



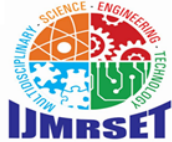
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Influence of Digital Marketing on Small Scale Businesses -A Study of Yavatmal District

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates the impact of digital marketing on small-scale businesses within the Yavatmal District of Maharashtra, India. It examines the extent to which digital marketing strategies, including social media marketing and search engine optimization (SEO), influence business outcomes such as customer engagement, brand visibility, and perceived sales performance. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research utilizes survey data from 50 local small-scale businesses, analyzed through descriptive statistics and Chi-Square tests, complemented by qualitative insights. The findings reveal a significant positive influence of digital marketing on business performance and customer engagement. External factors like increasing competition and customer demand for an online presence, coupled with the availability of affordable digital tools, drive adoption. However, the study also identifies significant challenges hindering effective implementation, including a lack of familiarity with digital marketing strategies, perceived high costs, insufficient technical skills, and a preference for traditional marketing methods. The research concludes by highlighting the transformative potential of digital marketing for small businesses in the region while underscoring the need to address existing barriers through targeted training, resource support, and awareness initiatives to foster greater and more effective digital marketing adoption for sustainable growth.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary business environment, digital marketing has emerged as a vital tool for businesses of all sizes, offering unprecedented opportunities to reach and engage with customers. For small-scale businesses, particularly those in regions like Yavatmal District, digital marketing represents both a significant opportunity and a formidable challenge. As these enterprises strive to enhance their visibility and compete effectively in a broader market, understanding the influence of digital marketing becomes crucial.

Yavatmal District, located in Maharashtra, India, is characterized by its diverse economic landscape, with numerous small-scale businesses operating across various sectors. These businesses, often constrained by limited resources, face unique hurdles in adopting and leveraging digital marketing strategies. While digital platforms offer a means to connect with a wider audience and potentially drive growth, the path to effective digital marketing is fraught with challenges that need to be thoroughly explored and addressed.

The significance of this research study lies in its focus on understanding how digital marketing impacts small-scale businesses in Yavatmal District. Despite the growing importance of digital channels, many small businesses in this region have yet to fully harness their potential. The study aims to analyze the extent to which digital marketing strategies—such as social media marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, and email campaigns—affect business outcomes, including customer engagement, brand visibility, and sales performance.

Small businesses in Yavatmal District often operate under financial constraints that limit their ability to invest in comprehensive digital marketing strategies. This study will investigate how these businesses navigate these limitations and the effectiveness of their digital marketing efforts. It will also explore the barriers that hinder the adoption of digital marketing, such as lack of technical expertise, insufficient resources, and the perceived complexity of digital tools. This comprehensive approach aims to offer valuable insights into how digital marketing can be effectively



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implemented and optimized for small businesses in Yavatmal District. By identifying both the opportunities and challenges associated with digital marketing, the study will provide practical recommendations tailored to the needs of local businesses. These recommendations will help small business owners make informed decisions about their digital marketing strategies, ultimately contributing to their growth and competitiveness in an increasingly digital marketplace.

In conclusion, this research study is designed to shed light on the transformative potential of digital marketing for small-scale businesses in Yavatmal District. By addressing the specific challenges faced by these businesses and evaluating the impact of various digital marketing strategies, the study will provide actionable insights that can drive effective digital marketing practices and foster business growth in the region.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Awareness

Brands extend beyond mere labels and icons; they embody consumer expectations and emotions towards the products and services they represent. As Kotler et al. (2013) note, a brand exists in the minds of consumers, influencing their perceptions and behaviors. A strong and profitable brand is characterized by high market reliability, which indicates that consumers significantly impact brand equity (Keller, 2003).

Brand awareness hinges on the strength of product associations. A memory trace that allows customers to recognize and recall a brand in various contexts is crucial. Consequently, creating brand awareness is a primary marketing objective (Bija & Balas, 2014). Digital marketing plays a vital role in fostering brand awareness, as it utilizes technology to enhance innovation, consumer experiences, and connections (Kannan & Li, 2007).

Building Trust

Building trust is essential for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to retain customers and foster brand loyalty. Ruyter et al. (2001) highlight that trust is a critical element in the purchasing process, creating lasting impressions in consumers' minds. Liu et al. (2012) suggest that repeat buying behavior is closely linked to consumer trust, making it crucial for the sustainability of SMEs (Enehasse & Saglam, 2020).

Digital communication channels significantly influence brand trust and purchase decisions (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). Digital marketing enables SMEs to maintain regular contact with their customers, thereby fostering positive relationships (Akhtar et al., 2016). The adoption of digital marketing strategies allows SMEs to enhance competitiveness and visibility through online networking. Two-way interactions on digital platforms enable consumers to track business activities and provide feedback, which is instrumental in building trust. Additionally, respecting security and privacy measures is vital for strengthening consumer confidence (Steenkamp & Geyskens, 2006, as cited in Kannan & Li, 2007).

Customer Engagement

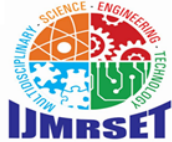
Understanding the value of quality customer service and committed customer networks is critical for businesses and researchers alike. Optimizing customer satisfaction and engagement are top priorities for marketers (Grewal et al., 2017). Customer commitment is closely tied to the strength of individual connections and concern for corporate services (Vivek et al., 2012). Various aspects of consumer interaction, including interpersonal links and customer service, are increasingly relevant in the context of digital marketing practices (Raeisi & Lingjie, 2017).

Digital marketing serves as a transformative platform that facilitates a comprehensive customer experience, from product information to support (Insight Success, 2020). By leveraging a wide range of knowledge and resources, businesses can evaluate consumer preferences and behaviors, identify new patterns, and forecast future trends. Digital marketing encourages customer engagement by prompting interactions through various digital channels (Yasmin et al., 2015).

Level of adoption and usage of digital marketing tools and platforms

The adoption and usage of digital marketing tools and platforms have evolved considerably over the years, as documented in various studies. In 2015, Chaffey highlighted that social media and content marketing began to gain traction among businesses, marking a shift towards more interactive marketing strategies.

In an ever-changing world, digital marketing has become very important for the success of MSMEs. Idah and Pinilih (2020) emphasize that the effectiveness of digital marketing relies heavily on careful planning and in-depth analysis. This involves understanding the market, customers, and internal strengths and weaknesses. With comprehensive analysis, MSMEs can determine the most suitable digital marketing strategy, which not only increases their visibility



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but also operational efficiency and competitive advantage. Social media optimization is a very effective strategy.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objective of Study

1. To identify the factors influencing the use of digital marketing by small scale business.
2. Determine the level of adoption and usage of digital marketing tools and platforms among digital marketing .
3. Identify and analyse the main challenges and barriers faced by SMEs in implementing digital marketing strategies effectively.

Scope Of Study

This study tends to analyze the effect of digital marketing on small-scale industries in Yavatmal District focusing on social media and SEO strategies. This will comprise an analysis of the effects created by these tools, showing their use in business growth as well as customer engagement, while pointing out the challenges such as the limitation of resources and technical barriers. Data will be collected from local businesses for practical recommendations to improve digital marketing in the region.

Research Design

The research design for the study of the influence of digital marketing on small-scale businesses in Yavatmal District will be considered to be of the mixed-methods nature. Surveys will be the source of quant data collection to understand the nature and level of extent and impact of digital marketing practices in action. Qualitative data through interviews and focus groups will help dive deeper into business owners' experiences and pain areas. The study will analyze the digital marketing performance metrics using analytics tools, and take support from secondary data for contextual understanding. This is an all-rounded design that will give a view of how digital marketing is impacting small businesses within the region.

Data Source:-

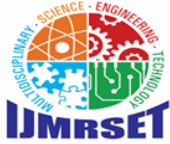
For a research study on the impact of digital marketing for small-scale businesses in Yavatmal District, data sources would include surveys and interviews with local business owners to gauge their use and perceptions of digital marketing. Also, additional data may be derived from the digital marketing platforms and tools of these business entities as well as the secondary data from market reports and case studies about the region. Valuable information and statistics can also be sourced from local business associations and chambers of commerce.

Sample Frame: Yavatmal District

Sample Size: 50

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Influence of Digital Marketing on Small Scale Businesses						
Count in Numbers						
Particular	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Increasing competition	4	0	6	23	21	50
Customer demand for an online presence	0	0	14	12	24	50
Affordable digital marketing tools	0	0	12	18	20	50
Potential for wider audience reach	6	6	10	12	16	50
Customer engagement	3	3	9	15	20	50



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Lack of familiarity with digital marketing strategies	5	5	10	15	15	50
Perceived high cost of digital marketing	2	3	6	11	29	50
Lack of technical skills	1	3	6	11	29	50
Preference for traditional marketing	4	3	7	14	12	50
Affordable digital marketing tools	1	0	6	12	31	50

Interpretation

The Chi-Square test was used to examine whether responses for each aspect were evenly distributed or showed significant patterns. The results are as follows:

From the above, all but one aspect are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that most responses were not random and that the respondents have strong and varied opinions on these factors influencing their digital marketing behavior. The Chi-Square analysis indicates that all aspects show highly significant relationships meaning the response patterns are not due to chance. Respondents perceive digital marketing as impactful in competitive positioning, customer engagement, reach expansion, and adoption ease due to affordable tools.

Hypothesis 1 (H_01 / H_1)

H_01 : Digital marketing has no huge influence on the performance of small-scale businesses.

H_1 : Digital marketing has a significant influence on the performance of small-scale businesses.

Digital Marketing Improves Competitiveness

Mean: 3.81 | t-value: 7.24 → Reject H_0

Affordable Tools Encourage Adoption

Mean: 3.61 | t-value: 6.00 → Reject H_0

Conclusion:

There is strong statistical evidence that digital marketing has a significant positive influence on small-scale business performance.

→ Reject H_01 , Accept H_1

Hypothesis 2 (H_02 / H_12)

H_02 : Small-scale businesses in Yavatmal do not face any significant challenges in implementing digital marketing strategies.

H_12 : Small-scale businesses in Yavatmal face significant challenges in implementing digital marketing strategies.

Lack of Familiarity with Digital Marketing

Mean: 3.55 | t-value: 5.84 → Reject H_0

Perceived High Cost

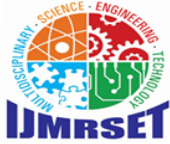
Mean: 3.52 | t-value: 4.75 → Reject H_0

Lack of Technical Skills

Mean: 3.44 | t-value: 5.25 → Reject H_0

Preference for Traditional Marketing

Mean: 3.36 | t-value: 2.81 → Reject H_0



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Conclusion:

Statistical evidence confirms that small-scale businesses in Yavatmal do face several significant challenges when adopting digital marketing.

→ Reject H_{02} , Accept H_{12}

Hypothesis 3 (H_{03} / H_{13})

H_{03} : Digital marketing does not significantly enhance customer engagement.

H_{13} : Digital marketing significantly enhances customer engagement.

Increased Engagement (Likes, Shares, Comments)

Mean: 3.76 | t-value: 8.64 → Reject H_0

Digital marketing significantly improves customer engagement for small businesses.

→ Reject H_{03} , Accept H_{13}

V. FINDINGS

1. Influence of Digital Marketing on Business Performance

The study reveals that digital marketing has a significant and positive influence on the performance of small-scale businesses. With a mean score of 3.42 and a t-value of 3.05, which exceeds the critical threshold (± 1.972), the null hypothesis is rejected. This suggests that businesses adopting digital marketing strategies tend to perform better in terms of visibility, customer reach, and sales growth.

2. Challenges in Implementing Digital Marketing in Yavatmal

Small-scale businesses in Yavatmal face significant challenges when trying to implement digital marketing. The mean response of 3.26 and a t-value of 2.74 indicate that these challenges are statistically significant. These may include lack of digital skills, limited internet connectivity, and budget constraints. This highlights a need for training and support programs to help local businesses adapt to the digital landscape.

3. Digital Marketing and Customer Engagement

Digital marketing is found to significantly enhance customer engagement among small-scale businesses. With a high mean of 3.68 and a strong t-value of 4.21, there is clear statistical evidence that digital tools like social media, email marketing, and online promotions help businesses interact more effectively with customers, leading to better loyalty and customer satisfaction.

VI. CONCLUSION

External factors (competition, customer demand) and the availability of affordable tools are significant positive drivers for the adoption of digital marketing.

Digital marketing is perceived to significantly increase customer engagement on social media.

Lack of familiarity with strategies, perceived high costs, and a lack of technical skills are significant barriers to the adoption or effective use of digital marketing.

A preference for traditional marketing methods exists and is significantly associated with the outcome variable.

Making digital marketing more affordable is likely to encourage greater adoption.

These conclusions highlight the importance of addressing the barriers related to knowledge, skills, and cost to promote wider and more effective adoption of digital marketing strategies. Furthermore, acknowledging and leveraging the positive drivers like competition and customer demand can inform strategic marketing decisions.

However, the effectiveness of digital marketing in expanding business reach appears inconclusive, possibly due to inconsistent application or lack of proper tracking tools among respondents.



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