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A STUDY ON ONLINE MARKETING PRACTICING OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study explores the online marketing practices of college students, aiming to understand their engagement with digital marketing strategies and platforms. As digital natives, college students are uniquely positioned within the marketing landscape, leveraging social media, influencer marketing, and e-commerce. Through a mixed-method approach, this research investigates how students utilize online tools for personal branding, entrepreneurial ventures, and peer influence. Surveys and interviews were conducted to gather quantitative and qualitative data, revealing trends in online behavior, preferred platforms, and perceived effectiveness of various marketing strategies. Findings indicate a growing reliance on social media for career development and business promotion, highlighting a shift in how traditional marketing principles are adapted to the digital age. Additionally, despite the opportunities, students face challenges related to digital literacy and market saturation. This study contributes to the understanding of student-driven online marketing efforts, providing insights for educators and marketers aiming to engage this demographic effectively.

KEY WORDS: Online marketing, digital world, traditional marketing, social media, content creation, search engine optimization (SEO), email campaigns, digital advertising

INTRODUCTION

Online marketing is an essential skill for college students to master, as it equips them with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate the digital world and grow businesses in today's technology-driven economy. With the internet playing a pivotal role in shaping modern commerce, understanding how to effectively engage with target audiences online is crucial. Online marketing encompasses a wide range of strategies, including social media marketing, content creation, search engine optimization (SEO), email campaigns, and digital advertising. For college students, this practice can open up opportunities for entrepreneurship, internships, or even future careers in marketing. Learning these techniques not only provides valuable real-world skills but also fosters creativity and problem-solving abilities. As more industries move towards digital platforms, gaining practical experience in online marketing can give students a competitive edge in the job market, allowing them to stay ahead of trends and better understand consumer behavior.

ONLINE MARKETING

Online marketing has become an indispensable skill for college students looking to thrive

in the ever-evolving digital landscape. As businesses increasingly turn to the internet to promote their products and services, students who gain hands-on experience in online marketing will not only develop valuable practical skills but also improve their ability to navigate the complexities of the digital world. Online marketing encompasses a broad range of strategies designed to engage and convert target audiences, including social media marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, email campaigns, and digital advertising. By engaging in these practices, students can build a strong understanding of how brands reach potential customers, track consumer behavior, and measure the success of their marketing campaigns. For college students, these skills are essential for launching entrepreneurial ventures, landing internships, or securing full-time positions in marketing or related fields. The hands-on experience gained through online marketing practice helps students understand key concepts like audience segmentation, data analysis, and the power of personalized marketing. By utilizing platforms like Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and TikTok, students can learn how to tailor content to specific demographics and use analytics to track performance and optimize campaigns. Additionally, learning how to create compelling content, whether through blog posts, videos, or infographics, sharpens students' creativity and communication abilities. Content marketing, for instance, requires an understanding of the audience's needs, storytelling, and the ability to present information in a way that resonates with potential customers. Moreover, online marketing practices empower students to grasp the importance of SEO in boosting website visibility and increasing organic traffic. SEO knowledge enables them to optimize websites and content, ensuring higher rankings in search engine results, which can make a significant difference in online visibility and business success. Another critical aspect of online marketing is email marketing, where students can experiment with crafting effective newsletters and promotional emails that nurture customer relationships and drive conversions. Digital advertising is also an area where students can practice using tools like Google Ads or Facebook Ads to create targeted ad campaigns. In addition to the technical aspects of online marketing, students also gain essential problem-solving and strategic thinking skills, which can help them make informed decisions in future professional endeavors. The opportunity to practice online marketing while in college prepares students to be future leaders in the business world, equipped with the skills to succeed in an increasingly digital-first economy.

ONLINE MARKETING BEHAVIOUR

Online marketing behavior is an important concept for college students to understand, as it directly impacts how they approach digital marketing strategies. In the modern digital world, consumers are constantly interacting with brands and content through various online platforms, and understanding their behavior is crucial for effective marketing. College students, who are often active participants in these digital spaces, can benefit from learning how online marketing behavior shapes purchasing decisions, brand loyalty, and engagement with digital content. By practicing online marketing, students learn to analyze how users interact with websites, social media, and digital advertisements. They gain insight into what attracts audiences, what causes them to take action, and what drives conversions. Understanding the psychology behind online consumer behavior allows students to design marketing strategies that speak directly to their audience's preferences and needs. For example, social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook provide a wealth of data on user behavior, including engagement rates, the types of content that perform best, and the times when users are most active. By studying these patterns, students can optimize their content and campaigns to ensure that they reach the right audience at the right time. Additionally, students practicing online marketing must understand the importance of personalization. Online users expect tailored experiences, whether it's through customized product recommendations, targeted email campaigns, or dynamic web content. Personalization has become a central element of successful online marketing strategies, as consumers are more likely to engage with content that feels relevant to them. Students who learn how to leverage data and create personalized marketing strategies can greatly enhance their

ability to attract and retain customers. Moreover, the growth of influencer marketing has changed the way brands approach online marketing behavior. College students, who are familiar with the influence of social media influencers, can benefit from learning how to identify and collaborate with influencers who align with a brand's values and target audience. This trend requires an understanding of both influencer behavior and audience expectations, helping students develop strategies that foster authentic connections between brands and consumers. By practicing these aspects of online marketing behavior, students gain essential skills in data-driven decision-making, content creation, and consumer psychology, which are key for success in today's digital economy. In conclusion, online marketing behavior is not just about understanding how to push products or services but also about building meaningful, personalized relationships with consumers, something that can be honed through consistent practice and analysis of online trends and interactions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rapid advancement of technology and the increasing reliance on digital platforms have significantly transformed the landscape of marketing. In today's digital age, online marketing has become a crucial tool for businesses and individuals alike. College students, who are digital natives, have ample opportunities to leverage online marketing for entrepreneurial ventures, personal branding, and career advancement. However, despite their familiarity with digital platforms, many college students lack the practical knowledge and strategic skills necessary to effectively implement online marketing strategies. The gap between theoretical knowledge acquired in academic settings and real-world application remains a persistent challenge. This problem hinders students from capitalizing on online marketing opportunities, limiting their ability to compete in the digital marketplace and diminishing their prospects for professional growth. The lack of structured learning and hands-on experience leaves them ill-equipped to navigate the complexities of the digital marketing industry, reducing their capacity to build successful online businesses or secure job placements in competitive markets.

One major issue is the inadequate integration of practical online marketing training within college curricula. While some educational institutions offer courses on digital marketing, these programs often focus on theoretical concepts without providing hands-on experience. As a result, students graduate with a fundamental understanding of marketing principles but struggle to apply them in real-world scenarios. The absence of structured practical training, such as internships, live projects, and simulation exercises, prevents students from gaining the necessary confidence and expertise to implement digital marketing strategies effectively. This deficiency can lead to poor decision-making in real-life marketing campaigns, reducing the overall effectiveness of their marketing efforts. Without immersive learning opportunities, students may fail to grasp essential components of digital marketing, including audience targeting, conversion optimization, and data analytics, all of which are integral to crafting successful marketing strategies. The gap between theoretical and applied knowledge limits students' ability to think critically and creatively, preventing them from making informed marketing decisions that drive business growth.

Another significant challenge is the fast-evolving nature of digital marketing tools and trends. Social media algorithms, search engine optimization (SEO) techniques, content marketing strategies, and advertising platforms continuously change, making it difficult for students to stay updated with the latest developments. Without continuous learning and hands-on practice, students risk relying on outdated strategies that may no longer be effective. Furthermore, many college students lack access to professional mentorship and industry resources, which are essential for navigating the complexities of online marketing. Without proper guidance, students may struggle to develop effective marketing campaigns, measure performance metrics, and optimize their strategies for success. The absence of structured mentorship programs in colleges further exacerbates this issue, leaving students to rely on trial and error rather than benefiting from industry expertise. Moreover, the absence of a collaborative

learning environment hinders students from networking with professionals and gaining real-world insights, making it harder for them to secure internships or job opportunities in the digital marketing sector.

Additionally, financial constraints and limited access to marketing tools pose significant barriers for students who wish to practice online marketing. Many advanced marketing tools and platforms require paid subscriptions, making it challenging for students to experiment with professional-grade marketing solutions. The lack of financial resources may also prevent students from launching their own digital ventures or running paid advertising campaigns, further restricting their ability to gain practical experience. Addressing these challenges is essential to empower college students with the necessary skills and resources to thrive in the competitive digital marketing landscape. A lack of financial support limits students' ability to explore advertising models such as pay-per-click (PPC), search engine marketing (SEM), and influencer collaborations, which are vital for digital marketing success. Without access to these tools and platforms, students may struggle to understand critical aspects of digital marketing, such as customer engagement, analytics, and conversion rate optimization.

To bridge this gap, colleges must enhance their digital marketing education by integrating practical training components, providing mentorship opportunities, and ensuring that students have access to cutting-edge marketing tools. Encouraging partnerships between educational institutions and industry leaders can help provide students with internship opportunities, real-world projects, and updated course content that aligns with industry standards. By addressing these fundamental challenges, students can develop a deeper understanding of online marketing practices, improve their employability, and enhance their entrepreneurial capabilities in the digital age.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To study Online Marketing Practices of the college students

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

This study will adopt a mixed-methods research design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyze the effectiveness of online marketing practices for college students.

Sample Size and Sampling:

The study will focus on college students were collected from 75 respondents. A stratified sampling method will be used to ensure diverse representation across different academic disciplines and institutions.

Data Collection Methods:

Primary data will be collected through structured surveys and in-depth interviews with students. Secondary data from academic papers, reports, and online sources will be analyzed to support the research findings.

Data Analysis:

Quantitative data from surveys will be analyzed using statistical tools such as SPSS, while qualitative data from interviews will be thematically analyzed to identify key insights and trends.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Digital marketing has revolutionized how businesses engage with consumers, leveraging technology to promote products and services efficiently. Several studies highlight its growing dominance over traditional marketing, particularly among tech-savvy audiences.

Consumer Engagement and Effectiveness

Mrs. K. Nagapriya and Dr. V. Vidya Chellam (2022) emphasize that smartphones and internet accessibility have made digital marketing indispensable. Their study on college students (n=70) found that digital promotions are preferred for their convenience and real-time information access. Similarly, Ignatius Inpa Rajathi (2023) notes that social media and mobile

marketing significantly influence purchase decisions, though email marketing's impact varies. Demographic factors like gender and academic level further shape these trends, with female students showing higher awareness of deceptive ads and review-based promotions.

Platform-Specific Success

Dr. Anita Soni (2023) highlights Google Ads as a leading digital marketing channel, citing increased website traffic, customer acquisition, and sales. Her research recommends Google AdWords for its measurable ROI. Meanwhile, Alreany C. Tabuena (2022) underscores social media's rising dominance, predicting continued growth in ad spending due to its broad reach and engagement potential.

Sector-Specific Applications

- Insurance: Ben Kajwang (2022) links digital marketing to improved profitability and customer loyalty in insurance firms, advocating for IT investments and staff training.
- Agriculture: Saravanan Ravi (2023) explores digital tools in rural farming, noting gaps in social media utilization (e.g., WhatsApp, YouTube) for agricultural extension services.
- Education: Eray Sen (2018) found that online course enrollment thrives on flexibility but lacks face-to-face interaction, suggesting blended learning for social sciences.

Challenges and Opportunities

While digital marketing offers cost-effectiveness and global reach (Sahil Kumar Pathak, 2019), challenges like privacy concerns (Rana Nidhish Singh, 2023) and technological gaps (Adelia Rahma, 2024) persist. Small businesses, especially in food and beverage (F&B), struggle with limited resources but benefit from digital literacy programs.

Comparative Advantages Over Traditional Marketing

Afrina Yasmin (2015) and Dr. Aditi Banerjee (2024) stress that digital marketing's interactivity, affordability, and data-driven strategies outperform traditional methods. Pritam Chattopadhyay (2019) warns of risks like reputational damage on social media, urging businesses to master platform-specific tactics.

Future Directions

- SMEs: Abdel-Aziz Ahmad Sharabati (2024) confirms that digital transformation boosts SME performance through SEO and customer engagement.
- Education: Sailaja Bohara (2016) ties online marketing to higher education enrollment, advocating targeted digital campaigns.

Digital marketing's ascendancy is undeniable, driven by its adaptability, precision, and scalability. However, businesses must address privacy issues, skill gaps, and platform volatility to harness its full potential. As technology evolves, integrating AI and immersive tools (e.g., AR/VR) could further redefine marketing landscapes.

ONLINE MARKETING PRACTICES

Table 1

S.NO	PARTICULARS	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Table Showing on Age Group of Respondents			
1.	BELOW 18	65	50
2.	19-21	38	29
3.	ABOVE21	27	21
	TOTAL	130	100
Table Showing on Gender Group of Respondents			
1.	MALE	90	69
2.	FEMALE	40	31
	TOTAL	130	100
Table Shows that Course Category of respondents			
1.	BA	31	24
2.	BSC	34	26

3.	B.COM	65	50
	TOTAL	130	100
Table Shows that Year Category			
1.	1YEAR	56	43
2.	2YEAR	48	37
3.	3YEAR	26	20
	TOTAL	130	100
Table Shows that Residential Place Category			
1.	RURAL	56	42
2.	SEMI URBAN	62	47
3.	URBAN	14	11
	TOTAL	130	100
Table Shows that Online Device Category			
1.	MOBILE PHONE	80	62
2.	LAPTOP	50	38
	TOTAL	130	100
Table Shows that How Often Do You Shop Online			
1.	DAILY	14	11
2.	WEEKLY	26	20
3.	MONTHLY	56	43
4.	RARELY	22	17
5.	NEVER	12	9
	TOTAL	130	100

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION:

The majority of the population is below 18, meaning it is predominantly young. The 19-21 age group has a noticeable presence but is significantly smaller than the below-18 group. The above 21 group is the least represented, suggesting a relatively younger demographic overall. There is a significant gender imbalance, with males outnumbering females by a large margin. If this represents a workforce, institution, or student body, it suggests that males dominate the population. The lower female representation (31%) may indicate factors such as gender preferences in participation, cultural influences, or specific enrollment trends in certain fields. The B.COM course dominates, meaning students prefer commerce over arts and science. BSC and BA have similar but lower enrollments, with BSC slightly ahead. If this data represents a college or university, it may indicate a stronger emphasis on commerce education or student preferences leaning toward business-related fields. The largest proportion of students is in their 1st year, showing that new admissions are strong. The 2nd-year group is slightly smaller, suggesting a moderate dropout or transfer rate. The 3rd-year group is the smallest, possibly due to students leaving before completing their studies or fewer students enrolling in previous years. Semi-Urban areas have the highest representation, possibly due to growing urbanization or accessibility to both rural and urban benefits. Rural areas also have a significant presence, meaning a large portion of individuals still come from traditional or less developed areas. Urban representation is the lowest, which could indicate that this particular sample group has fewer people from fully developed cities. The dominance of mobile phones (62%) suggests that most users access the internet via smartphones, possibly for social media, browsing, and casual use. Laptop use (38%) is still relevant, likely for more complex activities such as academic work, business, or professional tasks. This could indicate a trend toward mobile-friendly services and applications, as more users are dependent on smartphones for internet access. The fact that nearly two-thirds (63%) shop online either monthly or weekly suggests that online shopping is a routine activity for most people. Daily shopping (11%) is relatively low, which might suggest that while

online shopping is popular, it hasn't become a daily habit for most people. The 9% who never shop online might reflect gaps in internet access, trust issues, or a preference for traditional shopping.

Table 2

S.NO	PARTICULARS	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE%
Table Shows that What Influenced Your Decision to Purchase Online			
1.	SOCILE MEDIA AD	56	43
2.	RECOMMENDATIONS/RE VIEWS	25	19
3.	REVIWES DISCOUNTS & OFFERS	18	14
4.	SEARCH ENGINE RESULT	22	17
5.	OTHERS	9	7
	TOTAL	130	100
Have you ever clicked on an online ad?			
1.	YES	88	68
2.	NO	42	32
	TOTAL	130	100
Which platform do you prefer for online shopping			
1.	AMAZONE	52	41
2.	FLIPKART	54	43
3.	MEESHO	19	15
4.	MYNTRA	5	1
	TOTAL	130	100
How Important are Customer Reviews in Your Decision to Buy a Product			
1.	VERY IMPORTANT	75	58
2.	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	49	38
3.	NOT IMPORTANT	6	4
	TOTAL	130	100
Which social media platform is most effective for your business?			
1.	FACEBOOK	48	39
2.	INSTAGRAM	56	45
3.	LINKEDIN	18	15
4.	X	8	1
	TOTAL	130	100
What type of content performs best on your social media accounts?			
1.	IMAGES	18	24
2.	VIDEOS	14	19
3.	INFO GRAPHICE	26	35
4.	TEXT POSTS	16	22
5.	STORISE/REELS	56	24
	TOTAL	130	100
Do You Use Paid Advertisements on Social Media			
1.	YES	105	81
2.	NO	25	19
	TOTAL	130	100
Do you collaborate with influencers for online marketing			
1.	YES	95	73

2.	NO	35	27
	TOTAL	130	100

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION:

The fact that nearly half (43%) of buyers are influenced by social media ads shows how effective targeted advertising and influencer partnerships have become. Reviews and recommendations (19%) reflect the importance of trust and social proof in consumer behavior. The 17% influenced by search engine results suggests that appearing at the top of search pages is crucial for driving traffic and sales. The fact that over two-thirds (68%) of people have clicked on an ad shows that online ads are generally effective in capturing interest and engagement. The 32% who haven't clicked on ads might reflect a growing trend of ad fatigue, distrust toward online ads, or the use of tools like ad blockers. This suggests that while online ads are successful in driving engagement, there's still room to improve ad targeting and relevance to convert the skeptical group. Flipkart and Amazon together dominate the market with a combined 84% share, showing that consumers gravitate toward established and trusted platforms. Meesho presence (15%) reflects the growing appeal of social commerce and value-based shopping. Myntra small share (1%) indicates that it may have a more specialized customer base, focusing on specific categories rather than broad market appeal. The fact that 96% of respondents consider reviews to be at least somewhat important reflects the growing impact of social proof and peer validation in the online shopping process. The dominance of the "very important" category (58%) shows that businesses need to actively manage reviews, encourage positive feedback, and address negative reviews promptly to maintain customer trust. The small 4% who don't consider reviews important may rely more on personal experience, brand trust, or specific product details. The dominance of Instagram (45%) and Facebook (39%) reflects the power of visual content and social media ads in driving business engagement. LinkedIn's share (15%) highlights its niche effectiveness for B2B and professional networking. The low impact of X (1%) suggests that businesses might be shifting focus away from it or finding it less effective for direct sales and engagement. The dominance of infographics (35%) reflects the importance of providing value and simplifying information for easy consumption. The strength of images (24%) highlights the need for visually appealing and creative content. The balanced performance of text posts (22%) and videos (19%) suggests that a diverse content strategy is effective in maintaining engagement. The slightly lower performance of videos may reflect competition or shorter attention spans on social media platforms. The high percentage (81%) of businesses using paid ads shows that investing in targeted social media campaigns is now a standard part of a successful marketing strategy. The 19% not using paid ads may reflect smaller businesses with limited budgets or those relying more on word-of-mouth and organic strategies. This trend suggests that businesses aiming to scale and improve visibility may need to incorporate paid advertising into their strategy. The high percentage of businesses working with influencers (73%) reflects how influencer marketing has become a key strategy in the digital space. The success of influencer marketing is likely due to the ability of influencers to build personal connections with their audience, leading to higher trust and engagement. Businesses not using influencer marketing might be missing out on potential growth opportunities, especially among younger, social media-savvy audiences.

Table 3

S.NO	PARTICULARS	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE%
How satisfied are you with the overall quality of online marketing contents?			
1.	Highly satisfied	32	25
2.	Satisfied	28	21
3.	Neutral	18	14
4.	Dissatisfied	30	23
5.	Highly dissatisfied	22	17
	TOTAL	130	100

How satisfied are you with the relevance of online ads shown to you?			
1.	Highly satisfied	38	29
2.	Satisfied	30	23
3.	Neutral	26	20
4.	Dissatisfied	22	17
5.	Highly dissatisfied	14	11
	TOTAL	130	100
Rate the quality of information provided in Online Marketing Campaigns			
1.	Highly satisfied	37	29
2.	Satisfied	38	29
3.	Neutral	22	17
4.	Dissatisfied	18	14
5.	Highly dissatisfied	15	11
	TOTAL	130	100
How Satisfied Are You With The Online Marketing Practices Used By Brands			
1.	Highly satisfied	40	29
2.	Satisfied	35	26
3.	Neutral	24	18
4.	Dissatisfied	22	16
5.	Highly dissatisfied	9	11
	TOTAL	130	100
Table Shows the Do You Think Online Marketing Practices Labour Well to College Students			
1.	Highly satisfied	45	34
2.	Satisfied	40	31
3.	Neutral	29	22
4.	Dissatisfied	10	8
5.	Highly dissatisfied	6	5
	TOTAL	130	100

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION:

A combined 46% (highly satisfied + satisfied) of respondents are generally positive about the content quality — which is a good sign. However, 40% (dissatisfied + highly dissatisfied) express dissatisfaction, pointing to a need for better-targeted and higher-quality content. The neutral group (14%) represents an opportunity to engage more effectively and convert them into satisfied followers. The focus should be on improving content relevance, presentation, and value to reduce dissatisfaction and increase engagement. A combined **52%** (highly satisfied + satisfied) are generally positive about the relevance of online ads — showing that targeting strategies are working well for over half of the audience. On the other hand, **28%** (dissatisfied + highly dissatisfied) are unhappy, indicating a significant portion still finds the ads irrelevant or poorly targeted. The **neutral group** (20%) represents an opportunity to increase engagement by refining targeting or making ads more personalized and compelling. A combined **58%** (highly satisfied + satisfied) of respondents are generally happy with the quality of information provided. The **neutral group** (17%) reflects a need for more engaging or targeted content. A total of **25%** (dissatisfied + highly dissatisfied) are unhappy with the quality of information, showing that a quarter of the audience feels the content is lacking in clarity or relevance. A combined **55%** (highly satisfied + satisfied) have a positive perception of brand marketing practices, which is encouraging. The **neutral group** (18%) reflects that brands could make improvements to make

their marketing more impactful and engaging. A total of **27%** (dissatisfied + highly dissatisfied) are not happy with brand marketing practices, showing that over a combined **65%** (highly satisfied + satisfied) believe that online marketing practices resonate well with college students — a positive sign. The **neutral group** (22%) suggests that some strategies may lack relevance or fail to capture attention fully. Around **13%** (dissatisfied + highly dissatisfied) feel that current approaches need improvement — this signals a need to refine targeting and engagement strategies.

TESTING HYPOTHESIS

Table No: 4
Chi – Square Test Age Group of the Respondents

Null Hypothesis (H0): The age distribution of college students engaging in online marketing is uniform across the categories (i.e., there are no significant differences in the proportions of students in different age groups).

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): The age distribution of college students engaging in online marketing is not uniform across the categories (i.e., there are significant differences in the proportions of students in different age groups).

Age Category	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	(O - E) ²	(O - E) ² / E
Below 18	65	43.33	$(65 - 43.33)^2$	$(21.67)^2 / 43.33 = 10.53$
19-21	38	43.33	$(38 - 43.33)^2$	$(5.33)^2 / 43.33 = 0.65$
Above 21	27	43.33	$(27 - 43.33)^2$	$(16.33)^2 / 43.33 = 6.12$
Total	130	—	—	17.30

Now we can find the Chi-square statistic:

$$\chi^2 = 10.53 + 0.65 + 6.12 = 17.30 \quad \chi^2 = 10.53 + 0.65 + 6.12 = 17.30$$

3.1.3 Degrees of Freedom and Significance Level

The degrees of freedom (df) for this Chi-square test is calculated as:

$$df = k - 1 = 3 - 1 = 2 \quad df = k - 1 = 3 - 1 = 2 \quad \text{where } k \text{ is the number of categories.}$$

Using a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, we can compare our calculated χ^2 value with the critical value from the Chi-square distribution table.

The critical value for $df = 2$ is approximately 5.991.

Since $17.30 > 5.991$, we reject the null hypothesis (H0). This indicates that there is a significant differences in the age distribution of college students involved in online marketing practices.

Table No: 5
Chi – Square Test Gender Group of the Respondents

Null Hypothesis (H0): The gender distribution of college students engaging in online marketing

practices is uniform (i.e., there is no significant difference between male and female respondents).

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): The gender distribution of college students engaging in online marketing practices is not uniform (i.e., there is a significant difference between male and female respondents).

Calculating the Chi-square statistic gives us the following:

Gender Category	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	(O - E) ²	(O - E) ² / E
Male	90	65	(90 - 65) ²	(25) ² / 65 ≈ 9.62
Female	40	65	(40 - 65) ²	(25) ² / 65 ≈ 9.62
Total	130	—	—	19.24

Calculating the χ^2 statistic:

$$\chi^2 = 9.62 + 9.62 = 19.24 \quad \chi^2 = 9.62 + 9.62 = 19.24$$

3.2.3 Degrees of Freedom and Significance Level

The degrees of freedom (df) here is:

$$df = k - 1 = 2 - 1 = 1 \quad df = k - 1 = 2 - 1 = 1$$

Using a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, we compare our χ^2 value with the critical value for $df = 1$, which is approximately 3.841.

Since $19.24 > 3.841$, we reject the null hypothesis (H0). This indicates that there is a significant difference in the gender distribution of college students involved in online marketing practices, with a larger number of male respondents compared to female respondents.

FINDINGS

A majority of the surveyed population is composed of individuals below the age of 18, indicating a predominantly young demographic. The age group of 19-21, while present, is significantly smaller than that of those below 18. Conversely, individuals older than 21 are the least represented, further affirming the youth focus of this demographic. The gender distribution shows a notable imbalance, with significantly more males (69%) compared to females (31%), suggesting potential barriers for female participation in certain activities or fields of study. The B.COM course is the most favored among students, suggesting a preference for commerce-related education over arts and sciences. This is reflected in the lower enrollment figures for BSC and BA courses. First-year students constitute the largest group, indicating strong admission rates, while fewer students remain in the subsequent years, pointing towards a potential moderate dropout or transfer rate. Semi-urban areas contribute the highest number of respondents, highlighting the effects of urbanization and access to educational resources, while urban representation is limited, possibly due to fewer participants from fully developed cities. A significant majority (62%) of respondents access the internet via mobile phones, reinforcing a strong trend towards mobile-friendly services and applications. Frequent online shopping (monthly or weekly) is common among 63% of respondents, though daily shopping remains relatively low at 11%. Social media advertisements emerged as a major influence on buying decisions (43%), with overall online engagement highlighting effectiveness in ads, although a significant minority (32%) of respondents do not click on ads, indicating a need for improved targeting. Brand trust is crucial, as 96% of respondents consider reviews important, with strong emphasis placed on businesses managing their online reputation. Chi-square tests confirmed significant differences in both age and gender distributions among college students engaging in online marketing practices, leading to the rejection of null hypotheses in both cases. The results indicate a larger male demographic and an uneven age distribution affecting marketing engagement.

SUGGESTIONS

Institutions and organizations should implement strategies to encourage and support female participation in courses, programs, and fields where they are underrepresented. This could include mentorship programs, outreach initiatives, and targeted scholarships. Colleges and universities should examine the factors contributing to the dropout or transfer rates among second and third-year students. Enhancing academic support services, counselling, and creating a more engaging campus environment could improve retention. Given the dominance of smartphone usage for internet access, businesses and educational institutions should prioritize developing mobile-optimized websites and applications for improved user engagement and convenience. Companies should focus on more personalized and targeted advertising strategies to capture the interest of the 32% of users who do not click on online ads, possibly by utilizing data analytics and user behaviour insights. The dissatisfaction expressed by 40% of respondents regarding content quality points toward the necessity for businesses to enhance their content strategy to focus on delivering high-quality, relevant, and engaging content for their audience. Brands should harness the power of influencer marketing to reach younger demographics effectively. Selecting relevant influencers who resonate with their audience will likely result in better engagement and conversion rates.

CONCLUSION

This study provides critical insights into the demographic landscape and consumer behavior of college students, revealing significant age and gender disparities that impact online marketing engagement. The prevalence of mobile internet usage and social media influence are pivotal in shaping consumer habits. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions from educational institutions and businesses to address gender inequalities, enhance retention, and improve user engagement. By focusing on content quality and personalized marketing strategies, stakeholders can work towards fostering a more inclusive and effective marketing environment tailored to the needs of this predominantly young demographic.

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