

How to Cite:

Abraham, J. J. G., & Sreedevi, V. (2022). Strategies to improve online marketing of home appliances. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S2), 5963–5976.
<https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS2.6553>

Strategies to improve online marketing of home appliances

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Abstract---Today internet has become an integral part and necessity of our day-to-day life. People cannot think of a life without it. Ecommerce has also emerged as an important part of our daily lives. It is used in every aspect of human lives starting from buying household items to online investments. E-commerce has become a necessity for urban people. With the increase in cheap availability and high-speed internet with a number of security options, an increase in digital penetration and easy access to the internet prompted individuals and marketers toward e-commerce. This paper focuses on the strategies to improve online marketing.

Keywords---ICT, E-commerce, internet, website, digital communication.

Introduction

The innovations in science and technology have transformed the framework of business. Globalization and the development of new technologies have prospered business in a significant way. Today, technology is performing all the tasks through the global system called the internet. The internet or the World Wide Web changed the way people work, shop, communicate, learn and play. The world of business with interconnected servers reaches out beyond geographical boundaries. The Internet has changed the method of conducting business and the way consumers purchase goods and services. The internet revolution has brought about a paradigm shift in the way things are done and the way consumers collect and use information. With technological development and the emergence of the World Wide Web, a new form of commerce appeared e-commerce. It began to develop and grow widely to reshape the system of business.

Today internet has become an integral part and necessity of our day-to-day life. People cannot think of a life without it. Ecommerce has also emerged as an

important part of our daily lives. It is used in every aspect of human lives starting from buying household items to online investments. E-commerce has become a necessity for urban people. With the increase in cheap availability and high-speed internet with a number of security options, an increase in digital penetration and easy access to the internet prompted individuals and marketers toward e-commerce. Marketers can increase their sales via the internet.

Review of Literature

Jain and Jain (2000)¹ noted that the advancement of ICT changed the traditions of human society and its application is visible everywhere. One of the examples of this major application area is business. Singh and Kaur (2002)² described that E-commerce or online marketing gained popularity at the inception of computers and Internet technology. Zhuang et al., (2018)³ stated in their study that the internet prompted enormous growth in the number of transactions and choices for products and services. Raluca, (2018)⁴ also supported the view of Zhuang (2018) and stated that online business transactions have increased largely regardless of the fear about the quality of products because of lack of a past experience. Kim and Krishnan (2015)⁵ and Conrado (2018)⁶ mentioned that the growth of online transactions is due to their comfort and savings.

Online marketing is a method of doing business through the internet. It is otherwise called internet marketing, digital marketing, web marketing, search marketing, and marketing. Greenstein et al., (2003)⁷ defined e-commerce as a method of doing business that has the capability to influence every aspect of a firm's value chain. Goyal and Gupta (2004)⁸ pointed out that E-commerce is an innovative way of conducting business to communicate and interact with customers. It eliminates the geographical limitations and closes together with the customers across the world. Peng F. and Kurnia S (2008)⁹ defined e-commerce as a valuable and the most useful tool to fill the commercial gap between the geographical boundaries and facilitate a way to supply the goods and services via the internet.

Majundar (2000)¹⁰ said that the internet and its allied technologies are recent technological advancements that gained much popularity and are being considered the world's most revolutionary development. It has provided a worldwide place for buying and selling goods and services. It has also given the platform for marketers to carry out the business processes within the organization. Philip Kotler et al., (2017)¹¹ define digital marketing as an idea of projecting a set of profile processes that includes all the digital channels available to promote a product or service or to build a digital brand. Kalyanam, K.&McIntyre, S., (2002)¹² pointed according to Mark Sceats, that internet marketing is possible using the internets as a functioning and demonstration atmosphere.

Andrews W. (2002)¹³, Chuang M.L and. Shaw W. H, (2001)¹⁴, Cuellar R. G and. Tovar L. A. R, (2005)¹⁵, Damanpour F., (1991)¹⁶, Gartner. (2016)¹⁷, Jones C, Alderete M. V. and Motta J., (2013)¹⁸, Peng F. and Kurnia S, (2008)¹⁹, Pena Garcia N., (2014)²⁰, Tavera F. and Londono B., (2014)²¹, Turban J., E. and Lee, (2002)²², Vallejo J. M., Redondo Y. P., and A. U., (2015)²³, Wigand R. T., (1997)²⁴ and Wu

F., Bringing E., (2001)²⁵ defines e-commerce as business transactions through electronic media and that it alters the relationship both internal and external to develop value and make use of the opportunities which is impacted by changed rules of a connected economy. It permits the integration of all activities of information, products, services, or payment via electronic networks, its solutions via the internet, and the use of digital communication networks to enable the purchase and sale of goods or services.

Yelkur et al., (2001)²⁶ and Chesney (2002)²⁷ stated that online marketing helps companies to have direct communication with small groups of consumers or individual consumers very easily. Harding et al., (2001)²⁸ said that the web is personalized for these small groups and the internet allows the marketers to target very specific groups. Chesney and Darby (2003)²⁹ reveal that the internet is a medium that helps to carry out the business of buying and selling and have personalized interaction with potential customers.

The distinctiveness of the internet marketing in functional features are personality; confidentiality; customer service; the community; security and sales promotion³⁰ Mukhopadhyaya et al., (2002)³¹ pointed out that e-commerce is enhancing economic growth and increases productivity through lowering transactions cost, saving time, improving consumer choice, improving supply chain management, and reducing the barriers to entry. Deloitte, (2015)³² described that quick delivery, better return policies and free shipment included in certain sites have increased the popularity of online buying. The growth of online shopping has been motivating the growth of online marketing.

Statement of the problem

In India, of more than 100 million internet users more than half prefer online purchases and it is growing every year. According to the PwC analysis 2018, Ecommerce is emerging in the Asian region in the coming years and India is to become the largest online retail market in 2019. The online shoppers in the country are to be estimated to be approximately 330 million in 2020. The estimates show that nearly 71 percent of the internet users in the country shop online during a particular period. The E-commerce sector is prospering with personalized advertisements, attractive offers and discounts, quick delivery and return, and a high penetration rate of smartphones. This environment of e-commerce merged with ease of being at home and getting all the customer's choices on their doorsteps has transformed and boomed online marketing significantly.

Despite the tremendous growth in the online marketing sector, the penetration rate is comparatively low when compared to the markets of China and the U.S. Online marketing or E-commerce growth has many problems such as trust, privacy and security issues because of a large number of fake websites and counterfeit products. Due to this reason, the buyers hesitate to buy online. Marketers and companies entered the internet market and began to use the technological revolution in communication such as mass media and computer networks to provide information to sell their products. The online environment or virtual stores helped the companies to enter into a new sales channel and provide

an unlimited market³³. Ecommerce facilitated the marketers and shoppers with a sophisticated, new, more convenient and efficient way of business.

In this scenario, the following researchable question could be put forth:

- How can the online marketing of home appliances be improved?

Objectives of the study

The research will focus on the following objectives

1. To understand the demographic profile of the online marketers in home appliances
2. To study the methods/ strategies to improve online marketing of home appliances

Scope of the study

The Internet revolution and internet penetration led to the growth of online marketing. According to the report by PwC³⁴ India's internet base is the second largest in the world with the number of internet users exceeding 450 million today. With these, nearly 70 million people are expected to have more than two or three years of online experience at present which makes the marketers easy to win in e-commerce. Since internet penetration is estimated to increase to 60 percent by 2022, more buyers are to join the internet economy and many remain to become adapted to their changed online lives, and the e-commerce industry is expected to increase to a 100 million USD market by 2022.

The growth of online retail in India was at its peak in 2013 and 2015 (107% and 105%). We live in a world where we communicate with each other over mobile phones than we do face to face. For keeping in touch, shopping, hailing a cab or ordering food everything begins and ends with a smartphone. India's e-commerce market value has reached 33 billion registering a 19.1% growth in 2016-17, says recently published Indian Government's Economic survey 2018. Realizing the importance and growth of e-commerce, the researcher carried out the study of prospects and problems in the home appliances industry in Kerala. The research is carried out in two sections the prospects of online marketing related to 4 Ps and its impact on online sales of home appliances products and the problems of adoption, security, ethical issues and its impact on online sales. This study helps the online marketers in planning strategies of online marketing of home appliances products.

Research Methodology

This study is both descriptive and analytical in nature. Formulation of methodology for the study helps the researcher to draw a systematic approach for the research process.

Universe for the study

The universe of the study is the online marketers of home appliances products in Kerala.

Sample Frame

The selection of elements from which the actual sample is drawn. For the study, the area is divided into three regions: southern, central and northern.

Sampling Method

The sampling procedure for the study is the selection of the representatives of sample from the population. In this study the researcher first used systematic sampling technique under probability sampling method. Systematic sampling is performed by the researcher as: the population is homogeneous in character that the similar products (home appliances) are dealing in online market. The present population constitute all the online dealers who deals home appliances in Kerala. The researcher has the exact details about the number of members included in the population and the researcher has the control over the sample members attributed to the population

Sample Size

The sample size is determined at 93 online dealers or marketers as respondents. The sample size for the research study has been calculated using the following formula

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Sample size} &= 93 \\ \text{Population (P)} &= 120 \\ \text{Confidence Level} &= 95\% \\ \text{Confidence Interval} &= 5\% \\ \text{Z value at two-tailed test} &= 1.96 \\ \text{Sample size} &= \frac{Z^2 \times P \times (1-p)}{C^2} \end{aligned}$$

Sample Distribution

Region	Partnership	Private	Total
Southern region	6	25	31
Central region	6	25	31
Northern region	4	27	31
Total	16	77	93

Sources of Data

The data for the study is collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected from the respondents directly through a structured questionnaire and from their discussions with them. The secondary data source of the study includes books, journals, periodicals, publications of various

agencies and websites. The present study is both analytical and descriptive in nature and has used both primary and secondary data.

Pilot study

The pilot study was undertaken with 30 respondents which include 10 respondents from each zone in Kerala State and the respondents include online marketers of home appliances products. The prospective questionnaire was tested on the different brands of Home appliances products in each zone. The Cronbach's Alpha for the 30 respondents for 87 items is 0.830 which means 83 percent of the observations by the respondents are almost similar and identical which is found to be high in the present study.

Results and Discussions

The discussion of the results of the strategies to improve online marketing of home appliances is summarized from the descriptive analysis and described below.

Demographic Profile of the respondents

Knowledge of the demographic factors will lead to understanding how shopping preferences affect market conditions. Marketing experts always pay attention to major factors such as demographics, economic, socio-cultural, technological and environmental factors in an effort to understand market conditions. Analysing and understanding the profile of the consumers of Home appliances helps the marketers to understand their tastes and preferences. The study of profile includes their age, gender, occupation, qualification and area of residence, the average number of transactions, online experience and preference for products in online marketing

Table 1
Demographic profile of the respondents

	Gender	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	66	71
	Female	27	29
Region	Southern	31	33.3
	Central	31	33.3
	Northern	31	33.3
Qualification	Degree	54	58.1
	Post-Graduation	35	37.6
	Professionals	4	4.3
Occupation	Administrative staff	93	100.0
Type of ownership	Partnership	16	17.2
	Private company	77	82.8

Source: Primary source

The table above shows that 71% of the respondents are male and 29 % are female. 33.33 percent of the respondents belong to the Southern region (31 respondents). 33.33 percent reside in the central region of Kerala and the remaining 33.33percent resides in the northern region of Kerala. 58.1 percent of the respondents are graduates, 37.6 percent are postgraduates and 4.3 percent are professional degree holders. The responses were collected from administrative staff. The respondents in partnership business are 16 (17.2%) and a private company is 77 which contributes to 82.8 percent.

Methods of improving online marketing

The Internet has become a part of life and online marketing is emerging at present. It yields many opportunities to the marketers, however, its implementation becomes challenging for the marketers. The researcher has analysed the methods to improve online marketing with the help of Multiple Correspondence Analysis.

Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA)

It is a multivariate descriptive analysis used to simplify complex data and provides a detailed description of the data. The aim of this analysis is to analyze and categorize data that are transformed into cross tables and to present the results in a graphical manner.

Model Summary

The analysis grouped the online marketing improvement factors into two dimensions/factors named technical improvement and sentimental improvement. The model summary gives the Eigenvalues, the value of Cronbach's Alpha, and the inertia of the first and second dimensions. The Cronbach's Alpha of the first dimension is 0.9667 and it means 96.67 percent of reliability of the first dimension and its influence is 69.047 % in improving online marketing and the Cronbach's Alpha of the second dimension is 0.944 which means 94.4 % reliability of the second dimension and it influences 57.906% in improving online marketing. These two dimensions together influence an average of 63.4per percent of improving online marketing.

Table 2
Model Summary

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha	Variance Accounted For		
		Total (Eigenvalue)	Inertia	% of Variance
1	.966	9.667	.690	69.047
2	.944	8.107	.579	57.906
Total		17.773	1.270	
Mean	.956 ^a	8.887	.635	63.476

a. Mean Cronbach's Alpha is based on the mean Eigenvalue.

Correlation Matrix

It helps to measure the interrelationship between the variables of improvement in online marketing.

Table 3
Correlation transformed variables

	ROI	BVC	CAC	BWS	OTOS	USBS	IWV	MC	LE	OW	UC	BL	CQ	HG
ROI	1.000	.530	.455	-.141	.526	.508	-.067	.613	.489	.462	.482	.409	-.120	.320
BVC	.530	1.000	.743	.572	.666	.648	.390	.828	.850	.826	.811	.803	.650	.698
CAC	.455	.743	1.000	.629	.809	.779	.420	.681	.800	.884	.885	.702	.542	.626
BWS	-.141	.572	.629	1.000	.674	.601	.756	.615	.758	.702	.662	.695	.879	.593
OTOS	.526	.666	.809	.674	1.000	.759	.406	.811	.877	.820	.813	.667	.517	.551
USBS	.508	.648	.779	.601	.759	1.000	.554	.698	.869	.814	.803	.619	.426	.644
IWV	-.067	.390	.420	.756	.406	.554	1.000	.585	.636	.543	.564	.614	.694	.549
MC	.613	.828	.681	.615	.811	.698	.585	1.000	.888	.733	.748	.862	.557	.694
LE	.489	.850	.800	.758	.877	.869	.636	.888	1.000	.912	.921	.784	.664	.782
OW	.462	.826	.884	.702	.820	.814	.543	.733	.912	1.000	.969	.757	.712	.668
UC	.482	.811	.885	.662	.813	.803	.564	.748	.921	.969	1.000	.741	.617	.761
BL	.409	.803	.702	.695	.667	.619	.614	.862	.784	.757	.741	1.000	.671	.727
CQ	-.120	.650	.542	.879	.517	.426	.694	.557	.664	.712	.617	.671	1.000	.426
HG	.320	.698	.626	.593	.551	.644	.549	.694	.782	.668	.761	.727	.426	1.000

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The correlation ranges from -0.141 to 0.969. The highest correlation is shown between update content marketing efforts and optimise a website and email marketing for mobile. The lowest correlation is between boosting the website speed and repositioning of opt-in-offer. In dimension 1, repositioning of opt-in offer correlated (transformed variables) significantly with build a value to customers ($r = 0.530$), clear and actionable calls to actions (0.455), offer testimonials on website ($r = 0.526$), use social sharing buttons ($r = 0.508$), monitor customer comments and feedback ($r = 0.613$) and listen to and engage with customers on social media ($r = 0.489$). In dimension 2, boost the website speed correlated (transformed variables) significantly with increase website's visibility in search ($r = 0.756$), optimize website and e-mail marketing for mobile (0.702), update content marketing efforts ($r = 0.662$), build a loyal customer base ($r = 0.695$), create quality content ($r = 0.879$) and hire a good team ($r = 0.593$).

Discrimination measures

The interpretation of Multiple Correspondence Analysis is based on discrimination measures and contribution of the variables. The variables on improvement of online marketing of two groups/ dimensions based on their contribution or influence, is given below.

Table 4
Discrimination measures (Dimension 1)
Technical Improvement

Variables	Score	Mean
Boost the website speed	.624	.495
Increase Website's Visibility in Search	.439	.375
Optimize Website and Email Marketing for Mobile	.887	.512
Update Content Marketing Efforts	.883	.499
Build a Loyal Customer Base	.759	.553
Create Quality Content	.521	.398
Hire a Good Team	.619	.404

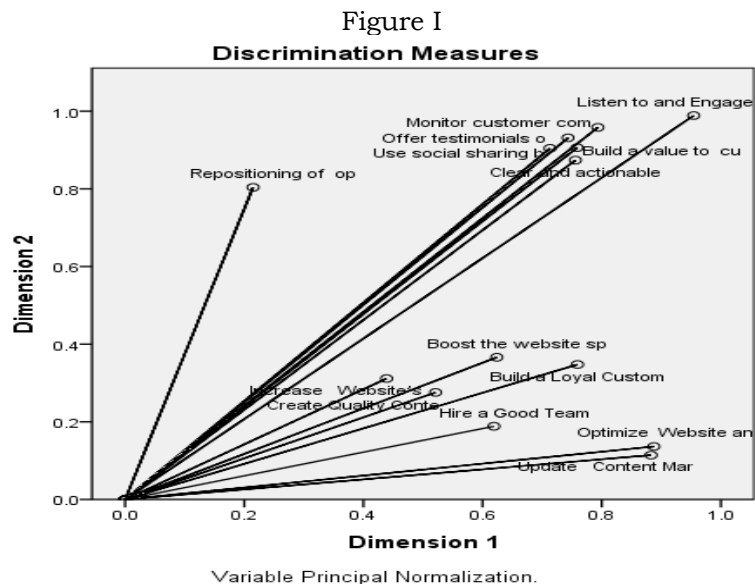
The technical dimension table shows that optimize website and e-mail marketing for mobile has the highest discrimination value (0.887) followed by update content marketing efforts (0.883), build a loyal customer base (0.759), boost the website speed (0.624), hire a good team (0.619), create quality content (0.521) and increase website's visibility in search (0.439).

Table 5
Discrimination measures (Dimension 2)
Sentimental Improvement

Variables	Discrimination measures	Mean
Repositioning of opt-in offer	0.804	0.509
Build a value to customers	0.906	0.832
Clear and actionable calls to actions	0.874	0.815
Offer testimonials on website	0.931	0.837
Use social sharing buttons	0.904	0.809
Monitor customer comments and feedback	0.958	0.876
Listen to and Engage with Customers on Social Media	0.989	0.972

The table above shows the discrimination measures with a maximum value of 0.989 (Listen to and Engage with Customers on Social Media) for the sentimental dimension. Monitor customer comments and feedback is the second highest factor in the sentimental dimension contributing to a discrimination value of 0.958, offering testimonials on the website contributed a value of 0.931, building a value to customers contributed a value of 0.906, using social sharing buttons contributed the value of 0.904, clear and actionable calls to actions 0.874 and repositioning of opt-in offer contributed the value of 0.804.

Multiple Correspondence Analysis results are presented graphically in Figures 1 and 2 below. Dimension 1 is presented on the horizontal axis and Dimension 2 on the vertical axis. The graph shows that Dimension 2 is away from the origin and it is the most important and influencing factor in the improvement of online marketing.



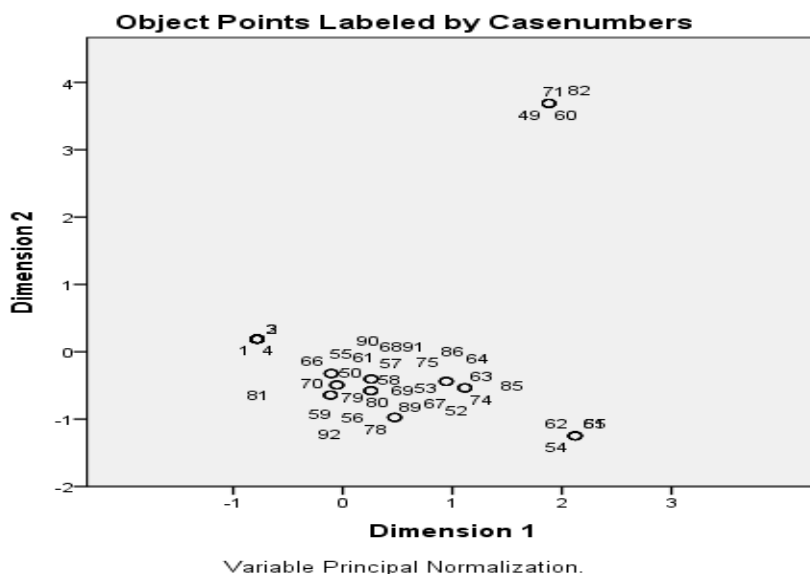


Figure 2

Findings

1. 71% of the respondents are male and 29 % are female. 33.33 percent of the respondents belong to the Southern region (31 respondents). 33.33 percent reside in the central region of Kerala and the remaining 33.33percent reside in the northern region of Kerala. 58.1 percent of the respondents are graduates, 37.6 percent are postgraduates and 4.3 percent are professional degree holders. The responses were collected from administrative staff. The respondents in partnership business are 16 (17.2%) and a private company is 77 which contributes to 82.8 percent.
2. Multiple Correspondence Analysis is used to analyse and categorise the methods to improve online marketing. The analysis grouped the online marketing improvement factors into two dimensions/factors named as technical improvement and sentimental improvement. The model summary gives the Eigen values, the value of Cronbach's Alpha and inertia of first and second dimensions. The Cronbach's Alpha of first dimension is 0.9667 and it means 96.67 percent of reliability of the first dimension and its influence is 69.047 % in improving online marketing and the Cronbach's Alpha of second dimension is 0.944 which means 94.4 % reliability of second dimension and it influence 57.906% in improving online marketing. These two dimensions together influence on an average 63.476 percentage in improving online marketing.
3. The highest correlation is shown between update content marketing efforts and optimise website and email marketing for mobile. The lowest correlation is between boosting the website speed and repositioning of opt-in-offer. The technical dimension shows that optimize website and e-mail marketing for mobile has the highest discrimination value (0.887) followed by update content marketing efforts (0.883), build a loyal customer base (0.759), boost the website speed (0.624), hire a good team (0.619), create quality content (0.521) and increase website's visibility in search (0.439). The

discrimination measures with maximum value of 0.989 (Listen to and Engage with Customers on Social Media) for sentimental dimension. Monitor customer comments and feedback is the second highest factor in sentimental dimension contributing to a discrimination value of 0.958, offer testimonials on website contributed a value of 0.931, build a value to customers contributed a value of 0.906, use social sharing buttons contributed the value of 0.904, clear and actionable calls to actions 0.874 and repositioning of opt-in offer contributed the value of 0.804. Dimension 2 is the most important and influencing factor in the improvement of online marketing.

Recommendations

The study points out that the following technical improvements must be brought in to boost the customer's preference towards online markets: Optimize websites and email marketing for mobile, update content marketing effects, build a loyal customer base, boost the website speed, hire a better support team, and create quality content, and increase website visibility in search. The optimizations demand higher focus as the mobile penetration is high and can tap into the potential of bigger customer base.

The study points out the following sentimental improvements that must be made to boost the customer's preference towards online markets: Listen and engage with customers on social media platforms, monitor customer comments and feedback, offer testimonials on website, build a value to customers, use social sharing button, clear and actionable calls to actions, repositioning of opt-in offer. The psychological aspects when improved contribute significantly in earning a customer's trust and can lead to a better loyal customer base

Limitations and Future Directions

The findings of the study is limited to strategies to improve online marketing of home appliances. There is a scope for cross cultural comparison studies in online marketing to identify common and different factors related to online marketing perception.

Conclusion

The home-appliance industry in the state of Kerala is one of the most sought-after sectors. Online marketing opens a new spectrum of opportunities for both sellers and buyers with an extreme degree of versatility and accessibility. The growth in delivery infrastructure has supplemented the growth in popularity of online markets. With the successful establishment of each product's reach, marketers compete to claim and expand their share of online portfolio.

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