



The Effect of Digital Marketing on Emotional Responses and Impulse Buying Behaviour in E-Commerce: Evidence from Sikkim

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Abstract

Digital marketing has become an important factor influencing consumer behaviour in e-commerce. This study examines how digital marketing affects emotional responses and impulse buying behaviour among consumers in Sikkim. It focuses on marketing strategies such as social media advertisements, influencer promotions, and limited-time offers that create emotions like excitement and urgency, leading to unplanned purchases.

The study is based on primary data collected from respondents, especially youth, who actively use online shopping platforms like Amazon and Flipkart. The findings show that digital marketing significantly influences emotions, which in turn encourages impulse buying. However, concerns like misleading advertisements and overspending still exist.

The study provides insights for marketers and policymakers to improve responsible digital marketing practices and enhance consumer awareness in Sikkim.

Keywords: Digital marketing, emotional responses, impulse buying behaviour, e-commerce, consumer behaviour, social media advertising, online shopping, Sikkim.

1. Introduction

In recent years, India has witnessed rapid growth in the digital economy, driven by increasing internet penetration, widespread smartphone usage, and the expansion of online platforms. This transformation has significantly changed the way consumers interact with businesses, especially in the field of e-commerce. Online shopping through platforms like Amazon and Flipkart has become a common part of daily life, offering convenience, variety, and easy access to products and services.

Along with the growth of e-commerce, digital marketing has emerged as a powerful tool for influencing consumer behaviour. Businesses are increasingly using strategies such as social media advertising, influencer marketing, personalized product recommendations, and time-limited offers to attract and engage customers. Platforms like Instagram and YouTube play a major role in delivering these marketing messages, making them more interactive and appealing.

One of the most important aspects of digital marketing is its ability to influence the emotional responses of consumers. Advertisements are designed not only to inform but also to create feelings such as excitement, urgency, happiness, and desire. These emotional triggers can strongly impact decision-making and often lead to



impulse buying behaviour, where consumers make unplanned purchases without careful consideration. This type of buying behaviour is becoming increasingly common, particularly among younger consumers who are highly active on digital platforms.

In semi-urban regions like Sikkim, the adoption of e-commerce and digital marketing is growing steadily. Consumers are becoming more familiar with online shopping and are increasingly influenced by digital advertisements and promotional content. However, along with these opportunities, there are also challenges such as misleading advertisements, excessive promotional pressure, and concerns about product quality, which may affect consumer trust and satisfaction.

Sikkim provides a unique context for studying the relationship between digital marketing, emotional responses, and impulse buying behaviour. While younger consumers, especially students, show a high level of engagement with digital platforms, other groups may still be developing their understanding of online marketing influences. Emotional appeal and marketing strategies play a key role in shaping purchasing decisions in such environments.

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of digital marketing on emotional responses and impulse buying behaviour among consumers in Sikkim. It aims to understand how different marketing techniques influence consumer emotions and how these emotions lead to unplanned purchasing decisions. The study also seeks to identify the challenges faced by consumers, including issues related to misleading information and overspending.

This research is based on primary data collected through a structured survey of respondents from Sikkim, including students, working professionals, and regular online shoppers. By analysing their responses, the study attempts to provide a clear understanding of how digital marketing affects consumer behaviour in a semi-urban setting.

As digital marketing continues to expand, it is important to understand its impact on consumer psychology and decision-making. The findings of this study will help marketers, e-commerce companies, and policymakers develop more effective and responsible marketing strategies. It will also contribute to improving consumer awareness and promoting a more balanced and informed approach to online shopping.

2. Statement of the Problem

Even though digital marketing and online shopping are growing very fast, people's buying behaviour in places like Sikkim is not always stable or predictable. Many e-commerce platforms like Amazon and Flipkart use digital marketing techniques such as advertisements, influencer promotions, and special offers to attract customers. These methods are very effective, but they also influence people in a strong emotional way.

Many users, especially young people, spend a lot of time on platforms like Instagram and YouTube, where they see attractive ads and promotions. These ads create feelings like excitement, urgency, and desire to buy something immediately. Because of this, people often do impulse buying, which means they buy things without planning or thinking properly.



However, this creates some problems. Many consumers later feel regret because the product may not match their expectations or they may spend more money than needed. Some users also feel confused due to misleading advertisements or too many promotional offers. This can reduce trust in online shopping and affect their overall experience.

Another issue is that not all users clearly understand how digital marketing works. Some people, especially those with less experience, may not be able to identify whether an advertisement is genuine or just a marketing strategy to attract them. This makes them more likely to be influenced emotionally and make quick decisions.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Previous Studies

- Jain and Rathore (2018) studied the impact of digital marketing on consumer behaviour. They found that online advertisements, discounts, and promotional offers strongly attract customers. These marketing strategies create emotional responses like excitement and interest, which can lead to impulse buying behaviour. However, they also mentioned that too much advertising can sometimes confuse consumers and affect their decisions.
- Sharma and Gupta (2020) found that digital marketing has a stronger impact on consumers in urban areas because of higher internet usage and exposure to online platforms. In comparison, consumers in semi-urban and rural areas may have less awareness, but they are still influenced by emotional marketing content when they use platforms like Instagram and YouTube.
- Singh et al. (2021) focused on emotional responses created by digital marketing. They explained that content such as influencer promotions, attractive visuals, and limited-time offers can create feelings like urgency, happiness, and desire. These emotions play an important role in encouraging impulse buying, especially among young consumers who are active in e-commerce.
- Patel and Mehta (2022) examined impulse buying behaviour on e-commerce platforms like Amazon and Flipkart. They found that strategies such as flash sales, discounts, and personalized recommendations increase unplanned purchases. However, they also noted that misleading advertisements and product quality issues can reduce customer trust and satisfaction.

3.2 Common Findings and Research Gap

- Digital marketing has a strong effect on consumer emotions, which directly influences impulse buying behaviour.
- Emotional triggers like excitement, urgency, and attraction to offers play a key role in unplanned purchases.
- Social media platforms are important tools for influencing consumer decisions through digital marketing.
- Many consumers are not fully aware of how digital marketing affects their emotions and buying behaviour.
- Most studies are focused on urban consumers, while less attention is given to semi-urban regions like Sikkim.



- This study focuses on Sikkim to understand how digital marketing influences emotional responses and impulse buying behaviour, and to identify the challenges faced by consumers in this region.

4 Research Methodology

The research methodology used in this study is a mixed-method approach, which includes both primary and secondary data. The main aim of this study is to understand how digital marketing affects emotional responses and impulse buying behaviour among consumers in Sikkim.

Definition of Primary Data

Primary data refers to the data that is collected directly by the researcher for the specific purpose of the study. It is original in nature and is collected through methods like surveys, questionnaires, or interviews. In this study, primary data was collected through a questionnaire shared with respondents in Sikkim to understand their online shopping behaviour, emotional reactions to digital marketing, and impulse buying habits.

Definition of Secondary Data

Secondary data refers to the data that has already been collected and published by others. It includes sources like articles, research papers, websites, and reports. In this study, secondary data was used to understand general trends in digital marketing, consumer behaviour, and impulse buying, and to support the findings of the research.

Primary data was collected through a structured survey questionnaire from **49 respondents**, including students, working professionals, and regular online shoppers. The questionnaire included multiple-choice and scale-based questions to understand the impact of digital marketing on emotions, frequency of online shopping, and impulse buying behaviour. It also helped to identify common issues faced by consumers, such as overspending, misleading advertisements, and post-purchase dissatisfaction.

4.1 Objectives of the Study

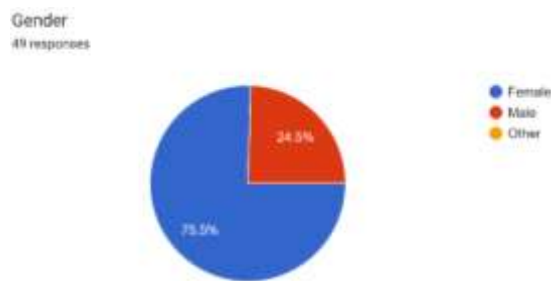
- To understand how digital marketing influences consumers in Sikkim, especially in online shopping.
- To examine the effect of digital marketing on emotional responses such as excitement, urgency, and desire.
- To analyse how these emotional responses lead to impulse buying behaviour among consumers.
- To identify the main digital marketing factors (like social media ads, influencer promotions, and discounts) that influence buying decisions.
- To study the challenges faced by consumers, such as misleading advertisements, overspending, and dissatisfaction after purchase.
- To provide suggestions for improving responsible digital marketing and helping consumers make better buying decisions.

4.2 Data Collection & Analysis

A survey was conducted among 49 respondents in Sikkim to understand how digital marketing affects emotional responses and impulse buying behaviour in e-commerce. The study used primary data collected through questionnaires and secondary data from research articles, websites, and online reports related to consumer behaviour and digital marketing. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis were used to interpret the data and understand patterns in emotions, online shopping habits, and impulse buying decisions.

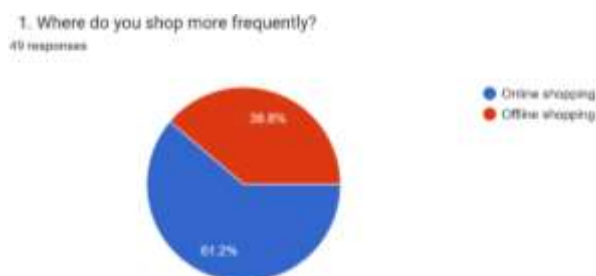
5 Data Analysis and Interpretation

5.1 Demographics of Respondents (Gender Distribution of Respondents)



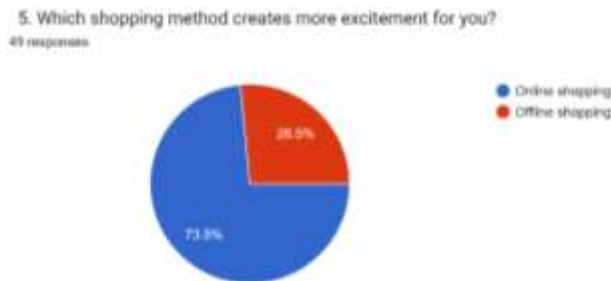
As shown in the graph, the majority of respondents are female, accounting for 75.5% of the total sample, while male respondents make up 24.5%. This indicates that female participation in the survey is higher compared to male respondents.

5.2 Awareness and Usage Patterns (Shopping Preference of Respondents)

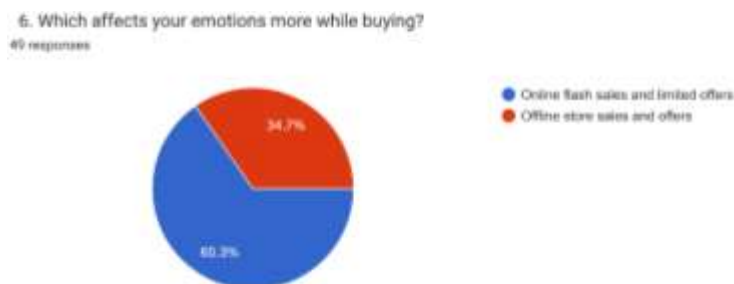


As observed from the graph, 61.2% of respondents prefer shopping online, whereas 38.8% prefer offline shopping. This indicates that online shopping is more frequently used among the respondents.

5.3 Emotional Influence of Digital Marketing.



As shown in the graph, 73.5% of respondents feel more excitement while shopping online, whereas 26.5% feel more excitement in offline shopping. This shows that online shopping creates higher excitement among consumers.



As observed from the graph, 65.3% of respondents are more emotionally affected by online flash sales and limited offers, while 34.7% are influenced by offline store sales and offers. This indicates that online marketing strategies have a stronger emotional impact.

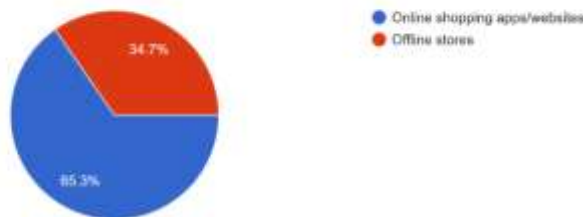
5.4 Impulse Buying Behaviour

3. Where do you make more unplanned purchases?
49 responses



As shown in the graph, 53.1% of respondents make more unplanned purchases in offline shopping, whereas 46.9% make unplanned purchases in online shopping. This shows that impulse buying is slightly higher in offline shopping.

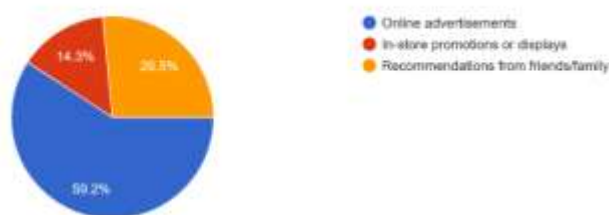
7. Which makes you spend more money?
49 responses



As observed from the graph, 65.3% of respondents spend more money through online shopping apps or websites, while 34.7% spend more in offline shopping. This indicates that online shopping leads to higher spending.

5.5 Influence of Marketing Factors

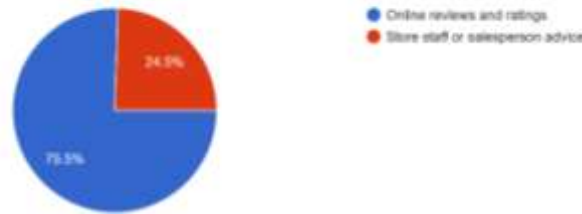
4. Which influences your buying decision more?
49 responses



As shown in the graph, 59.2% of respondents are influenced more by online advertisements, 26.5% by recommendations from friends or family, and 14.3% by in-store promotions or displays. This shows that online advertisements have the highest influence on buying decisions.

5.6 Trust and Preference

B. Which do you trust more when buying products?
49 responses



As observed from the graph, 75.5% of respondents trust online reviews and ratings, while 24.5% trust store staff. This indicates higher trust in online sources.

5.7 Consumer Suggestions

Many respondents actively shared their suggestions and opinions. This shows that participants were engaged in the survey and willing to express their views. The responses indicate that consumers are aware of their shopping behaviour and are interested in improving their overall shopping experience.

6 Findings and Discussion

- **Higher Preference for Online Shopping:**
Most respondents (61.2%) prefer shopping online compared to 38.8% who prefer offline shopping. This shows that online shopping is more commonly used among the respondents.
- **Online Marketing Creates Strong Emotional Impact:**
A majority of respondents (65.3%) stated that online flash sales and limited offers affect their emotions more than offline store promotions (34.7%). This shows that digital marketing has a strong emotional influence on consumers.
- **Online Shopping Creates More Excitement:**
About 73.5% of respondents feel more excitement while shopping online, whereas only 26.5% feel the same for offline shopping. This indicates that online platforms are more engaging and attractive.
- **Impulse Buying Slightly Higher in Offline Shopping:**
53.1% of respondents make more unplanned purchases in offline shopping, while 46.9% do so online. This shows that impulse buying exists in both, but is slightly higher in offline shopping.



- **Online Advertisements Influence Buying Decisions:**
59.2% of respondents are influenced by online advertisements, compared to 26.5% by friends or family and 14.3% by in-store promotions. This highlights the strong impact of digital marketing.
- **Higher Spending in Online Shopping:**
65.3% of respondents spend more money through online shopping apps or websites, while 34.7% spend more in offline shopping. This shows that online platforms encourage higher spending.
- **Greater Trust in Online Reviews:**
75.5% of respondents trust online reviews and ratings, while only 24.5% trust store staff. This indicates that consumers rely more on online information before purchasing.
- **Overall Preference for Online Shopping:**
59.2% of respondents prefer online shopping overall, while 40.8% prefer offline shopping. This shows that online shopping is slightly more preferred.

7 Suggestions and Recommendations:

- **Ensure Honest Marketing:** Products and advertisements should be clear and truthful to build customer trust.
- **Use Promotions Carefully:** Discounts and flash sales should be limited to avoid unnecessary impulse buying.
- **Encourage Genuine Reviews:** Real customer reviews should be promoted to help buyers make better decisions.
- **Improve Customer Experience:** Better service, easy returns, and support can increase satisfaction.
- **Promote Responsible Buying:** Consumers should be guided to make informed and planned purchase decisions.

8. Conclusion

Digital marketing has become an important factor influencing consumer behaviour in e-commerce. The study shows that many consumers prefer online shopping because of its convenience and the strong impact of digital marketing strategies. Platforms like Amazon and Flipkart have made shopping easier and more attractive, especially for younger users.

The findings indicate that digital marketing techniques such as online advertisements, flash sales, and limited-time offers create strong emotional responses like excitement and urgency. These emotions play a major role in influencing buying decisions and often lead to impulse buying behaviour. Consumers are more likely to spend money and make quick decisions when they are emotionally influenced by these marketing strategies.



However, the study also shows that impulse buying does not always lead to satisfaction. Some consumers may feel regret after making unplanned purchases, especially when expectations are not met. In addition, issues like misleading advertisements and over-promotion can affect consumer trust and overall experience.

Another important point is that while online shopping is more preferred, impulse buying is slightly higher in offline shopping. This shows that both online and offline environments influence consumer behaviour in different ways.

In conclusion, digital marketing has a strong impact on emotional responses and impulse buying behaviour among consumers in Sikkim. While it helps businesses attract customers and increase sales, it also creates challenges related to consumer awareness and responsible spending. Therefore, it is important for companies to follow ethical marketing practices and for consumers to make informed decisions to ensure a better and more balanced shopping experience.

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