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EVALUATION OF DIGITAL MARKETING PERFORMANCE IN ELECTRONIC GOODS INDUSTRY: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Abstract: The last two decades have witnessed a skyrocketing growth in digital marketing that made customers interested in purchasing products particularly electronic goods. However, it is not known whether those customers attained satisfaction through this purchase. To confirm the fact, this research has attempted to analyze the retention rate of digital marketing customers who have experience in purchasing electronic goods and for this purpose, 603 consumers of Tamilnadu (India) who have the purchase experience on a digital marketing basis were selected on a simple random basis. Tools like structural equation modeling, percentage analysis, one-way ANOVA, and paired sample 't' test were applied and the result revealed that only customer satisfaction has mediated the influence of digital marketing on their loyalty but, the important parameter, trust has a negative role between these constructs. Marketers need to create trust about the product with the actual features as informed in digital marketing so that consumers can reach a high level of satisfaction and this may lead to a positive word of mouth. In addition, this enhances sales and enables marketers to attain profit maximization along with building consumer confidence.

Keywords: Customer Loyalty; Digital Marketing; E-Commerce; Market; Technology; Trust

INTRODUCTION

In today's context, every organization is trying to retain its position in the market due to competition and this competition and change are due to the growth of digital marketing organizations following this technique for their cost efficiency and global reach. Merisavo (2006) pointed out that digital channels are often creating new prospects and ensuring good customer relationships and hence it becomes an essential part of the organization's strategy.

Also, digital marketing technology is a new tendency that reaches the worldwide customers efficiently and facilitates them to get the required and updated information in a simplified manner and also provide with economic pricing conveniently. This becomes a part of customers' everyday schedules (Ganesh and Chakraborty 2021) especially among the younger generation (Balakrishnan, Dahnil, and Yi 2014).

But for any success crucial for the business, customer loyalty is essential and this loyalty could be achieved only through effective quality in services offered by the concerned organization. Only when both perceive service quality and the satisfaction is found high, it creates the purchase intention among the customers and this is not only for the electronic goods but for all the products. Especially, it is trust that plays a crucial role in the purchasing decision among the customers who were influenced by digital marketing.

This study primarily focused on the effects of digital marketing (DM) on customer loyalty among individuals who purchased electronic items in Tamilnadu. The reason behind this is normally, a customer who preferred purchasing electronic goods would not rely on the entire information communicated through the social media advertisement rather be satisfied only based on their physical verification either in the premises of the retailer or in their place if it is online purchase due to product's sensitivity nature. But this digital marketing enables those sensitive customers to purchase electronic goods even through online shopping because of the trust created by that communication. But there is no evidence to identify the level of loyalty they had with the organization after the initial digital marketing-based purchase.

Various constructs like website design, product quality, and Security, Trust, and customer satisfaction were considered to analyze the customer loyalty level along with the following research questions:

1. How does digital marketing significantly impact customer purchase behavior?
2. Do the online marketing strategies yield positive results on customer loyalty?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many earlier research works were done on this topic with various results. Ganesh and Chakraborty (2021) pointed out product brand differentiation could be shown only through digitally-based promotion and, this alone enables the marketer to overcome the competition in the market. The author also pointed out that satisfaction through experience acts as a mediator for the purchase intention among them. Mullatahiri and Ukaj (2019) confirmed that it is e-marketing that builds the brand image among the customers and creates satisfaction thereby leading to commitment and loyalty. Aslam *et al.* (2020) confirmed that website user interfaces quality, information quality, awareness of e-Commerce, and perceived privacy were act as significant predictors for e-customers trust and loyalty.

Danei, Karimi, and Moghaddam (2016) found that advertising in mass media has an impact on customer loyalty, and its factors like brand communication and digital marketing communication help marketers to have a profit and discharge the functions in a better and efficient way. Ayoola and Ibrahim (2020) e-marketing components like search engine optimization; social media marketing and email marketing have a positive impact on customer satisfaction in such a way that the search engine is providing all necessary information to the consumers.

Dhingra, Gupta, and Bhatt (2020) implicated that organizational practitioners need to take initiatives to enhance the trust factor for the website users and credibility of the operations as it is only the predominant factor that influences overall service quality and at the same time, other factors like website design, reliability, responsiveness, and personalization could not be ignored. Dastane (2020) studied the mediating effect of Customer Relationship Management between digital marketing and online purchase intention and found that the mediating effect did not promote a positive impact on purchasing intention rather digital marketing has a significant impact on purchase intention and customer relationship management.

Pricillia *et al.* (2020) analyzed the impact of website design quality and service quality on the purchase intention among 170 customers of Jakarta by considering the trust as a mediating variable and revealed that website design quality has a positive impact on the customer trust and regarding the repurchase intention, if the service quality found high, the repurchase intention among the customers also found high and this intention is based on the trust which found positively associated with the repurchase intention. It is also informed that trust mediates the service quality and repurchase intention positively. Sukendi *et al.* (2021) evaluated and correlated the effect of e-service quality, customer's experience, customer's engagement, and customer's loyalty in the B2C market and found that customer experience was influenced by the e-service quality followed by website design, fulfillment/reliability, customer service, and the privacy.

Khatoon, Zhengliang, and Hussain (2020) investigated the relationship between e-banking service quality and the customer purchasing intention through customer satisfaction as a mediating factor and found that the factors like reliability, efficiency, responsiveness, communication, privacy, and security have a significant and positive impact on purchasing intention. And the positive intention is coming up only when the customer is satisfied with the service. Djumarno, Anjani, and Djamaluddin (2018) analyzed the effect of product quality and prices on customer satisfaction and its mediating role on loyalty and found that product quality significantly increases customer loyalty and it is also proved that customer satisfaction mediated the service quality and the loyalty.

Hanaysha (2017) attempted to study the impact of social media marketing on word of mouth (WoM) promotion and found that both have a significant impact on WoM and this is supported by price promotion. The above review reflected that all the factors like website design quality, product quality, promotions, trust, and customer satisfaction were significantly affecting customer loyalty.

There are many studies available on the topic selected for this study but the gap noticed with the earlier research is no one research has focused on the electronic goods industry and not even a single study was done in Tamilnadu. Also, the author has considered trust as the mediating variable between digital marketing and customer loyalty in addition to customer satisfaction.

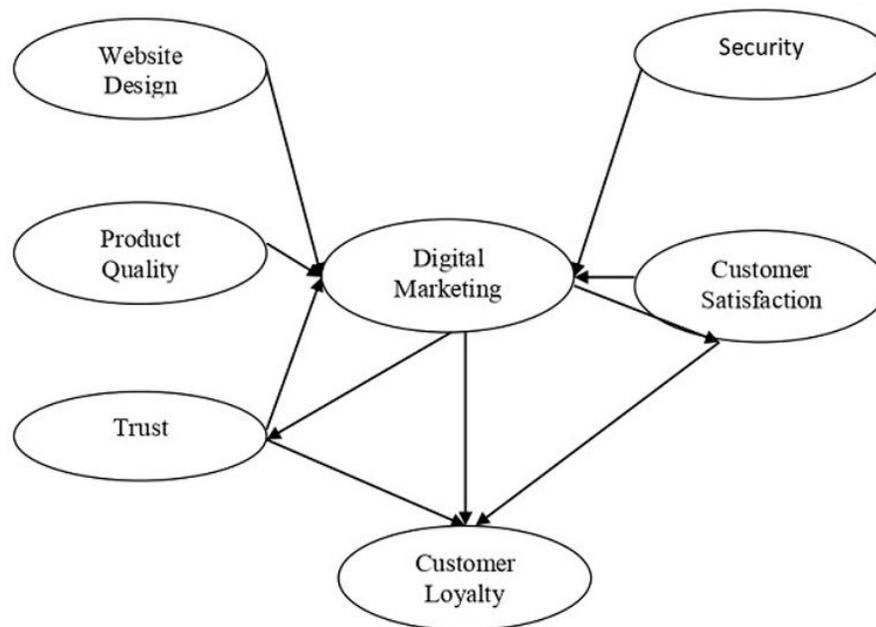


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of the Study (Source: Authors' depiction)

METHODOLOGY

Objectives

Objectives in every research are framed based on the constructs considered in the conceptual model and it also explains the nature of the study and the factors considered. In other words, it is the road map for the outcome of the result of the study. In this study, the authors have considered the following objectives.

1. To analyze the association between the demographic profile of the respondents and the factors that influence digital marketing and customer loyalty.
2. To examine the intercorrelation among the factors under digital marketing.
3. To investigate the impact of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty.
4. To find the mediating role of trust and customer satisfaction between digital marketing and customer loyalty.

Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a concept of any formulation under known conditions and proving the relationship between the factors and variables that occurred in every research works. In this study, various factors that affect the dependent factors (i.e. website design, product design, security, trust) were considered, and based on the anticipated result, the investigator has formulated the following hypotheses and analyzes the acceptance of those through the sampling data collected for this study.

H₁: There is a significant association between the demographic profile and the factors that influence digital marketing.

H₂: Trust positively mediates digital marketing and customer loyalty.

H₃: Customer satisfaction positively mediates digital marketing and customer loyalty.

H₄: There is a significant impact of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty.

As this study is a descriptive and survey nature in connection with the effectiveness of digital marketing among the customers on a pan-India basis, a general survey was conducted in each state considering it as a cluster, and from the total sample collected through this general survey, simple random sampling was applied and the respondents were selected finally. For an unknown sample size, it is suggested to have 200-500 samples (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007), and based on this; the researchers have considered 750 samples above the prescribed limit to have a precise result and

distributed the questionnaire among the customers. Before proceeding with the survey, a pre-test was conducted among 100 respondents to ascertain the reliability value of the instrument and found the reliability value of the constructs and variables in the questionnaire is found as 0.898 that confirming the threshold limit as prescribed by Nunnally in Peterson (1994) during their research towards Cronbach's coefficient alpha value. After possible consideration of the correction in the instrument, sequence along with the feedbacks of the experts, the questionnaire was distributed through e-mail and other possible ways for the customers residing in various states in India. But while checking the rate of return to the filled questionnaire, the researcher has received only 682 questionnaires and out of which 603 could be reused for further analysis with the percentage of 80.40%. The period of this particular study is from May 2021 to July 2021. The research has adopted the quantitative method to investigate the association and the relationship between the factors. The statistical packages applied here are IBM SPSS 20 and AMOS 24 and tools like percentage analysis, confirmatory analysis (CFA), and Karl Pearson's correlation, multiple regression techniques, analysis of variance (one-way), and paired sample 't' analysis was carried out and the result revealed is discussed in the following sections.

Structural Equation Modeling

The various hypothesis in every study could be tested properly only through confirmatory factor analysis through the goodness of fit indices obtained through structural equation modeling and this also technique enables to check the unidimensionality nature and, the latent structure of the model (Hoyle 2004). The values as prescribed in the above study were considered to confirm the fit of the model. The result revealed through structural equation modeling is detailed in Figure 2.

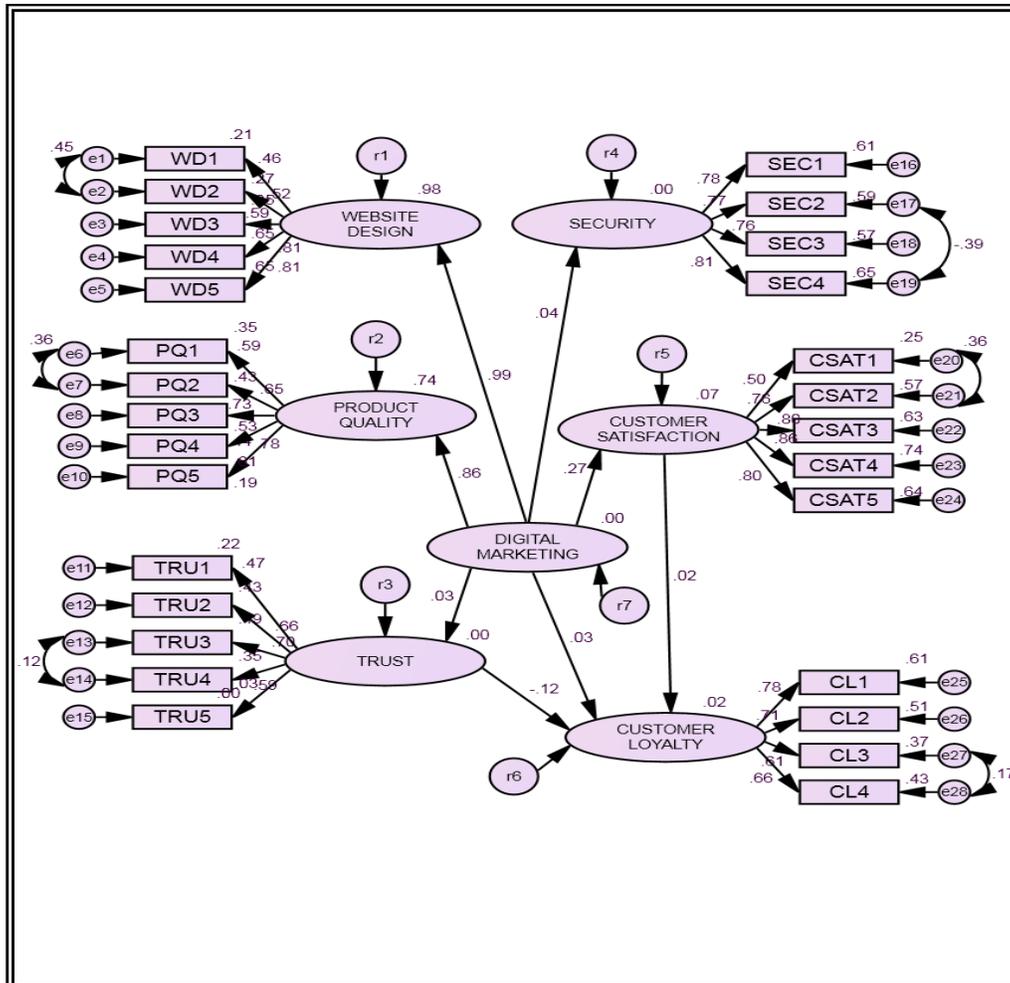


Figure 2: Structural Equation Modeling (Source: Authors' depiction)

Diamantopoulos and Sigauw (2000) in Tsoukatos and Rand (2006) informed that the chi-square test value along with the RMSEA, ECVI, standardized RMR, GFI, and CFI indices are sufficient to assess an overall model fit of every research. In this study, it is seen that all the goodness and badness indices are met by the measurement model ($\chi^2/df = 3.316$, GFI = 0.901, NFI = 0.841, CFI = 0.902, IFI: 0.901, RMR = 0.058 and RMSEA = 0.062, AGFI=0.897, P Ratio=0.889 and confirmed the goodness of fit of the model considered with the constructs.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic profile plays an important role in the purchasing behavior among the customers and in this study, various demographic variables for getting the opinion of the respondents in connection with the objectives framed and the results revealed is detailed in the following Table 3 below:

Table 3: Details of the Demographic Details of the Respondents (Source: Authors’ depiction)

Sl. No.	Demographic Variable	Total Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	
		(n)		
01.	Age	Less than 20 years	63	10.4
		21-40 Years	396	65.8
		41-50 Years	101	16.7
		Above 50 Years	43	7.1
02.	Gender	Male	413	68.5
		Female	190	31.5
		Transgender	0	0
03.	Marital Status	Married	440	73.0
		Unmarried	163	27.0
04.	Educational Qualification	Illiterate	24	3.1
		SSLC	116	19.2
		HSC	199	33.0
		Under Graduate	127	21.1
		Post Graduate	131	21.7
		Others	30	5.0
05.	Occupation	Public Sector	232	38.5
		Private Sector	147	24.4
		Business	78	12.9
		Agriculture	99	16.4
		Others	47	7.8
06.	Monthly Income	Less than Rs.20000/-	123	20.4
		Rs.20001/= to Rs.35000/=	320	53.1
		Rs.35001/= to Rs.50000/=	143	23.7
		> Rs.50000/=	17	2.8
07.	Status of the Residential Area	Urban	255	42.3
		Rural	274	45.4
		Semi Urban	74	12.3
08.	Type of Family	Nuclear	269	44.6
		Joint	334	55.4
09.	What Type of Electronic Goods did You Purchase Based on Digital Marketing?	Mobile phone	264	43.8
		Television	52	8.6
		Washing Machine	136	22.6
		Computer system	26	4.3
		Others	125	20.7

From the above, it is seen that the maximum respondents of this study were under the age group of 21-40 years (65.8%) and the maximum was found under the male category (68.5%). Regarding their marital status, it is noticed that 440 respondents

with 73% were got married and a maximum of the total respondents were having higher secondary qualification (199 with 33%).

Regarding the occupation, 232 respondents with 32.5% were having employment in the public sector and 147 respondents with 24.4% were in the private sector. The salary of the maximum respondents ranged from Rs.20001/= to Rs.35000/= and most of them were having their residence in rural areas (45.4%) and living jointly (55.4%).

When the inquiry was made about the electronic goods they have purchased based on the digital marketing, it is revealed that 264 respondents with 43.8% were informed that they have purchased a mobile phone and 136 with 22.6% have informed that they have purchased a washing machine. Next to this, 125 respondents with 20.7 percent have purchased other items like iron boxes, DVD players, and accessories to the mobile phone. Only 26 with 4.3 percent have been informed that they have purchased computer systems based on digital marketing advertisement.

Karl Pearson's Correlation

To analyze the inter-correlation between the various factors that influence digital marketing and customer loyalty, Karl Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted and the result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Association between the Factors That Influencing Digital Marketing and the Customer Loyalty
(Source: Authors' depiction)

Correlations						
	Website Design	Product Quality	Trust	Security	Customer Satisfaction	Customer Loyalty
F1	1	0.689**	0.313**	0.029	0.274**	0.441*
F2		1	0.207**	0.014	0.158**	0.511*
F3			1	-0.050	0.114**	0.372*
F4				1	0.349*	0.443
F5					1	0.327*
F6						1

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels (2-tailed).

From the above result, it is confirmed that factors like product quality, trust, and customer satisfaction were found positively correlated with customer loyalty at 1% and 5% level of significance All the factors were found to have low to moderate correlations with each other (R=+0.10 to +0.7) and hence the performance of each factor were found to be similar in the study of Schober *et al.* (2018). The highest correlation is found between 'product quality' with 'customer loyalty' with the value of (r=-0.659**) at a 1% level of significance and the lowest correlation was found between 'trust' and the

'security' with the value of ($r=0.158^{**}$) at 1% level of significance. Through the R^2 value, 26% variation was shown by the product quality with customer loyalty and 11% variation with the customer satisfaction.

Multiple Regression Analysis

To analyze the impact of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty among the respondents of electronic goods inspired through digital marketing, multiple regression analysis was carried out by considering customer loyalty as the dependent variable and customer satisfaction as the independent variable. The details of the analysis are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Details of Regression Coefficient and the Statistics for the Proposed Model of the Study
(Source: Authors' depiction)

Factor (Dependent)	Factor (Independent)	Regression Coefficient (B)	S.E	't' Test Value	Tolerance Value	VIF Value
Customer Loyalty	(Constant)	8.717	0.508	17.158	-	-
	Customer Satisfaction	0.020	0.028	0.661	1.000	1.000
	R^2 Value	0.271				
	Adjusted R^2 Value	0.070				
	F Value	3.437**				
	Number of Samples	603				
	Durbin Watson Test Value	1.610				

**** - 1% level of significance.**

From the result of the multiple regression analysis, the value of the 'F' was found to be 3.37 which is significant at a 1% level of significance and this witnessed the model fit of the study. In this case, customer satisfaction is not found as a significant forecaster for customer loyalty and the value of R^2 also confirmed it with a way that a unit increase in the independent variable increases the dependent variable (customer loyalty) to the tune of 7%. From the value of Durbin Watson (1.610) and the Tolerance Value and Variance Inflation Factor, it is confirmed that there was no multicollinearity noticed among the factors and variables.

Compare Mean Analysis through “t” test and ANOVA

To find the association between the demographic variables considered in this study and the factors that influence digital marketing and customer loyalty in the case of electronic goods, paired sample ‘t’ test and the one-way ANOVA - ‘F’ test was carried out, and the findings were detailed in Table 6.

Table 6: Association between the Demographic Variables and the Factors Considered Under Digital Marketing and the Customer Loyalty (Source: Authors’ depiction)

Factors	Website Design	Product Quality	Trust	Security	Customer Satisfaction	Customer Loyalty
PAIRED SAMPLE ‘t’ TEST						
Marital Status	115.349**	112.609**	129.624**	107.837**	108.632**	112.564**
Type of Family	115.328**	111.610**	128.601**	106.088**	114.214**	121.547**
ONE-WAY ANOVA – ‘F’ TEST						
Age	2.372	2.956*	3.616*	1.440**	7.082**	4.385**
Gender	4.078**	2.713*	1.323	6.574**	3.082	5.123
Educational Qualification	1.710	1.351	1.255	1.085**	3.014	4.012
Occupation	2.905*	1.990	2.518*	2.948*	6.542	4.011*
Monthly Income	0.740	1.311	0.465	0.103	1.542	1.852
Type of Electronic Goods Purchased Through the Effect of Digital Marketing	4.794*	1.601	2.853*	3.142*	4.852*	2.864**
**- 1% level of significance and *-5% level of significance						

Regarding the association between the demographic variables of the respondents of this study and with the factors that influence the digital marketing, from the result, it is revealed that all the factors were significantly associated with marital status, Type of the family found statistically as the ‘t’ value is significant at 1% level.

The result of the one-way ANOVA confirmed that there is a significant association between the factors considered under digital marketing, customer satisfaction, and loyalty at 1% and 5% level of significance except with the monthly income. In addition, the security factor alone was found significantly associated with the educational qualification at 1% level of significance and gender with website design, product quality, and security. Occupation and type of electronic goods purchased by the influence of digital marketing are not significantly associated with product quality.

Managerial Implication

The core objective of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of DM on customer loyalty particularly towards electronic goods and hence the respondents who were influenced by digital marketing were contacted all over Tamilnadu in India. To confirm the goodness of fit of the constructs taken up for consideration in this study, structural equation modeling was done and found that all the indices were having a threshold limit as suggested by the earlier studies. Based on the research gap and the outcome of the earlier research work of this domain, objectives and hypotheses were framed. Various precious tools were applied to identify the association between the factors and the constructs that influence the DM towards electronic goods and the result revealed that there is a significant association exists between the factors that influence DM but at the same time, customer satisfaction is not having any impact on the customer loyalty and the result found controversy with the findings of (Mullatahiri and Ukaj 2019) who informed that e-marketing built a brand image among the customers and creates satisfaction and this led to repurchase intention and the findings of (Djumarno, Anjani, and Djamaluddin 2018) who proved that customer satisfaction mediating the marketing and loyalty and rejected the alternative hypothesis (H₄). Trust is also having a negative mediating value between digital marketing and customer loyalty and thereby rejecting the alternative hypothesis (H₂) but customer satisfaction mediates the factor of DM and customer loyalty positively and thereby accepting the alternative hypothesis (H₃). There is a significant association found between the demographic profile of the respondents and the factors that influence digital marketing, customer loyalty, and thereby accepted the alternative hypothesis (H₁). As this is marketing based on a digital platform, there is no possibility of visual communication as well as pre-inspection of the products, marketers need to create trust among the customers and ensure the security of their personal information so that they could able to increase the sales and earn profit maximization. At the same time, they should satisfy the needs and wants of the customers through an effective survey with the target audience.

Limitation and Scope for Future Research

The study is conducted among the respondents who have inspired the DM and initiated their purchase, this is an unknown population selected through simple random sampling methods, and hence findings may not be applicable for other markets. The factors considered under DM are also not adequate, and yet many factors that influence DM. Hence, further research on this topic may be conducted with different sample sizes and with various sampling techniques through cross-sectional study in various geographic areas so that more precious results may be obtained which will be useful for the entire audience universally.

CONCLUSION

This research intended to find whether the customers who have purchased the electronic products have received their expected perceived value and found satisfaction based on the digital marketing information. For this purpose, important constructs like website design, product quality, trust, and security were taken up to find their impact on digital marketing since all these factors affect customer satisfaction. Also, an attempt was made to study the mediating role of customer satisfaction between digital marketing and customer loyalty, and from the opinion-based result of the customers, it is concluded that customer satisfaction was not highlighted as a significant forecaster for the loyalty among them and this clearly explained that whether they have satisfied or not, they were purchasing the electronic goods on the attractiveness of the digital marketing. But at the same time, there witnessed a negative impact of trust on customer loyalty. As customers always knew the features of products through the information given through advertisements in the digital platform, this result confirmed that those customers have not attained the perceived value as expected by them in the purchased electronic goods. Most of the customers of this study have purchased only mobile devices based on the information communicated through digital marketing they have expressed their dissatisfaction with the purchase. However, this level of dissatisfaction has not affected their loyalty. But marketers need to be very cautious in creating trust among their customers by providing quality and real information about the products on the website since the brand is very important for the consumers and it is acting as an interface between the customers/consumers and the marketers. It is also suggested to review the opinion and the feedback of the customers to find where they are lying behind in creating trust among the customers so that they could able to rectify the problem immediately. 🌐

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

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Statement of human rights:

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were following the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any of the authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

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