The Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Relationships

Kritika Khandelwal[1] and Dr. Bhawna Chahar[2]

1. Department of Business Administration, Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India
2. Department of Business Administration, Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

Abstract: *In this chapter, researcher thoroughly explore the effects that digital marketing poses on consumer behaviour. This study in detail explained what prompts an individual to behave towards a brand in a certain way, or perceive a brand under a specific light and how an individual responds to and how one interacts with a company through the use of a digital platform. Researcher will also be looking into how the digitalisation of businesses has facilitated forming valuable relationships with their customers, as well as improving feedback systems and making the entire process a whole lot easier for all parties involved. In order to extract the data for the purpose of this research, choosing a sample of 25 individuals that are active on digital platforms and frequently engage with brand pages on the internet. Through the means of a survey, researcher ask a series of questions with the aim to understand better the relationship between customers and brands as well as how they interact with one another. This way, will get an effective insight and a better understanding into how customers interact with their preferred brands, or simply, brands in general.*

Keywords: Digital marketing, Consumer behaviour, Digital platform, Brand, Internet

Introduction to Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is quite a broad concept as it brings together all the various forms of marketing, through the operation and the use of electronic devices. It is a term that can be used to describe the integrated views of marketing used in order to attract and engage as well as convert customers through an online medium. "Digital marketing makes use of multiple online marketing channels such as the likes of content marketing, search engine optimisation (SEO), and online advertising so as to help businesses make meaningful connections with their customers". The following are some of the few most common ways of digital marketing:

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO): It is the most common tool in digital marketing used in order to increase a website's ability to be visible across any search engine.

Email marketing: This type of marketing goes way back in time as it is quite an old form of marketing. It consists of spreading targeted messages at the right point of time.

Pay per click (PPC): It is also popularly referred to as "paid search". In this case, adverts which are paid for are strategically placed right above what is known as 'organic' search results. The cost varies with the level of competition.

Online advertising: It is the process through which advertising is executed by placing ads on another website.

This entire research paper has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter will give the reader a glimpse of what the research entails and how it has been organised throughout the five chapters. The second chapter of the research consists of the literature review, wherein, the background of the study is thoroughly discussed. In the third chapter, the application of the methodology has been mentioned and discussed in detail. The fourth chapter brings us to the actual research body where data is analysed and results, about the data, are revealed. Finally, a detailed conclusion of the entire research work is provided in the fifth chapter, whereby, I have summarised the research and talk about how it was conducted as well as the significance of the results along with some recommendations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Study 1
Title: The Role of Digital and Social Media Marketing in Consumer Behaviour
Author: Andrew T. Stephen
Extract: This research paper puts light on the current business environment and how digital environments have had a massive impact on the workings of a business. Through this research, issues such as digitalisation and word-of-mouth have been studied in depth. My understanding of this particular research paper is that one can definitely notice the massive impact that the digital world has on individual business and it's potential.

Study 2
Title: Using Social Media to Increase Consumer Loyalty to a Brand
Author: Lindsey Julian
Extract: This study aims to understand how to use social media to its best potential in order to achieve targeted business objectives and to increase consumer loyalty towards a brand. In today's world, the increasing dependency towards practicing the use of social media, especially in the fields of marketing and public relations, it has become essential to understand how a business can communicate with its customers through the medium of a digital platform. The aim of this study is to outline all the necessary tools, tactics and strategies in order to achieve business objectives with the help of a digital platform.

Study 3
Title: Digital Marketing and its Role in The Modern Business Processes
Author: Tetiana Girchenko, Yana Ovsiannikova
Extract: This study highlights the main features of digital marketing, in order to fully understand the concept and what it stands for. This research work also makes a comparative study between traditional marketing and digital marketing methods and provides the readers an insight into how easy digital platforms have made the functioning of business operations. Economic data and statistics have been provided so as to effectively portray the impact of digital marketing and the use of internet platforms.

Study 4
Title: The Importance of Digital Marketing. An Exploratory Study To Find The Perception and Effectiveness of Digital Marketing Amongst the Marketing Professionals in Pakistan
Author: Fawad Khan, Dr. Kamran Siddiqui
Extract: This piece of research sheds light into how marketing professionals perceive the use of digital marketing and the awareness they have towards the concept. It gives a great view as to how marketing individuals view the use of the internet in order to achieve business goals and objectives, and how to strategize and pave the way for business to rely on the internet to take their companies forward. This study also talks about some of the drawbacks that digital marketing poses.

Study 5
Title: Effectiveness of Digital Marketing in the Challenging Age: An Empirical Study
Author: Afrina Yasmin, Sadia Tasneem, Kaniz Fatema
Extract: This article emphasises on the importance of digital marketing for both marketing individuals as well as the customers, in question. In this study, the effects of digital marketing are assessed through the sale of a particular organisation, taken as a case study, for this paper. Furthermore, the contrasts between digital and traditional marketing are presented in this study. Various forms of digital marketing strategies and how effective they are in helping a company achieve its goals and objectives are thoroughly assessed. The data collected had been analysed effectively with the help of various statistical tools and techniques.

Study 6
Title: Importance and Problems of Social Media Marketing in Indian Context
Author: Munish Kumar Thakur, Dr. Rakesh Kumar
Extract: This research paper thoroughly assesses the importance of social media marketing, in the context of India. It is quite understandable how important the use of social media is in terms of marketing; however, this study provides the reader with another view, in which the authors address the problems that come with using social media as a means for marketing. With all the advantages that are present because of social media, there are also downsides to it – and this is presented in this study very eloquently.

Study 7

Title: A Conceptual Framework of the Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Relationships

Author: Daiana Maria

Extract: The paper's main aim was to study how high-end fashion make use of social media as a medium to develop and maintain customer relationships and hence creating a personal connection with the brand's target audience. This study provides an incredibly insightful framework into social media marketing and how exactly it can further improve the relations between a business and its customers, as well as other stakeholders involved in the process. Furthermore, this study assesses the importance of social media so as to create awareness towards a brand and maintain consumer loyalty and ultimately achieve the goals and objectives of a business.

Study 8

Title: Consumer Perceptions of a Brand's Social Media Marketing

Author: Taylor Michelle Smith

Extract: The main aim of this study is to examine the various perceptions that consumers hold towards the manner in which a brand markets its products or services through the help of social media. Through this study, it was concluded that brands should make it a crucial point to actively engage with their customer base in order to keep up with the current competitive environment. It was also mentioned that engagement should be made more interactive and that brands should massively encourage their audience to come into contact with their social media posts and provide insightful feedback. This can be achieved through providing relatable content, from the brand's side, so that they can get more responses, from the customer's side. This would definitely ensure a better connection between the parties involved. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are proven to be the key towards achieving a better relationship with the customers as it helps them to stay in constant contact and within the reach of consumers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research would fall under the category of descriptive research, as researcher will be studying the impact that digital marketing has on consumer relationships. This research consists of qualitative and quantitative data that will both be thoroughly analysed. For this chapter, researcher selected twenty-five individuals to filled out a survey that they have prepared in order to gain a proper insight of how they use digital platforms, whether they follow brands on digital media or not, and if they do, how they interact with brands is their main question. Researcher contacted students as well as working individuals as they all have the habit of spending large amounts of their time on the internet, be it for work or for entertainment purposes. Everyone in the chosen sample belongs to an urban population and makes use of smartphones and laptops with an internet connection, devices which are essential, especially in today's world and of course, the main motive of digital marketing and all the efforts that are taken to make it a possibility.

The sample that they have chosen mostly consists of individuals between the ages of 18 to 25, out of which most of them are students and a few of them are full time employees but all of them happen to be spending a good amount of time on the internet, which comes very handy in my research process. In order to get accurate data and results, their target sample consists of people that belong to an urban population and are active on digital platforms.

For this research, I will be referring to both primary and secondary sources of data in order to be able to gain a better understanding of my topic. In order to extract primary data for this research, I will be conducting a survey, with 22 questions which will give me a wide variety of responses that I can base my research off of. As for my secondary data, I will be using the internet in order to extract information needed for this research project.

In research instrument researcher have chosen is the questionnaire method. They conducted a survey with 22 questions, which share with their chosen sample of 25 individuals.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

For this chapter, researcher have identified ten research objectives which they expect to fulfil throughout the study of this research. The following are the research objectives in question:

1. To identify the various changes that have been brought forward by digital platforms in marketing
2. To notice how relationship marketing has differed throughout the years

3. To study how digital marketing differs from traditional marketing
4. To understand the power customers, hold because of digital platforms
5. To study if customers remain loyal to businesses or not
6. To understand the effectiveness of digital marketing
7. To analyse the manner in which digital media has altered the way firms act towards their consumers
8. To examine the impact of a brand's response towards a customer's query or feedback
9. To study the manner in which brand's interact with their customers
10. To understand how reliable a brand's responses towards queries are

4: Data Findings and analysis

In this chapter, researcher thoroughly examined and discuss the findings as a result of the primary data from which they had collected, through the distribution of an online survey to which 25 people responded. Then they analysed the results carefully and reach towards a reasonable conclusion.

Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6: Gender, Age, Mobile phone operating system, Education, Household location, and Occupation

1. Gender
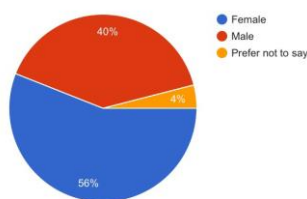
Figure 1: Gender

2. Age
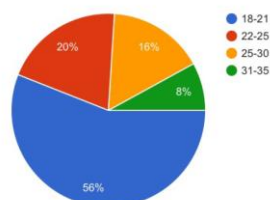
Figure 2: Age

3. Mobile operating system
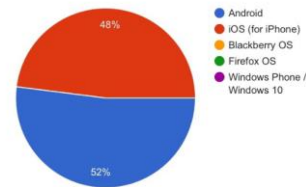
Figure 3: Mobile operating system

4. Educational level
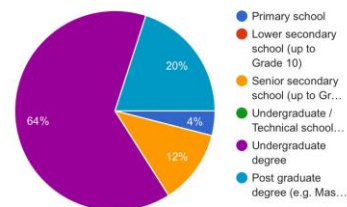
Figure 4: Educational level

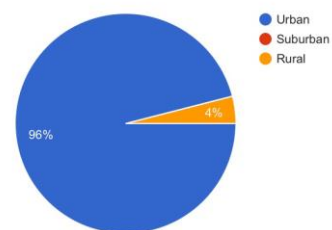**5. Household location**

Figure 5: Household Location

6. Occupation

Figure 6: Occupation

Findings and analysis: The six questions from above form the foundation of the survey. It provides a demographic look into the individuals that have filled out this questionnaire. From the information above, we can tell that 56% of individuals that gave the survey are females and 40% are males, out of which 4% chose not to reveal their gender. 56% of people that filled out the survey fall in between the 18-21 age group, 20% of individuals fall within the 22-25 age group, which is the main target for this research. 16% of people belong to 25-30 age group and lastly, only 8% fall into the 31-35 age group. Out of all the individuals that took part in this survey, 52% of them are Android users and 48% are iOS users. Majority of the participants are currently pursuing or have completed their undergraduate degree; the data reveals that 64% have listed 'undergraduate degree' as their highest level of education. 20% of them have completed Master's degree. 12% of them have listed secondary education as their highest level of education received and 4% belong to primary school. 96% of the participants belong to an urban area and the remaining 4% belong to the rural area. 64% of the participants are students, 20% of them are full time working employees, 12% are self-employed professionals and the remaining 4% are freelancers.

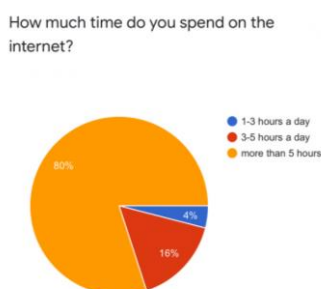### 7. How much time do you spend on the internet?

Figure 7: Time spent on the internet

Findings and analysis: In this question, I asked my respondents to reveal how much time they spend surfing the internet. From the 25 participants, the data above suggests that 80% individuals spend more than 5 hours on the internet, 16% of individuals spend 3-5 hours of their day on the internet and the remaining 4% spend around 1-3 hours on the internet. The data suggests that majority of the participants spend a good amount of their time on digital platforms.

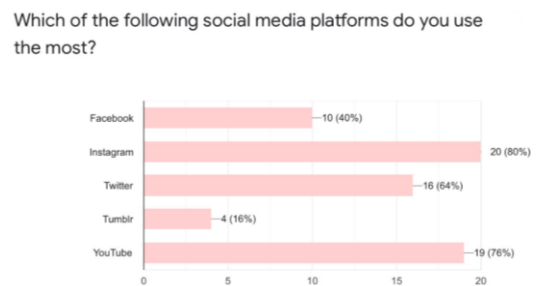### 8. Which of the following social media platforms do you use the most?

Figure 8: Most used social media

Findings and analysis: In this question, I asked my participants to select the social media platforms on which they are the most active. The data suggests that Instagram is the most popular amongst the participants, with 80% of them selecting the platform. The second most used is YouTube, with 76% of the participants selecting the video sharing site. Twitter follows as the third most used social media, with 64% of my participants selecting the platform as their most used socials. Facebook has 40% and Tumblr with 16%.

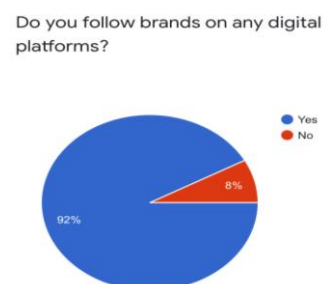### 9. Do you follow brands on any digital platforms?

Figure 9: Brand following on digital platforms

Findings and analysis: 92% of the participants answered saying 'yes', and the remaining answered 'no'. However, majority of my participants follow brands on social media platforms which suggests that they are engaged with the respective brands, and want to know more about them through such platforms, as well as maintaining a connection with such brands. This means that they are extremely aware of the digital marketing carried out by the respective brands.

10. Why do you follow brands on social media?
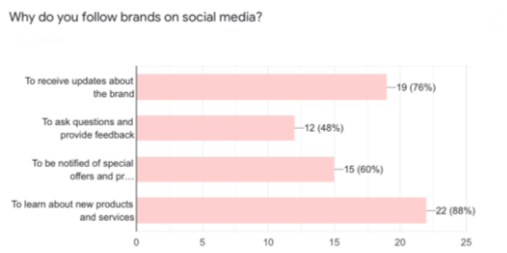
Figure 10: Reason of following brands on social media

Findings and analysis: In this question, I have received plenty of mixed answers. 88% of the participants say they follow brands, in order to "learn about new products and services", 76% say "to receive updates about the brand", 60% say "to be notified of special offers and promotions and lastly, 48% say "to ask questions and provide feedback". From this data, it is suggested that customers are keen to receive updates from brands, to keep up with their activities and to know more about the respective brands.

11. Do you engage (like, comment and share) with their content on social pages?
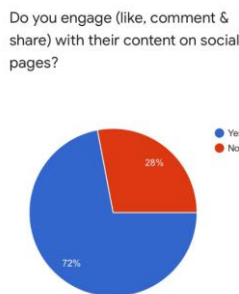

Figure 11: Brand engagement on social pages

Findings and analysis: Out of the 25 participants, 72% said that they do engage with brands on social media pages. 28% of the participants said that they do not engage with brands on social media pages. Customers are willing to express how they feel towards a brand, and they do so by leaving them a like, a comment or share a brand's content with others on digital platforms.

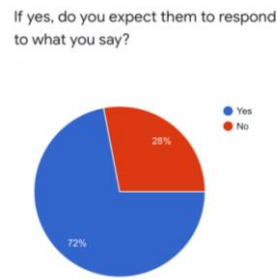**12. If yes, do you expect them to respond to what you say?**

Figure 12: Response

Findings and analysis: 72% of the participants say that they do expect brands to respond to their queries or comments. Which means that, they understand that they have an important role to play by sharing their views on social media, expressing their concerns and simply asking them a question, to which they demand a response in order to take the brand seriously. Therefore, brands are highly encouraged to interact with their customers in order to maintain a good relationship.

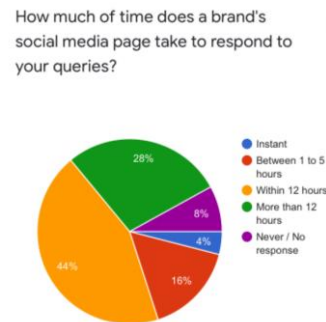**13. How much of time does a brand's social media page take to respond to your queries?**

Figure 13: Time brands take to respond

Findings and analysis:44% of the participants expect to get a reply within 12 hours. 28% say that they receive a reply more than 12 hours later. 16% wait for a reply between 1 to 5 hours. 8% of them expect to receive no reply. 4% of them expect to get a reply instantly. From the data above, we can tell that customers are keen to receive a reply from brands and also that brands take it very seriously to respond to the questions of their customers.

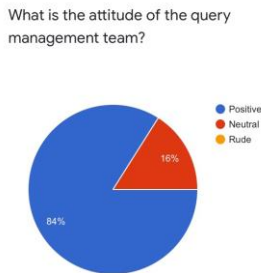**14. What is the attitude of the query management team?**

Figure 14: Query management team attitude

Findings and analysis: The results seem to look pretty good. 84% of the participants have mentioned that they have received positive replies from their preferred brands, while the other 16% have said that they have received a neutral response. None of the participants selected the "Rude" option, which suggests that brands make it a point to speak to their customers respectfully and sincerely, in order to keep them satisfied.

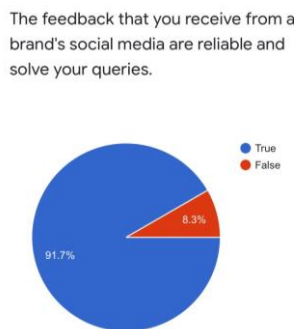**15. The feedback that you receive from a brand's social media are reliable and solve your queries.**

Figure 15: Feedback response

Findings and analysis: 91.7% of the participants selected the option "True", which suggests that the feedback that they receive from brands is indeed reliable and solve their issues effectively. This point can easily make a customer to remain loyal to the brand. The remaining 8.3% seem to be dissatisfied with the responses.

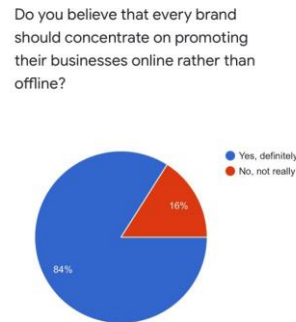**16. What sort of content do you like to see on social media?**

Figure 16: Preferred content

Findings and analysis: According the information above, 64% of the participants like to see entertaining content. 52% like to see humorous content. 44% like to see educational content. 52% like to see product or service-related content and 40% like to see motivational content. If brands strive to create content that customers would like to see more, then it would certainly lead to more customer engagement and would lead the customers to look forward to in anticipation of new products or services by a brand.

17. Do you believe that every brand should concentrate on promoting their businesses online rather than offline?
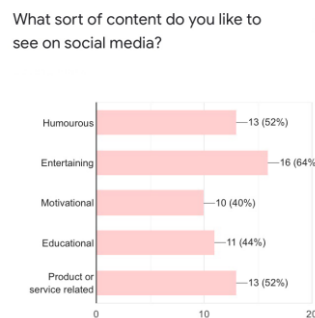

Figure 17 : Online vs Offline promotion

Findings and analysis: When asked this question, 84% replied with "Yes" suggesting that businesses should look into online platforms to increase the promotion of their products and services rather than offline. The participants indeed have a very good understanding of the fact that digital platforms, nowadays, are the key towards achieving a business' full potential.

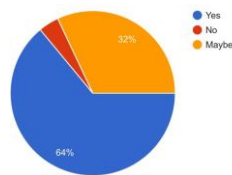**18. According to you, do brands act upon the feedback that they receive online?**

Figure 18: Do brand act upon the feedback received online?

Findings and analysis: The participants certainly do have a major understanding of the idea that brands take into consideration the feedback that they receive online. And thanks to the quick communication that the internet provides, customers can share their thoughts with brands and improve upon their business. 64% of the participants said "Yes", while 32% of the participants remained unsure and thus selected "Maybe". The remaining 4% selected "No".

19. Do you think that brands are aiming to strengthen relationships with their consumers through digital platforms?
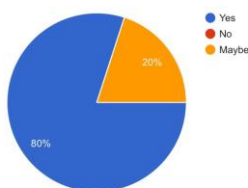

Figure 19: Relationship strengthening

Findings and analysis: The effects of digital marketing certainly seem to be positive as 80% of the participants think that brands are using digital platforms as a medium to achieve a better relationship with their target audience. The remaining 20% do not seem to be very sure of whether brands are making use of digital media in order to create better relationships with their customers or not. However, the data above shows that the participants have a good understanding that of digital platforms and how effective they are to maintain relationships with consumers.

20. Do you feel closer to brands through social media?
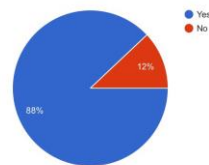

Figure 20: Do customer feel closer to brands?

Findings and analysis: The results from the above data seem to be very encouraging as 88% of the participants answer with "Yes", suggesting that following brands on social media, and staying connected with those brands has led them to feel closer to them, which in return for a business, is extremely rewarding. Only12% of the participants, however, answered with "No".

21. Have you become loyal to a brand because of their customer service on social media?
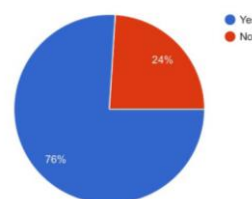
Figure 21: Consumer loyalty through brand service on social media

Findings and analysis: Majority of the participants answered to this question saying "Yes", suggesting that they have indeed become loyal to a brand because of their customer service on social media, which means that brands take their image on social media very seriously and make it a point to quickly respond to the problems of their customers. 24% of the participants, however, have not found themselves becoming loyal to a brand because of their service on a digital platform.

22. In your opinion, which digital platform should a brand make us of in order to create closer relationships with their customers?
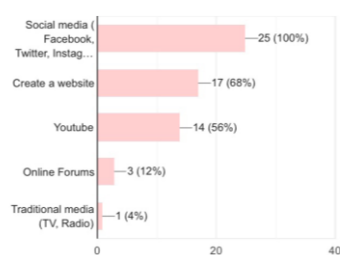

Figure 22: Social media for creating closer relationships with consumers

Findings and analysis: From the data above, it can be concluded that the participants think brands should focus on maintaining social media pages such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Facebook has a massive user base in India, and therefore, brands can easily connect with a wider audience and reach a bunch of potential customers. Digital marketing is a powerful tool and should definitely be considered by brands in order to enhance relationships with their customer base. All participants (100%) agreed to setting up social media pages. 68% of the participants said to create a website. 56% agreed to starting a YouTube channel for more exposure. 12% agreed to maintaining online forums and only 4% said traditional media.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Through this chapter, aim was to showcase the impact of digital marketing on businesses and their relationships with consumers. Indeed, digital marketing has certainly paved the way for marketing professionals to achieve their business goals and objectives through the medium of social platforms on the internet.

After carrying out an extensive research, and thoroughly analysing all the data and information collected, researcher come to a conclusion that digital marketing has definitely helped firms to a great extent in terms of connecting with their consumers and further strengthening their relationships.

1 - To identify the various changes that have been brought forward by digital platforms in marketing
In order to fulfil this objective, researcher asked participants to provide how digitalisation has impacted their lifestyle. The changes are certainly do not go unnoticed as we have all been greatly impacted by digitalisation as we are able to undergo transactions online. We are able to interact with businesses with only one click.

2 - To notice how relationship marketing has differed throughout the years
Before digital marketing became an actual thing, marketing professionals had to have a one-on-one conversation with their potential customers. They needed to have a face-to-face interaction with their customers in order for them to be able to understand their products or services. This process was very time-consuming. Nowadays, marketing professionals can reach a wider audience at once thanks to digital marketing. The internet has created a 'global village', it certainly is a one-stop destination for all.

3 - To study how digital marketing differs from traditional marketing
It can be understood that digital marketing differs greatly from traditional marketing as everything is done online rather than offline, i.e. there is no need for a one-on-one interaction with customers, businesses can simply reach out to them online, which is way faster.

4 - To understand the power customers hold because of digital platforms

Thanks to digital platforms, customers have a powerful voice and can make themselves heard by big brands by voicing out their opinions and providing feedback that can be valuable for an organisation.

5 - To study if customers remain loyal to businesses or not

From the results of the questionnaire, it can certainly be said that customers remain loyal to businesses due to constant interaction on social media.

6- To understand the effectiveness of digital marketing

Digital marketing is certainly a very powerful tool, when used by a business, it can truly unlock a firm's true potential. It makes it so much easier to conduct a business and reach out to consumers online.

7 - To analyse the manner in which digital media has altered the way firms act towards their consumers

According to the research, firms have certainly had a change of behaviour towards customers as they truly realise the power that they now hold due to digital platforms and how easily the spread of information can either benefit them or not.

8 -To examine the impact of a brand's response towards a customer's query or feedback

It can certainly be said that brand's take the feedbacks of their customers very seriously and it shows through the way that they respond. Brands make it a point to write a considerate response in order to satisfy the wants of consumers.

9 - To study the manner in which brands interact with their customers

From the questionnaire, it can be said that brands are keen to interact with their customer base by constantly updating them with information pertaining to their products and services as well as announcing exciting offers and promotions.

10 – To understand how reliable a brand's responses towards queries are

The questionnaire answers suggest that indeed, the responses from a brand's page are certainly very reliable and customers look forward to their responses and find to be quite trustworthy.

REFERENCES

1. "Digital Marketing Made Simple: A Step-by-Step Guide." *Neil Patel*, I'm Kind of a Big Deal, LLC, 17 Aug. 2019
2. "Introduction to Literature Reviews." Research & Learning Online, 24 Feb. 2020
3. "LibGuides: Literature Review: What Is a Literature Review?" What Is a Literature Review? - Literature Review - LibGuides at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania Library
4. "Theintactone.com." *Theintactone.com*, theintactone.com/.
5. Bhasin, Hitesh. "Causal Research - Meaning, Explanation, Examples, Components." *Marketing91*, Marketing91, 28 Feb. 2020
6. Dudovskiy, John. "Exploratory Research - Research-Methodology." *Research*, 2013
7. Girchenko, T., & Ovsiannikova, Y. (2016). Digital Marketing and its Role in the Modern Business Processes. *European Cooperation*, *11*(18), 24-33.
8. Julian, L. (2012). Using social media to increase consumer loyalty to a brand.
9. Khan, F., & Siddiqui, K. (2013). The importance of digital marketing. An exploratory study to find the perception and effectiveness of digital marketing amongst the marketing professionals in Pakistan. *Journal of Information Systems & Operations Management*, 1.
10. Kowalczyk, Devin. "Descriptive Research Design: Definition, Examples & Types." *STUDY.COM*
11. Maria, M. (2015). A Conceptual Framework of the Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer's relationship.
12. Smith, T. M. (2014). Consumer Perceptions of a Brand's Social Media Marketing.
13. Stephen, A. T. (2016). The role of digital and social media marketing in consumer behavior. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *10*, 17-21.
14. Thakur, M. K., & Kumar, R. Importance and Problems of Social Media Marketing in Indian Context. *International Journal of*

Research in Management, Economics and Commerce, ISSN.

15. Yasmin, A., Tasneem, S., & Fatema, K. (2015). Effectiveness of digital marketing in the challenging age: An empirical study. *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration*, *1*(5), 69-80.