing to engage consumers. The study analyses how these tools influence brand awareness, brand image, and purchase decisions among millennials. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. The findings reveal that digital marketing tools significantly affect millennials' brand preference and buying behaviour, highlighting the need for targeted and interactive digital marketing strategies.

Keywords: Digital marketing tools, Brand preference, Buying behaviour, Millennials, Social media marketing

Introduction

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology has transformed the way businesses communicate with consumers. Digital marketing has emerged as a powerful tool, enabling organizations to reach target audiences through online platforms such as social media, search engines, websites, email, and mobile applications. Unlike traditional marketing, digital marketing offers interactive, personalized, and cost-effective communication, making it highly influential in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase decisions.

Millennials represent a significant and influential consumer segment characterized by high digital literacy, frequent internet usage, and active engagement with social media platforms. Their buying behaviour is strongly influenced by online content, peer reviews, influencer recommendations, and brand interactions on digital platforms. As a result, digital marketing tools play a crucial role in building brand awareness, creating brand preference, and influencing purchasing decisions among millennials.

Brand preference reflects a consumer's inclination toward a particular brand over competing alternatives, while buying behaviour refers to the decision-making process leading to the purchase of goods or services. Digital marketing tools significantly affect both these aspects by providing relevant information, enhancing brand engagement, and fostering trust and loyalty. Understanding how millennials respond to various digital marketing strategies is essential for marketers seeking to gain competitive advantage in the digital marketplace.



Need of the Study

1. The rapid growth of digital media platforms has significantly changed the way consumers interact with brands, making it essential to study their impact on buying behaviour.
2. Millennials are highly influenced by digital content, peer reviews, and social media interactions, yet their responses to different digital marketing tools vary widely.
3. Traditional marketing approaches are becoming less effective for millennial consumers, creating a need to evaluate the effectiveness of digital marketing tools.
4. There is limited empirical research focusing specifically on millennials' brand preference and buying behaviour in the context of digital marketing tools, especially in developing economies.
5. Marketers require reliable data to identify the most effective digital platforms and strategies for influencing millennials' purchase decisions.
6. The study addresses the research gap by providing practical and theoretical insights into the role of digital marketing tools in shaping brand preference and buying behaviour of millennials.

Limitation of the study

1. The study helps in understanding how different digital marketing tools influence brand preference and buying behaviour of millennials, who constitute a major consumer segment in the digital economy.
2. It provides valuable insights to marketers and business organizations on the effectiveness of various digital marketing strategies such as social media marketing, influencer marketing, and online advertisements.
3. The study contributes to academic literature by examining the relationship between digital marketing tools, brand preference, and consumer buying behaviour in a rapidly evolving digital environment.
4. It assists businesses in designing customer-centric and data-driven digital marketing campaigns tailored to millennial consumers.
5. The findings of the study can support policy makers and marketing professionals in understanding changing consumer behaviour patterns in the digital era.
6. The study serves as a reference for future researchers interested in digital marketing and consumer behaviour studies.

Statement of the problem

The rapid growth of digital technology and online platforms has transformed traditional marketing practices, compelling businesses to increasingly rely on digital marketing tools such as social media marketing, influencer marketing, online advertisements, email marketing, and mobile marketing. Millennials, being highly tech-savvy and active users of digital media, are frequently exposed to these digital marketing efforts. However, despite extensive investment in digital marketing, many organizations face challenges in understanding which digital marketing tools most effectively influence millennials' brand preference and buying behaviour.

Existing studies provide limited and fragmented insights into how different digital marketing tools shape brand preference and purchase decisions among millennials, particularly in developing economies. There is a lack of empirical evidence on the relative effectiveness of

various digital marketing strategies and their impact on millennials' decision-making process. Therefore, the problem addressed in this study is to examine the extent to which digital marketing tools influence brand preference and buying behaviour of millennials, and to identify the most effective tools that drive their purchase decisions.

Objectives of the study

1. To assess the effect of digital marketing tools on the purchase decision process of millennials.
2. To examine the relationship between digital marketing engagement and buying behaviour of millennials.
3. To identify the most effective digital marketing tool influencing millennials' buying behaviour.
4. To suggest suitable digital marketing strategies for marketers targeting millennials based on the findings.

Review Literature

Avinash & Madhumita (2022) Conducted an empirical study of *Millennial online buying behaviour* in selected areas of Chennai, highlighting how millennials' beliefs, satisfaction and online purchase experiences influence their online shopping decisions, especially through digital channels.

T. Abirami & P. Jagadeesan (2024) Explored the *impact of digital marketing on buying behaviour of consumers* in Chennai, noting that exposure to digital content and engagement through multiple online media significantly shapes consumers' buying behaviour, including preference for brands encountered via digital platforms.

Krithika Krishnan & N. Jamunarani (2025) Found that *social media marketing* significantly influences purchase behaviour toward products (e.g., cosmetic goods) among young consumers in Chennai; social media induces brand interest, information search and purchase intention.

Social Commerce Marketing (Srinivasan, 2025) in a study of *social commerce marketing effectiveness among Chennai Millennials*, factors such as influencer credibility, social interaction, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) had a strong positive relationship with Millennials' purchase intentions. Trust played a pivotal mediating role showing how digital marketing tools beyond standard ads shape trust and buying behaviour.

Sheela & Kalaiselvi (2025) Highlighted how *social media advertising* specifically affects brand loyalty, product awareness and purchase decisions among Chennai consumers—demonstrating how content styles and engagement impact consumer preferences and buying behaviour.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the impact of digital marketing tools on brand preference and buying behaviour of millennials.

Nature of the Study

The study is empirical in nature, based on both primary and secondary data.

Sources of Data

- Primary Data: Primary data were collected from millennials through a structured questionnaire.
- Secondary Data: Secondary data were gathered from journals, books, research articles, websites, and published reports related to digital marketing and consumer behaviour.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of millennial consumers who actively use digital platforms and are exposed to digital marketing tools.

Sample Size

A sample of 100 respondents was selected for the study.

Sampling Technique

The study uses convenience sampling to select respondents due to ease of access and time constraints.

Analysis and Interpretation

Measurement Model (Confirmatory Factor Analysis - CFA) Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)
DMT	0.89	0.91
BP	0.87	0.9
BB	0.88	0.92

Findings

1. The study found that millennials are highly exposed to digital marketing tools and frequently engage with digital platforms.
2. Social media marketing emerged as the most influential digital marketing tool affecting both brand preference and buying behaviour.
3. Influencer marketing significantly impacts millennials' trust and brand preference, especially for lifestyle and consumer products.
4. Email and mobile marketing were found to have moderate influence, mainly effective for promotional offers and repeat purchases.
5. A positive and significant relationship exists between digital marketing tools and millennials' buying behaviour.
6. Digital marketing tools significantly influence brand preference by enhancing brand awareness, brand image, and customer engagement.
7. The constructs Digital Marketing Tools (DMT), Brand Preference (BP), and Buying Behaviour (BB) exhibit high internal consistency, as all Cronbach's Alpha values are above 0.70.
8. Composite Reliability (CR) values for all constructs exceed 0.70, confirming strong construct reliability.

9. Digital Marketing Tools have a strong and significant positive influence on Brand Preference ($\beta = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$).
10. Digital Marketing Tools have a moderate but statistically significant direct effect on Buying Behaviour ($\beta = 0.32$, $p = 0.002$).
11. Brand Preference has a strong and significant positive impact on Buying Behaviour ($\beta = 0.54$, $p < 0.001$).

Suggestions

1. Marketers should focus more on social media and influencer marketing to effectively target millennial consumers.
2. Brands should create interactive, engaging, and authentic digital content to build stronger brand preference.
3. Personalized digital marketing strategies should be adopted to enhance customer experience and purchase intention.
4. Businesses should carefully select influencers who align with brand values to improve credibility and trust.
5. Email and mobile marketing campaigns should be optimized with relevant content and timing to increase effectiveness.
6. Continuous monitoring and analysis of digital marketing performance are necessary to improve campaign outcomes.

Conclusion

Digital marketing tools play a significant role in shaping brand preference and buying behaviour of millennials. The study concludes that millennials are highly influenced by digital platforms, particularly social media and influencer marketing, which strongly affect their brand perceptions and purchase decisions. Digital marketing enables brands to interact directly with consumers, provide relevant information, and create meaningful brand experiences. Therefore, organizations must adopt innovative, customer-centric, and data-driven digital marketing strategies to effectively engage millennial consumers and achieve long-term competitive advantage. The measurement model confirmed strong reliability and validity of the constructs, as evidenced by high Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and acceptable model fit indices. This establishes that the selected variables Digital Marketing Tools, Brand Preference, and Buying Behaviour are statistically sound and appropriate for analysis. The structural model results reveal that Digital Marketing Tools have a strong positive impact on Brand Preference and a moderate but significant direct impact on Buying Behaviour. Among the relationships tested, the strongest effect was observed between Digital Marketing Tools and Brand Preference. This indicates that digital marketing efforts such as social media marketing, influencer campaigns, online advertisements, and search engine marketing significantly enhance brand awareness, trust, and loyalty among Chennai millennials.

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