

12. Effect of Covid-19 on The Marketing Strategies of Companies in India

Deepak Kaushik (M.Com, B.Com)

Former Student,
Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University,
Jind, Haryana.

Nancy (M.Com, B.Com)

Former Student,
Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University,
Jind, Haryana.

Abstract:

The frequent shift can be witnessed in advertising strategy, market strategy, television expenditures, promotional activities and media expenditures resulted due to the effects of the Covid-19 epidemic. Businesses have been forced to rethink their marketing strategies as a result of it. When it comes to attracting and communicating with customers, marketers have been forced to reconsider their strategies and tactics. Marketers in all industries must go beyond crisis preparation in order to learn from mistakes and discover opportunities that could have helped their customers and businesses in the future.

The Covid-19 pandemic was one of the catastrophic events occurred in human history regarding economic cost, death tolls, worldwide spread and influence on public health. The effects of this deadliest pandemic can also be seen on the implementation of IMC. And the money that goes along with it in enterprises. During current economic downturn, digital marketing has garnered more attention and funding than other forms of IMC. Most individuals now prefer online shopping methods. All marketing efforts put at center, the needs of the customers. The ways to connect with clients and the digital marketing tactics has also modified during the pandemic. The primary goal of this research is to present a primary inquiry into how the Covid-19 pandemic can affect marketing advances. It also wants to provide additional knowledge on how marketing philosophy is evolving due to the epidemic.

Keywords: Marketing, Marketing Strategies, Pandemic, Covid -19.

12.1 Introduction:

Due to pandemic, digitalization is being employed more extensively in higher education marketing, and as a result, the field of Content Marketing is seeing an upsurge. There is a growing desire among the younger generation to become more digitally savvy, and content marketing is the ideal venue for them. [1]

A wide range of content, including blogs, podcasts, email newsletters, videos and e-books, can be developed and released as part of content marketing. Marketing with content relies on anticipating and addressing an existing customer need for knowledge rather than creating new demand for the product or service being advertised. The reason is that it requires a lot of information to be delivered frequently, preferably as part of a content marketing plan. [2]

For most entrepreneurs, compromise and problem-solving are second nature, but COVID-19 has offered new and unexpected obstacles. There have been numerous impacts on businesses across the country and in nearly every industry due to a variety of factors, from financial losses and supply chain disruptions to a general increase in the difficulty of conducting business entirely online, as has been the case for some companies over the past 7-8 months. It's time to step up your internet presence for most firms. [3]

Considering the effects of pandemic, as many individuals are bound to stay at home only, results in the vulnerability of the businesses that totally relies on word of mouth and foot traffic. There's direct impact of the Covid-19 crisis on consumer behavior that furthermore directly impacts marketing.

There are many similarities between the COVID-19 problem and economic downturns when it comes to the way marketing is utilized. [4]

The Covid-19 crisis shot up the usage of social media in recent years. Social media, by developing social networks of opinion leaders, customers and industry experts, have reshaped and changed the dynamics of electronic economy. They recognized the value of social media markers when they came to know that in order to influence customers, integrated marketing promotional messages can be effective and discovered that this leads to consumption behaviors.

Businesses' service efforts are hindered by the COVID-19 epidemic and its related government mitigation strategies, which makes it inconvenient to contact directly. Customer dissatisfaction would undoubtedly rise as a result of subpar customer service, which will hurt a company's efforts to build customer loyalty. [5]

Coronaviruses, despite their many problems and crises, offer some advantages and chances for some sectors of the country. It is possible, however, that repurposing can be used to boost small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in manufacturing by producing health equipment and supplies or to significantly advance the digitalization of public and private sector services in order to greatly initiate new innovations. [6]

12.2 Using The Four Ps Framework Has Long Been Used To Evaluate And Alter Marketing Campaigns:

12.2.1 Product:

Products and services often undergo a gradual evolution under normal conditions. Online sales and, in the case of service providers, online delivery have necessitated product adaptations for many businesses. Customers will continue to shop online, so redesigning your products and services to make them relevant online should be a focus.

Consumer habits evolve along with the times. Customer behaviour and what they're willing or willing to accomplish or value is changing. It's possible that your previous best-selling item no longer has that distinction. You need to change your business strategy based on current buyer trends, not your business history. This is a culture shift, and you need to make sure your staff feel like they're working in a tech-forward workplace. [7]

12.2.2 Price:

Many businesses have seen a rise in operational and supply costs as a result of the COVID problem. The price of your product may change as a result of the changes you make to it. Changing costs of goods sold or operating expenses, for example, or a change in value since you're now providing more than you did before could all be reasons for this.



12.2.3 Place:

Amazon, Walmart, and a slew of other old and new traditional and digital platforms are all at your disposal. Develop an e-commerce-ready website or one that allows you to digitally schedule services to further establish your online presence. In the wake of COVID, everyone has become more comfortable with buying and working online. Physical space can't be ignored, either. If you have customers in your office or store, be aware of the rules and comforts in place. [8]

12.2.4 Promotion:

While it may appear more difficult than ever to get in front of potential customers, it's actually easier than ever. As a result, we're unsure of what to say and how best to promote our business. Digital advertising and social media make it easier for us to connect with our customers. We are always making decisions about what to say, how to say it, and where to put our money. Trying to simplify your thoughts and putting the needs of your customers first are the best approaches. [9]

12.3 Marketing Strategy:

All of these techniques are part of the integrated marketing umbrella: from design to digital marketing to public relations to on-site advertising and even events and promotions. Digital marketing will play a major role in the modern age, as social distancing is expected to

continue for some time. As a result, digital marketing is doomed to fail without both EQ and IQ. Digital and online platforms will require brands to convey their stories in a way that engages customers on an emotional level through carefully crafted copy and visually appealing design. In the future, customers may see social media marketing as a way to connect with your brand. [10] As part of your marketing strategy, you'll use a variety of tactics, including digital marketing, public relations, and design. In light of the recent coronavirus outbreak, digital marketing has never been more important. In order to express their narrative on digital and online platforms, brands use well-written design and content. [11] Increasingly, social media marketing is being used as a tool to engage with customers, as traditional marketing methods have proven ineffective. During Covid-19 phase, one of the marketing's most challenging job is to discover clients and interact with them, and to generate long term cash flows by converting them into valuable assets. Over the course of COVID-19, this pivotal position has been completely turned on its head. Many businesses have been driven into crisis management as a result of the shift to homebound clients, social isolation, and an uncertain environment. An effective marketing plan is based on the 4Ps: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. [12] The four pillars of marketing are product, pricing, location, and promotion. Products and services have been impacted by Covid-19 while prices have been impacted by discounting and credit policies. Additionally, impact of the pandemic can be seen on various aspects like advertising, sales promotion, market channel, distribution and publicity. [13]

12.4 Behavioural Changes in Consumers:

The way consumers shop has shifted dramatically. As a result of the convenience and security afforded by internet shopping, clients are gradually turning to it for nearly all of their buying requirements. The Indian E-commerce industry is growing and expanding powerfully. It is expected that by 2034, it will become the second largest market. People took to social media to pass the time while the school was under lockdown. In 2020, Instagram had more than one billion monthly active users. Instagram's rapid expansion has been awe-inspiring. Previously exclusively utilised for personal photo and video sharing, it's now a significant potential market for organizations. When it comes to Instagram marketing, businesses are taking advantage of the fact that 928.5 million people may be reached with one post. [14]

12.5 Review of Literature:

Most relevant studies have been reviewed in a report by Dekimpe and Deleersnyder (2018) [15] on the effectiveness of marketing initiatives during economic decline and upturn. Though it's expected to lead into a recession, this particular crisis exhibits traits that aren't typical of a recession.

There has been an upsurge in the amount of time and money spent on digital marketing strategies in recent years. For a variety of causes, the Covid-19 economic crisis is dominated by this marketing technique. Most events like flea markets, conferences, fairs, and trade exhibits scheduled for the second quarter of 2020 have been cancelled or are being held virtually. The epidemic is also expected to effect the next events in the last quarter of the year. Marketers are seeking for new ways to spend their marketing budgets around the world as a result of this during the pandemic, they need to keep promoting the is brand and generating the necessary leads and revenues to be in business. As a result, the digital marketing strategy is a crucial investment for marketers (Hamilton, 2020) [16].

Marketing expenses have dropped for the first time in more than 20 years as a result of the pandemic of the Coronavirus. All facets of marketing have been influenced by this crisis. Marketing expenses in the United Kingdom, for example, saw the steepest declines. In the year of the Vizard (2020), [17]

Majority of government-imposed lockdown across the world to fight the virus which further promoted companies to increase their technical investments so that they can continue the company and ensure the sales by using digital gadgets and tools. (Siggelkow & Terwiesch, 2019). [18]

For example, Covid-19 pandemic was dealt with by SMEs using digital technology to reconnect with clients, as revealed by Bettiol et al. (2021) [19]. (26 Italian SMEs analyzed). Researchers discovered that employing web-based technologies and investing in digital content increased both the frequency and quality of SMEs' contacts with customers. Particularly for SMEs, CRM and online shopping systems provided the tools they needed to compete and succeed in today's marketplace.

These findings have a substantial impact on management. Entrepreneurs and small businesses must adapt to the current economic crisis by embracing new operational techniques and processes that focus on clients, Web-based technologies are not mere a tool, instead they themselves are the beginning point of the marketing strategies. To connect and communicate with customers, to manage them and to satisfy their demands, SMEs should enhance the use of web-based technologies.

Analyzed the most popular social media platforms, including Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram based on Mahmoud's findings. The research examined how this condition has been passed along in various communities, and it discovered that, in addition to the inaccurate information that is widely disseminated via social networking sites, there has been an increase in the sharing of accurate information regarding COVID-19 (Cinelli et al., 2020). [20]

According to Laato et al. (2020) [21], researchers have paid little attention to how pandemics affect consumer behaviour. This is because of the lack of research on this topic. Rather, research has concentrated on the influence of pandemics on health-related behaviour. The COVID-19 pandemic is a unique chance to acquire insights into consumer behaviour during a time of uncertainty. Since the pandemic began, consumers' social media habits are changing significantly.

12.6 Objectives:

In the wake of the Covid 19 attack on a global scale, there have been significant hurdles for many industries, including business. It's wreaked havoc on economies around the world, from the most developed to the poorest. It is the goal of this study to determine how companies might adjust their marketing policies and strategies amid the COVID-19 issue.

12.7 Research Methodology:

For this work, qualitative research is more appropriate because the goal is to investigate and identify how Covid-19 can influence marketing philosophy. A social phenomenon can be described, explored, or explained using this method. Qualitative research allows for a more in-depth investigation and a variety of viewpoints.

12.8 Result and Discussion:

Every part of our lives is being impacted by the COVID-19 problem right now. Compassion for persons infected by the coronavirus is universal. Since the beginning of this year, society and the economy have been effectively paralysed. Figure 12.1 shows how COVID-19 is affecting real GDP around the world. [22]

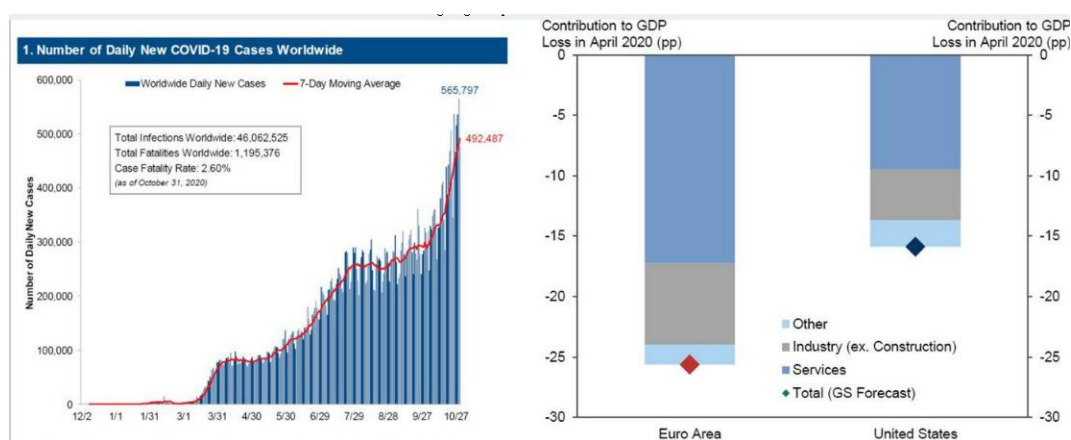


Figure 12.1: COVID-19 and GDP.

Global COVID-19 has been continuously increasing over time as shown in the graph. We can also conclude that the global economic slowdown will have long-term consequences from the right-hand side of Figure 12.1. Because of the COVID-19 crises anticipated impact on our way of life, work and shopping as well as on consumer behavior. As a result, nearly all enterprises will be impacted. Companies must do all they can to minimize the impact on their customers' basic necessities and employment levels in order to keep up with the times. Marketing is one way to accomplish this goal. [23]

Material marketing is the sort of marketing that centered on generating, publishing, and distributing the content for the intended audience online. It attracts attention of prospects and transforms prospects into customers by developing and sharing great free material which is useful for the customers. Today, content marketing helps firms build long-term brand loyalty, delivers relevant information to customers, and encourages them to buy from the company again in the future through the use of content marketing. The process of content marketing is depicted in the diagram below. [24]

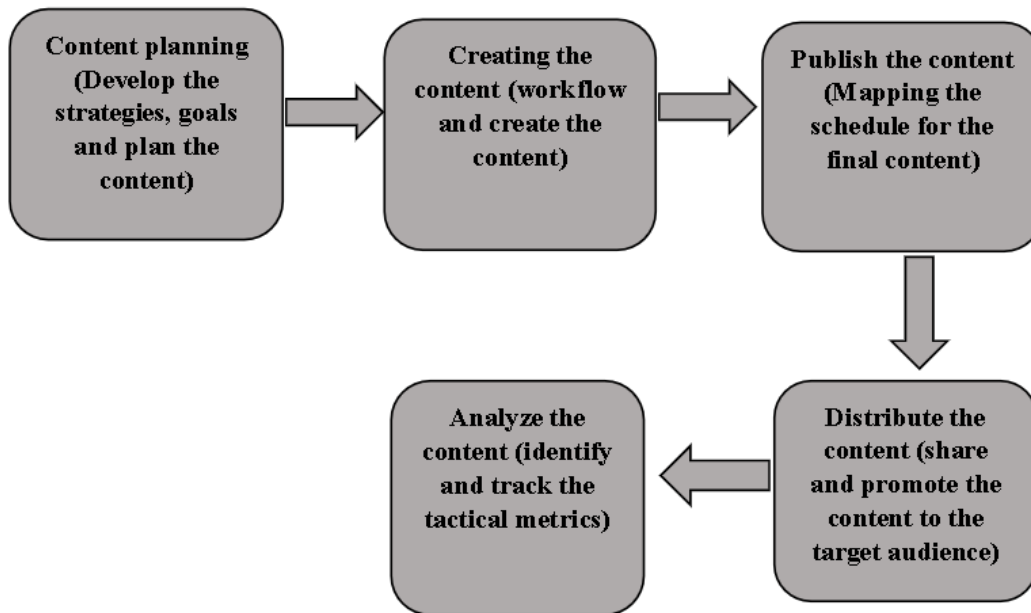


Figure 12.2: Flow Chart of Process of content marketing

Because of the current situation, digital development is not simply an expansion of the company, but a necessity for its existence.

It's revealed in Table 12.1 that consumers prefer to order products via the channels mentioned below. [25]

Favorite Channel to Order	Frequency	Valid Percent
Online Platform	107	41.63
Phone	81	31.52
Email	37	14.4
Facebook Account	93	36.19
Order form	178	69.26

Table 12.1: The frequency of the preferred channels for placing orders

The best channels for making orders are indicated in fig. as well as the information on channels pertaining [26]

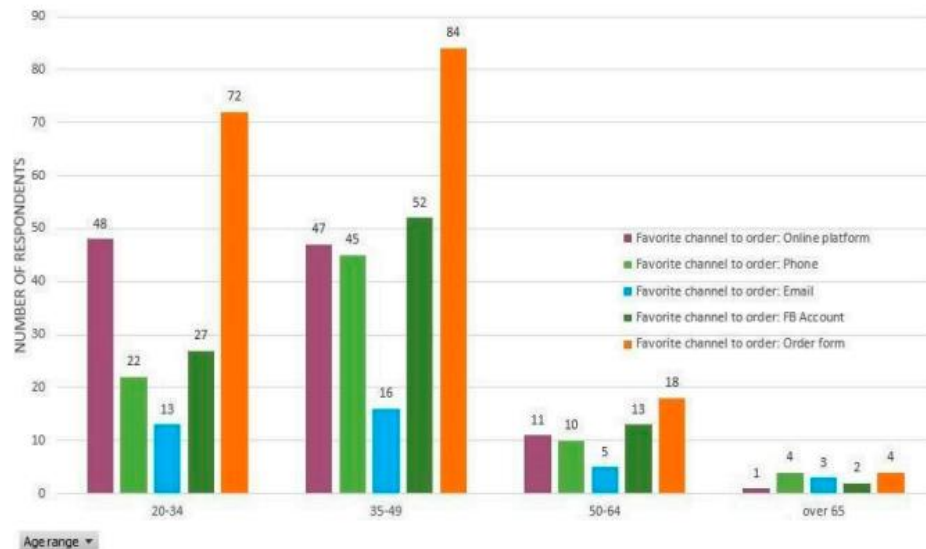


Figure 12.3: The favorite channels for placing orders depending on age group

12.9 Conclusion:

In the current Covid-19 pandemic, practically all businesses face either a supply or demand shock, or both, as a result. It was necessary to change the course of a company's marketing strategy in order to save money on advertising.

This pandemic prompted many brands to rethink and reimagine their marketing tactics and strategies in an effort to combat the epidemic. In addition, several organizations have shifted their marketing budgets to focus on mission-based, cause-related, and purpose-driven marketing in order to fulfil their customers' digital media consumption, which has increased rapidly. As a result, the marketing strategy should be focused on the value that can be added to the product and the best way to maximize and optimize that value. If this strategy succeeds, it might be the difference between life and death for the company.

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