

A Study on The Consumer Perception Towards Internet Marketing Before and During the Pandemic with Reference to Ernakulam District

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Abstract- The intention of this study is to analyse the consumer perception towards internet marketing before and during the pandemic. With the massive spread of the Covid 19 pandemic, there is a immense increase in the use of internet marketing, the study of online consumer behavior is of particular relevance in this paper. This study has enabled us to gather the views of online customers in Ernakulam with respect to what they expect and what has made them remain loyal or satisfied to the product or service. Convenience sampling is used for the study. It was found that, most of the people says internet marketing is more effective than traditional classic. Most of the people purchased food , groceries and medicines from online during pandemic period and their opinion is that the mode of online marketing is more convenient, saves time and provides better quality.

I. INTRODUCTION

Internet marketing refers to any form of advertising or marketing on the web. It's an all-inclusive term for promotions shared via emails, social media posts, paid advertisements displayed on search engines, etc. Internet Marketing or online marketing or web marketing, is a revolutionary process for all types of business operations. It is a modern topic in every business sector, and steadily plays an important role in any company's multi-channel marketing strategy. The base of the Internet has provided advanced business transactions and models for the international financial system. Internet Marketing adapts to rapid development of online business. The internet marketing, e-marketing, Online shopping offers the customer a wide range of products and services wherein he is able to compare the price quoted by different suppliers and choose the best deal from it.

Internet marketing is conceptually different from other marketing channels and the internet promotes a one-to-one communication between the seller and the end user with round the clock customer service. Today, business internet marketing is the fastest growing segment of online commerce. The major difference between traditional and online selling is the extent of interaction between the consumer and the seller. Online marketing also facilitates business, companies or individuals take advantage of the growing importance of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Myspace.

- Internet Marketing allows global marketing facility – Internet service is not for local purposes it allows global accessibility.
- It is less expensive – The cost involved in Internet Marketing is very less compared to other marketing strategies
- Through Internet Marketing, you can sell your products and services and encash your bills from anywhere.

It increases the choice of products, services and seller. With the growth of technology, it's crucial that you have an effective Internet Marketing plan in place. Internet Marketing helps to the growth of the business. Here are seven reasons why marketing is so important.

1. Customers are online

Internet Marketing is so important because the customers are online. Considering that over 4.2 billion people are on the Internet, it's a great opportunity for people to reach leads that are looking for business. There are billions of people online just waiting to find their company.

2. It create two-way communication

With traditional advertising, the communication is one-way. Companies create a TV ad or print ad in a

newspaper, and that's it. They wait and hope that the audience will see the ad and visit the business. The importance of Internet Marketing lies in the ability to create two-way communication. Companies provide clients with a way to contact their business. Whenever they create a social media post, run a pay-per-click (PPC) ad, or create any form of marketing material, they create the opportunity for people to contact the business.

3. It personalizes your audience's experience

Personalized marketing enables you to customize your audience's experience. When people find your business, they're going to come to your company for different reasons. It's best to create multiple, personalized marketing pieces than one, general marketing piece.

The ability to personalize your marketing strategy is why Internet Marketing is so important to your business. It helps you deliver a better experience for your leads, which turns them into customers.

4. It increases your business's visibility

When you want more people to check out your business, you must increase your business's visibility. With online marketing, you expose your business to hundreds of people.

The Internet is constantly marketing for your business. People can access your website or your social media 24/7. This means that your business is visible to your audience at all times. Brand visibility means that more people are getting familiar with your business.

When people are more familiar with your business, they're more likely to choose your business when they're ready to convert.

II. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- To determine which factor influences the consumers go for online shopping.
- To find out which feature of the website attracts the user to purchase the product from the online shopping websites.
- To analyze which factors influence the user to buy online grocery

- To determine the role of online shopping during the pandemic situation.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Marious Koufaris¹⁰: In his study on online consumer behavior have examined the underlying aspects of consumer pertaining to his cognitive and emotional responses in the online environment.
2. Techopedia(2010): Online Marketing is a collection of powerful methodologies and tools used to market products and services via the Internet
3. E.Mehta and Sivdas.(1995): In a research paper entitled "Direct Marketing on the internet: An empirical assessment of the consumer attitudes" have conducted research study to assess internet users' attitudes towards advertising on newsgroups and through email. Their study indicates that consumers have negative attitude towards newsgroups and emails. Advertising in spite of the fact that these advertisements are meant for special interest of the group. Since these study was limited to only newsgroup and email advertising the findings of the study cannot be generalized to all forms of internet advertising. Thus there is a scope to find out Internet users' attitudes towards IA in its many forms.
4. Prof. A. R. Mohammad Ismail and Dr. E. Mubarak, the research paper entitled "Marketing through Internet" by have shed light on the applications of the internet and its associated technologies in marketing and looked it as an emerging marketing medium. Marketing through internet provides immense business opportunities for the business concerns all over the country.
5. Ducoffe, R.H.13: In a research paper entitled "Advertising value and Advertising on the Web", has tried to unravel the underlying aspects of consumer attitudes towards web advertising. The study was administered on business executives in New York City. The study signifies the attitudes of business executives towards internet advertising. The important findings of the study indicates that business executive perceive IA to be more informative and entertaining in general while more informative than entertaining in particular
6. K.Rich ,Hein(1997): In a research paper entitled "Improving your online Marketing" described the

ways and means of Marketing on Internet .The researcher has emphasized on the interactivity aspect of internet advertising.

7. Dr. Mrs. D.Kamalavani²⁹: In a Research paper Entitled “Internet-An Emerging Medium of Advertising has elaborated upon the emergence of net advertising, its benefits and issues. The researcher has dealt primarily with two forms of internet advertising i.e. E-mail and Websites.
8. M.Lace³³:In the Research paper “At the cross roads of Marketing Communications and the internet : Experiences of the UK Advertisers” Jonathan M. Lace³³ has described the role of advertising agencies , the role of website and its features , the measurement of effective Internet advertising and E-Commerce. The paper highlights on important aspects related to Contemporary practices of integrating new media with traditional media.
9. Agarwal,Dr.Vaishali⁴⁰:In a research paper “Innovative Marketing practices for evolving consumers.” has discussed the prevailing social trends and innovative marketing practices in context to innovations in products and product designs. Innovative Marketing Techniques like Viral Marketing/Buzz Marketing, Digital Advertising, Blogs, permission marketing, Ambient media, Mobile Advertising, EStores, Product placements were discussed and elaborated upon changing social paradigms.

IV. OBJECTIVES

- 1) To determine whether internet marketing will be beneficial.
- 2) To study the attitude of customers towards internet marketing.
- 3) To assess the preference of customers regarding the attributes of online shopping over the internet during a pandemic.
- 4) To determine the growth potential of internet marketing during the pandemic situation.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

This is a descriptive study. The data and the other information required for the study were both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected

from the respondents directly, using questionnaire section, telephone data and secondary data were collected from various sources including websites, research articles, published research papers, journals were also made use of.

Sample Design:

A random sampling was adopted for the collection of data from the sampling respondents. Sampling data were collected from the consumers of online market using questionnaire section. Primary data consists of original information gathered from sample size of 100 respondents by using questionnaire. After sending the questionnaire through online and we got the data.

Data collection, Data analysis:

Various statistical tools like pie charts, graphs, percentages have been extensively used for the cross examination of the data. Factor analysis has been applied for the assessment of the performance of the consumers.

Sampling Technique:

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- The COVID-19 Impact on Customer Preferences & Digital Marketing

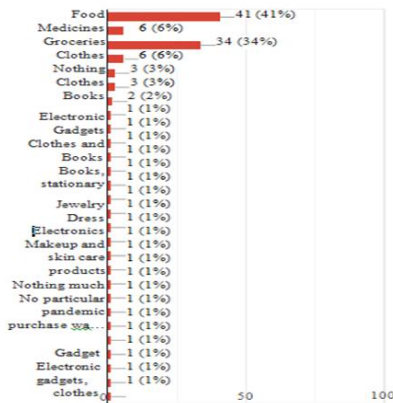
Pandemic has affected many industries, few have gained more importance and competence in the prevailing scenario. With a dip in revenue and consumer behavior due to the pandemic and ensuing lockdown, companies are trying to become more cost-efficient by cutting all the unnecessary expenses and focusing on needs rather than requirements.

In this current pandemic situation, businesses are heavily depending on digital platforms and digital marketing services to achieve their goals. The contagion has also had a deep impact on consumers – customers are increasingly using digital platforms for their day-to-day activities. In fact, with the help of digital marketing, it has become easier to reach out to the target audience and help them with their requirements better than ever before.

What this pandemic has done is that it has changed the customer’s preferences, how the customers perceive, evaluate, and measure brand value and success. These changes in customer preferences are influencing digital marketers to think out-of-the-box, forcing the digital marketing fraternity to come up with better optimization, better strategies and solutions which could be planned, measured, and executed efficiently. Unlike customer behavior, COVID-19 has also changed how businesses look at their customer preferences or behavior and optimize their strategies accordingly. This has resulted in companies becoming more customer-centric than product-centric.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

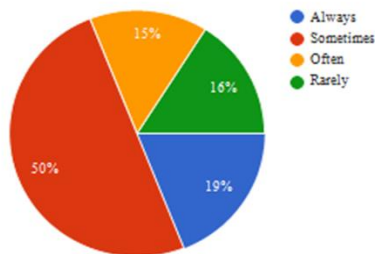
1. Products purchased during the pandemic



Interpretation

As per the sample given its clear that 41% of the total buyers purchased food items and 34% of customers where interested in groceries in the pandemic period.

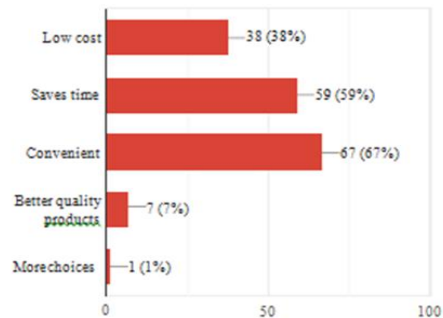
2. How much online shopping has helped during the pandemic



Interpretation

From the available sample only 19% of the customers made frequent purchase online, 50% are not regular buyers , 16% only purchase rarely and 15% buyers where made there purchase very often.

3. Opinion about advantages of Internet Marketing



Interpretation

Majority of the people says advantage of Internet marketing is that its more Convenient, Saves time and Low cost and remaining says better quality.

VII. FINDINGS

- Majority of the respondents were highly influenced by online shopping, most of the people buy the product from social media.
- Majority of the people says internet marketing is more effective than traditional classic media. A high percentage of people has the same opinion that the mode of online marketing is more convenient, saves time and a few amount says it provides better quality.
- Major portion of customers prefer cash on delivery as they are more conscious about safety
- A considerable number of people mostly use Amazon and Flipkart as their regular online sites.
- A significant group of people online purchase are influenced by social media, most of the people purchased food, groceries and medicines from online during pandemic period
- A major portion of the customers purchase preference changed via social media where others unclear about the same.
- During the period of lockdown majority of the people had spent their time in the social media sites like Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube etc.

- During the period of lockdown people had to depend upon apps like Google meet and Zoom to attend the daily meetings and classes. Meetings and Classes were conducted online and uses of these apps increased to a high percentage. Majority of the people used Google meet and Zoom.
- Most of the people had a very safe feeling when they shared their card details and a moderate amount of people just felt safe and a few amount people were not comfortable in sharing their card details.
- Majority of the people did not face any issues while conducting and online purchase but certain amount of people faced issues like cheap quality of the products, They received damaged products, delayed delivery etc.

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- [3] <https://www.optimizely.com/optimization-glossary/online-marketing/>
- [4] <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/marketing-internet-marketing-meaning-components-and-other-details/32325>
- [5] www.Scholarpedia.org
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CONCLUSION

Internet Marketing bridges the gap between the audience and the small business. The best part of Internet marketing is mass appeal. It takes endless efforts and money to reach the right audience with exclusive messages delivered in exact ways. There are several internet market strategies applied by companies to get the most from internet marketing. Several companies underestimate the internet marketing. Some believe that making a website and posting Ads in different portals will earn money for their business. The Covid-19 has drastically impacted the life, economy and consumer behavior around the world. The organization and marketers have to adapt to these new normal. The e-marketing has come as a great opportunity for marketers to respond and manage this crisis. The brand needs to maintain positive communication with their customer through various digital platforms and should not show any sort of hurry in selling the products. It is the right time to invest in e-marketing for businesses of all sizes. Although it is too early to comment upon how this crisis shapes in future but one thing is sure that e-marketing will prove to be an effective way of managing this crisis.

REFERENCES

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