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The Relative Influence of Digital versus Traditional Marketing on Smartphone Purchase Intentions: A Consumer Study in North Karnataka, India

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Abstract

This study compares the impact of traditional and digital marketing strategies on smartphone purchasing behaviour in North Karnataka's non-metropolitan areas. With a sample of 487 respondents from the ages of 18 and 45, this study is quantitative in nature. Hierarchical regression and and the further methods of inferential statistics were used to analyse the gathered data. The results shows that traditional marketing channels ($\beta = 0.29$) had lower purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.51$, $p <. 001$).The present study examines the effect of pre-purchase and post-purchase behaviour on smart phone purchasing decision of consumers in non-metro regions of North Karnataka through a quick online survey comprising participants residing out there. The study is quantitative, with a sample of 487 respondents aged between 18 and 45.the information gathered ws examined using techniques of inferential statistics such as hierarchical regression. The findings demonstrated that intensions to buy werehigher ($\beta = 0.51$, $p <. 001$).The finding indicate that consumers are largely motivated by digital interaction, yet they still depend on conventional sources for validation and trust. Designing integrated and demographically targeted marketing strategies in developing these insights can help regional marketplaces.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Traditional Marketing, Purchase Intention, Consumer Behavior, North Karnataka

Introduction

The world has become a different in regarding of communication and conducting business because of the advent of cell phones. The rapid changes in within digital sphere have facilitated consumers to integrate mobile devices in their lives which affect how they obtain information and make choices on what to purchase (Kannan and Li, 2017; Lamberton and Stephen, 2016). Among the organisations, theres a growing shift towards digital and social media sites as opposed to the old promotional strategies, which resulted in the transformation of marketing strategies (Stephen, 2016; Tiago and Veriissimo, 2014). Moreover, with the focused and participatory advertising, online platforms, particularly social media, have become powerful tools in shaping consumer perceptions and purchasing intentions (Dehghani and Tumer, 2015). As a result business operations now take place in a hybrid marketing environment where both new and old media are present. As a result its critical to ascertain how much each channel influences consumer behaviour in the various geographic markets. The Technology Acceptance Model and the idea of integrated marketing communications {**Figure 1: Word cloud showing key terms related to digital marketing and consumer behavior**.}serve as the studys theoretical foundations. According to TAM

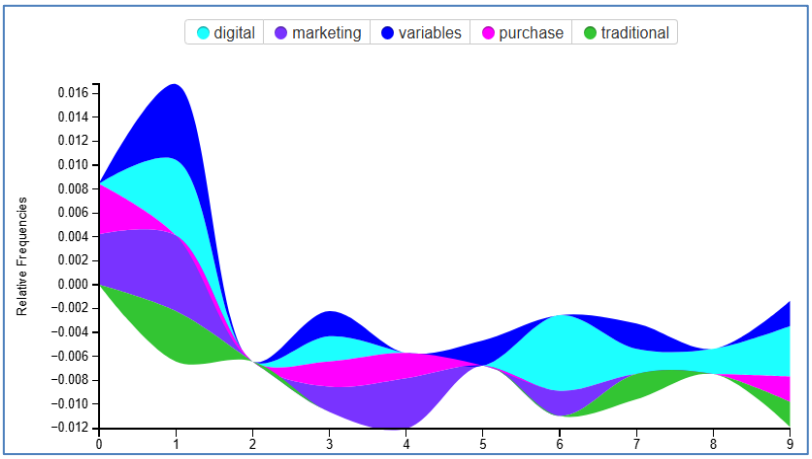
peoples interactions and responses to digital information are influenced by their perceptions of its usefulness and usability which are crucial factors in deciding whether or not to adopt new technologies (Davis 1989 Venkatesh and Davis 2000). It is possible to extend this paradigm to understand how consumers utilize and comprehend digital marketing content. According to Kliatchko (2008) and Kitchen and Burgmann (2015) the integrated marketing communications system emphasizes the significance of delivering consistent and coordinated messages across various communication channels in order to increase the degree of efficacy. The interaction between the different theoretical stances provides crucial information about how contemporary consumers make decisions particularly with regard to highly involved products like smartphones.The absence of area-specific empirical data is the first research issue. While the relative effectiveness of digital and traditional marketing in metropolitan settings has been extensively researched in studied in the past the relative effectiveness of digital and traditional marketing in rural and semi-urban settings have not been thoroughly investigated. Because these domains are impacted by particular socioeconomic and cultural traits they provide a distinctive framework for comprehending consumer behavior. The digital divide which continues to affect the accessibility and efficacy of digital marketing initiatives is among the primary issues in these areas (Rao 2005 Venkatesh et al. (2014))

As a result marketers must contend with a hybrid media landscape in which traditional media like television and outdoor advertising continue to have a significant impact despite the growing popularity of digital platforms (Stephen 2016 Lamberton and Stephen 2016). The process of creating successful marketing plans that would be suitable in developing regional markets is made more difficult by this contradiction. The study is significant because it helps marketers better allocate their budget and create campaigns that successfully target the North Karnataka consumer niche. By applying and contextualizing well-known marketing concepts to a scenario in a developing regional market it also adds to the body of scholarly literature (Stephen 2016). The research is restricted to examining the purchasing intentions of consumers between the ages of 18 and 45 in three important districts of North Karnataka: Kalaburagi Dharwad and Belagavi. However the study is subject to some limitations. The accuracy of the results may be impacted by response bias due to the use of self-report survey data.The research also records consumer behaviour at a specific point of time in a rapidly evolving digital environment, whereby the usage of platforms and the preferences of customers are constantly shifting.

Literature Review

Accoding to recent research that buy intention which is considered as an intentional choice taken by an individual to purchase in the upcoming is a critical dependent variable in marketing research especially when it comes to dealing with high involvement products such as cellphone (Morwitz, 2012). Numerous marketing stimuli, which

may be roughly categorised into traditional and digital marketing variables, as well as important moderating factors such consumer demographics and levels of digital literacy, have an impact on this intention (Kannan & Li, 2017; Venkatesh et al., 2014Traditional marketing media remains very applicable, especially in less developed countries where it still remains credible and has reach. For example, television advertising is still a successful medium because of its wide audience reach and capacity to provide powerful audio-visual material, which improves brand memory and trust (Stephen, 2016). Like that, outdoor advertising such (Table 1: **Graphical representation of relative frequencies showing the comparative variation among digital, marketing, purchase, traditional, and other influencing variables over the observed range**.)as billboards and transit displays, and print media such as newspapers and magazines remain to play a crucial role due to their physical presence and local reach, which contribute to spreading consumer awareness to specific geographic markets (Lamberton and Stephen, 2016). These findings informs that traditional marketing methods retain an auxiliary role in shaping the purchase intentions of consumers despite the expansion of online platforms.



What is special about digital marketing variables, in turn, is the quantitative outcomes, the ability to target effectively and the interaction. Social media marketing (SMM) and the involvement of users and peers in particular, such as on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, are crucial in enhancing customer engagement and purchase decision-making processes (Stephen, 2016These days, organizations are changing their attention from traditional marketing to digital and social media platforms, changing the whole way they approach promotion (Stephen, 2016; Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014). With targeted, interactive ads, digital spaces—especially social media—play a big role in shaping what people think and whether they decide to buy something (Dehghani & Tumer, 2015). Digital platforms shape the way people make decisions more than ever. Recent studyshows out how certain factors really shape how consumers respond to marketing. For example, age and income play a vital role in how effective different forms of communication are. research show that adult people tend to be more open to digital platforms. In fact, the older someone is, the less likely they are to respond to digital ads (Venkatesh et al., 2014Additionally, internet access and digital education are important for the success of digital marketing, which frequently results in differences in involvement between various demographic groups.Regional and cultural contexts also affect media consumption patterns because localized and vernacular information on both digital and traditional channels can boost consumers perceptions of relevance and credibility (Stephen 2016). Together these elements show how important it is to take moderating variables into account when looking at marketing efficacy in various regional contexts.

Research Gap:

To be honest we still dont fully understand how marketing functions in regions like North Karnataka. The majority of research has concentrated on large cities or examined the entire nation but it hasnt examined areas with distinct demographics inconsistent internet access and strong linguistic preferences. You cant simply apply national findings here without giving it some thought because that stuff matters. Both traditional and digital marketing

platforms channels are becoming imprtantly significant according to researchers but they havent really determined which is more significant in situations like this.There's just not enoughdata about how these strategies actually perform on a local level (Kannan & Li, 2017).Furthermore, while factors such as social media marketing and influencer impact are increasingly recognized, their interaction with traditional media channels and the moderating role of digital literacy remain underexplored (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). Therefore, there is clear need for a comprehensive empirical investigation that quantitatively assesses and compares the predictive strength of these variables in shaping smartphone purchase intentions within this specific regional setting.

Methodology

To figure out out which marketing Platform channels influence Smartphone buying decisions most in North Karnataka, the study relied on a quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional approach. Researchers used a standardised questionnaire to collect data from Belagavi, Dharwad, and Kalaburagi. They reached people both online and through in-person surveys, making sure everyone—from heavy internet users to those with less digital access—got a chance to participate. The sampling process started by picking metropolitan centers purposely, followed by random selection of wards. Finally, participants aged 18 to 45 were chosen conveniently and grouped by age and employment, following a multi-stage sampling method (Venkatesh et al., 2014). The survey had four parts: a five-point of Likert scale for five classic marketing channels—TV, print, outdoor ads, in-store promos, and word-of-mouth—a separate scale for six digital marketing strategies like social media, influencer reviews, search engines, e-commerce platforms, brand websites, and SMS/email campaigns; plus a six-item scale to capture purchase intention. All the sections came from tried-and-tested tools. When we ran a pilot with 35 people, Cronbach's alpha came out to 0.82. So, the instrument held up well in terms of reliability (Hair et al., 2019). We collected 487 valid responses in the end, which means we had a 78% response rate. For the analysis, we used SPSS 28 and broke things down step by step. First, we looked at who our respondents were and checked out some basic channel influences with descriptive stats. After that, we used Confirmatory Factor Analysis to make sure our concepts made sense. The important analysis used hierarchical multiple regression. In the 1st step, we focused on demographic variables. Then, in the 2nd step, we brought in the combined influence scores for digital and traditional marketing. This let us compare standardized beta coefficients (β) and find out how much more variance (ΔR^2) these new scores explained.. To find out how things change rely on the situation, I included an interaction term between digital marketing influence and digital literacy in a moderated regression analysis. Then I looked at how the effects differ for different groups—for example, how social media ads work across age groups—by running independent t-tests and ANOVA. This whole approach really helps make sense of what limits different marketing channels face and how systematically they actually forecast outcomes in this region (Hair et al., 2019).

Results

The analysis of data from 487 respondents offers solid empirical insights into the relative influence of marketing channels on smartphone purchase intentions in North Karnataka. The following sections detail the findings from the planned analytical procedures.

1. Descriptive Statistics and Initial Channel Ranking

The sample comprised 52.4% male and 47.6% female respondents, with 61% falling in the 18-30 age bracket. Self-reported digital literacy was moderately high (M=3.86, SD=0.92 on a 5-point scale). An initial ranking of perceived channel influence, based on mean scores, reveals a distinct hierarchy

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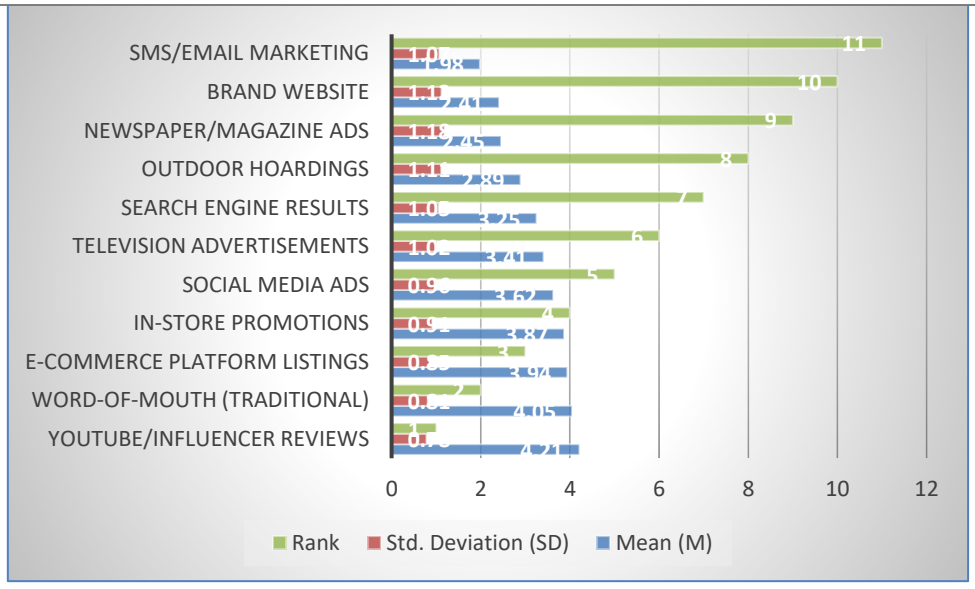
Table 1: Mean Influence Scores of Marketing Channels (1=No Influence, 5=Strong Influence)

Marketing Channel	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Rank
YouTube/Influencer Reviews	4.21	0.78	1
Word-of-Mouth (Traditional)	4.05	0.81	2
E-commerce Platform Listings	3.94	0.85	3
In-Store Promotions	3.87	0.91	4
Social Media Ads	3.62	0.96	5
Television Advertisements	3.41	1.02	6
Search Engine Results	3.25	1.05	7
Outdoor Hoardings	2.89	1.11	8
Newspaper/Magazine Ads	2.45	1.18	9
Brand Website	2.41	1.12	10
SMS/Email Marketing	1.98	1.07	11



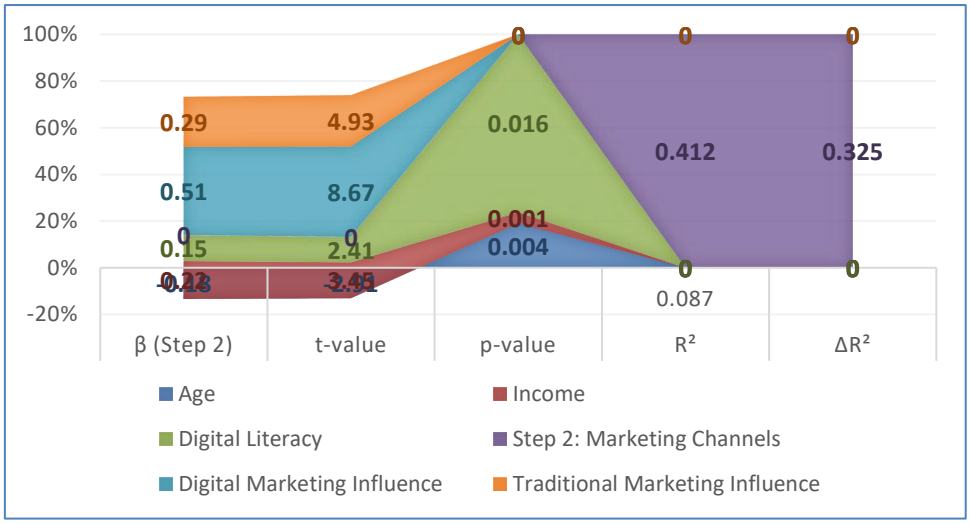
(in this table)The results make it pretty clear—people respond best to channels that mix digital and traditional approaches. Things like online reviews, personal connections, and digital retail sites really stand out. YouTube videos and influencer reviews (M = 4.21) actually beat classic word-of-mouth advertising for influence. On the flip side, old-school mass media like print ads (M = 2. Same goes for pushy digital tactics like email and SMS marketing (M = 1.98), which barely sway people when it time to buying decisions.

2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Scale Validation

CFA validated the proposed two-factor structure (Digital vs. Traditional Marketing Influence). Model fit indices were satisfactory ($\chi^2/df = 2.81$, CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.061). All factor loadings exceeded 0.60. Convergent validity was established as the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for the Digital construct was 0.58 and for the Traditional construct was 0.55, both above the 0.50 threshold. Discriminant validity was verified using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, as square root of AVE for each construct (0.76 for Digital, 0.74 for Traditional) was greater than the inter-construct correlation (r = 0.42). Reliability was strong, with composite reliability scores of 0.88 for Digital Influence and 0.84 for Traditional Influence.

3. Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis

Step/Predictor	β (Step 2)	t-value	p-value	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1: Control Variables				0.087	
Age	-0.18	-2.91	0.004		
Income	0.22	3.45	0.001		
Digital Literacy	0.15	2.41	0.016		
Step 2: Marketing Channels				**0.412**	**0.325**
Digital Marketing Influence	**0.51**	**8.67**	**<0.001**		
Traditional Marketing Influence	**0.29**	**4.93**	**<0.001**		



(Table 2: Hierarchical Regression Predicting Purchase Intention)

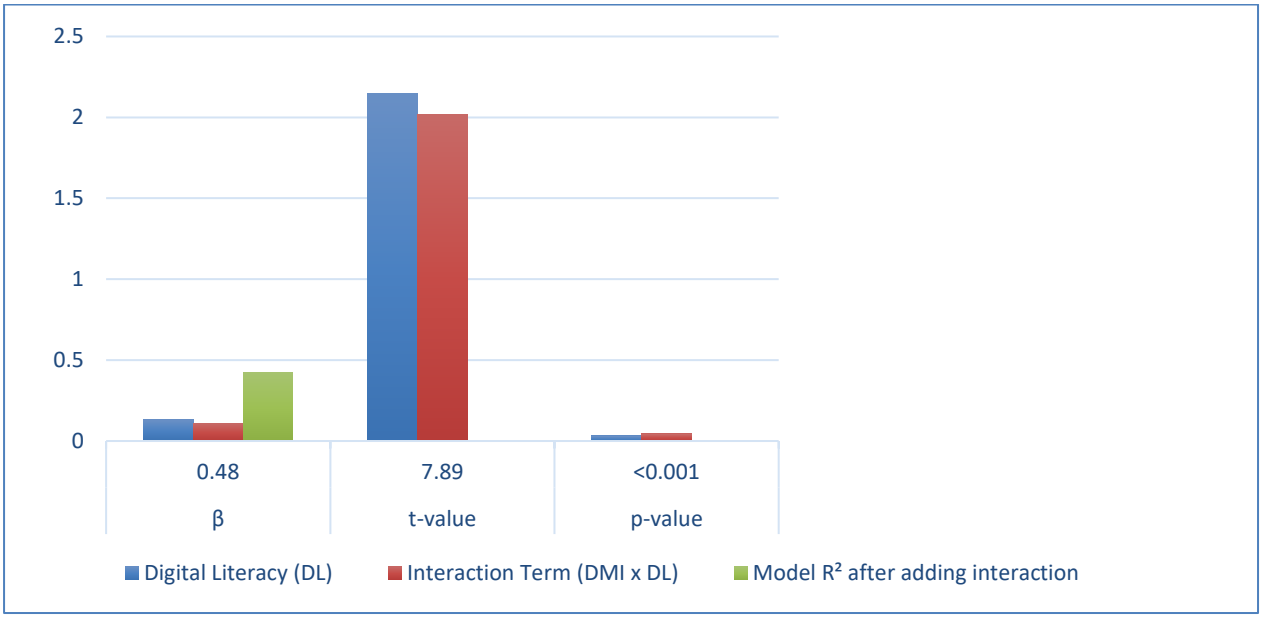
The 1st model, which having only the control variables, explained 8.7% of the variation in purchase intention. Once the two marketing variables got added in the second step, the model's explanatory power jumped to 41.2% ($\Delta R^2 = 0.325$, $p < 0$. Both traditional ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$) and digital ($\beta = 0.51$, $p < 0.001$) marketing had a positive, statistically significant effect on purchase intention, but digital marketing made a much bigger impact. All else equal, when digital marketing influence goes up by one standard deviation, purchase intention climbs by 0.51 standard deviations. That's about 1.76 times the boost that traditional marketing delivers, demonstrating just how much more influential digital channels are when it comes to swaying consumer decisions.

4. {Moderated Regression }Analysis for Digital Literacy

An interaction term (Digital Influence × Digital Literacy) was added in Step 3 of the regression.

Table 3: Moderation Effect of Digital Literacy

Predictor	β	t-value	p-value
Digital Marketing Influence (DMI)	0.48	7.89	<0.001
Digital Literacy (DL)	0.13	2.15	0.032
Interaction Term (DMI x DL)	**0.11**	**2.02**	**0.044**
Model R^2 after adding interaction	**0.425**		



(**Table 3: Moderation Effect of Digital Literacy**)The data shows a clear moderating effect: the interaction term is statistically significant (β = 0.11, p = 0.044). In plain terms, the more digitally literate someone is, the stronger digital marketing influences their intention to buy. For people with less digital literacy (one standard deviation below the mean), digital marketing has a smaller impact on PI purchase intention (β = 0.37). But for them who are more digitally skilled (one standard deviation above the mean), the effect jumps to β = 0.59. So, digital marketing works much better on customer who feel rely with digital tools and platforms. How effective these marketing strategies are really depends on how digitally competent the audience i

5. Subgroup Analysis by Age: Independent Samples t-test

A t-test compared the perceived influence of Social Media Ads between younger (<30, n=297) and older (≥30, n=190) respondents.

Table 4: Influence of Social Media Ads by Age Group

Age Group	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	t-value	df	p-value
< 30 years	3.91	0.87	6.84	485	<0.001
≥ 30 years	3.18	1.02			

The analysis shows a clear difference between age groups when it comes to how they see social media ads ($t(485) = 6.84$, $p < 0.001$). Younger people—those under 30—score higher ($M = 3.91$) compared to older folks ($M = 3.18$), which means they're more influenced by social media advertising. So, age really shapes how effective these ads are. If you're putting together a digital marketing plan, it's smart to tailor your strategy to different age groups instead of taking a one-size-fits-all approach

Discussion

This study doesn't just draw a simple line between digital and traditional marketing channels—it digs into how messy and connected the whole buying process is for people picking out cellphones in North Karnataka. The numbers show digital marketing packs a bigger punch, with a predictive impact of 0.51 compared to 0.29 for traditional methods. So, digital interactions really matter now. People aren't just noticing online ads; these digital touchpoints are shaping the way customers make decisions (Kannan & Li, 2017; Stephen, 2016).At the same period of time, the continueous relevance of traditional channels—particularly interpersonal communication such as word-of-mouth ($M = 4.05$, ranked 2nd)—emphasizes the lasting importance of trust and community-based influence within this regional context. This suggests that consumers do not entirely substitute traditional channels with digital ones; instead, they combine both, relying on digital platforms for gathering information while turning to personal networks for validation and trust-building (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016).People trust peer reviews and influencers way more than traditional marketing these days.21). Dehghani and Tumer (2015) and Stephen (2016) discovered that consumers perceive reviews as more genuine and reliable when influencers perform in-depth visually captivating demonstrations particularly in local languages. In the meantime brand websites and SMS marketing arent gaining much traction. This indicates that people are not particularly interested in digital content that is excessively commercial or one-way. They desire an authentic and interactive experience. Here digital literacy is crucial because people respond to digital marketing differently when they feel more at ease online. And the figures ($\beta = 0.11$ $p = 0.044$) support that. Digital marketing becomes more effective as users become more adept at using digital tools. Because not everyone has the same level of digital literacy traditional media does not simply vanish rather it continues to exist (Venkatesh et al. (2014)). When it comes to social media advertisements people really divide along age lines. When it comes to marketing demographics are crucial because people under 30 report being significantly more influenced by these advertisements (average score 3. 91) than those over 30 (average score 3. 18). Even though they are surrounded by digital content older customers continue to use traditional methods while younger customers trust what they see and hear online. The market is clearly divided: younger consumers heavily rely on social proof and digital platforms while older consumers do not.

Conclusion

The research found that people in North Karnataka are likely to buy smartphones when they're exposed to digital marketing than traditional ads. But this isn't true across the board — age and how comfortable people are with technology play a big role. The whole consumer landscape feels pretty digital, though there's still a strong traditional influence. Folks usually check out information online, especially videos, before they decide. Still, they end up double-checking their choices with offline conversations and trusted opinions from friends or family.These results really show that to understand consumer behavior, you can't just look at one angle—you have to see how people use both traditional and digital sources for information. It's a mix. They also make it clear that when it comes to marketing, there's no single strategy that works for everyone. Marketers have to adapt, since different groups respond better to different channels..

Implications

The findings offer actual useful guidance to marketers and policymakers. Businesses must employ a comprehensive marketing strategy and concentrate more on digital initiatives particularly localized influencer content on YouTube and e-commerce platforms. But instead of discarding conventional approaches make better

use of them. They are excellent at generating word-of-mouth and improving in-store experiences which ultimately aids customers in making decisions. Its critical to customize campaigns for various demographics. TV commercials and in-store promotions are examples of traditional educational formats that are typically well received by older people. However you need more interactive and captivating content on social media if you willing to reach younger audiences. Increasing digital literacy is important from a policy perspective. It facilitates greater social participation and improves the overall effectiveness of digital marketing. That is beneficial to the economy in addition to business. ..

Future Scope

While this study offers valuable insights it also highlights areas that require further investigation. Given the regions expanding digital infrastructure it makes sense to monitor how various marketing channels perform over time—possibly even conducting a long-term study to track those changes. Examining the variations between North Karnataka's rural and urban areas is also beneficial. We can better understand the differences within the area by contrasting these locations. Future research should employ experimental designs to observe real consumer behavior rather than merely depending on what people claim to intend to purchase in order to support causal conclusions. To be honest techniques like focus groups and interviews can delve deeply into the reasons behind consumers use of both traditional and digital marketing channels. These methods help researchers better understand what's happening underneath the surface.

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