

Digital Marketing versus Traditional Marketing: A Comparative Study of FMCG Consumer Preferences in Durg District, Chhattisgarh

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of digital communication has changed how fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands communicate with consumers, promote products and influence retail purchasing decisions. At the same time, traditional marketing channels, including television, newspapers, radio, outdoor advertising and in-store promotions, continue to provide broad consumer reach. Understanding how consumers perceive these alternative forms of marketing is particularly important in regional retail markets where digital and traditional communication coexist. This study compares consumer-reported preferences for digital and traditional marketing in the FMCG retail sector of Durg District, Chhattisgarh. It draws on the primary survey findings of an existing doctoral thesis involving 300 respondents selected through non-probability convenience sampling. The analysis uses descriptive statistics and examines the reported comparative influence of marketing channels alongside respondents' awareness of digital marketing campaigns and perceptions of digital marketing's influence on product awareness and purchase decisions. The thesis findings indicate that 62% of respondents reported digital marketing as more influential, compared with 38% who reported traditional marketing as more influential. Additionally, 89% reported awareness of digital marketing campaigns, 73% expressed a positive view of digital marketing's contribution to product awareness, and 66% expressed a positive view of its influence on purchase decisions. These findings suggest that digital communication occupies an important position in the reported marketing preferences of the surveyed FMCG consumers. However, the study does not establish that digital marketing generates higher actual sales or that the observed preference is statistically significant across the wider population. The findings support a complementary, audience-sensitive marketing approach in which FMCG brands integrate digital engagement with traditional communication according to consumer preferences, campaign objectives and measurable outcomes.

Keywords: Digital marketing, traditional marketing, FMCG, consumer preferences, consumer behaviour, retail marketing, Durg District, Chhattisgarh.

1. Introduction

Marketing communication is an important component of competition in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. Products such as packaged foods, beverages, personal-care items, household cleaning products and other daily necessities are purchased frequently, often with limited deliberation. Brand

awareness, product availability, price, promotional offers, familiarity and perceived quality can influence consumer choice. Consequently, FMCG businesses require communication strategies that can reach consumers effectively, support product recognition and encourage consideration at the point of purchase. Traditional marketing has historically played a major role in FMCG promotion. Television advertising, radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards, leaflets, retail displays and promotional activities allow brands to communicate with broad audiences. Repeated exposure can reinforce brand recognition, while in-store displays can attract attention close to the purchase occasion. These channels may remain relevant for consumers who rely on familiar media, have limited access to particular digital platforms or respond to locally visible promotions.

Digital marketing has introduced additional communication possibilities. Social media, search engines, websites, mobile applications, online video, influencer content and targeted advertising enable brands to distribute messages through internet-connected devices. Digital platforms can also facilitate interaction, feedback and campaign measurement. Kannan and Li (2017) describe digital marketing as a changing set of marketing touchpoints that influence both customer interactions and marketing strategy. Digital communication is therefore not simply another advertising format; it can alter how consumers discover information, engage with brands and encounter promotional messages.

Nevertheless, the expansion of digital marketing does not automatically make traditional channels obsolete. Consumers differ in age, media habits, digital access, trust, purchasing routines and exposure to advertising. Furthermore, the channel that attracts attention may not be the channel that directly produces a purchase. A consumer may discover a product through social media but purchase it from a neighbourhood retailer after seeing an in-store display. Such interactions make the relationship between digital communication and physical retail purchasing important to investigate.

This issue is particularly relevant to Durg District in Chhattisgarh, where the retail environment includes urban and semi-urban markets and different retail formats. Consumers may encounter digital promotions on smartphones while continuing to purchase everyday products through physical stores. Studying reported preferences in this context can provide region-specific evidence for FMCG marketers and retailers.

The present study compares digital and traditional marketing from the perspective of surveyed FMCG consumers in Durg District. It uses findings from the researcher's doctoral thesis, *Evaluating the Influence of Digital Marketing on the FMCG Sector: A Comprehensive Study in the Retail Industry*. Rather than presenting new or unverified statistical results, the paper examines the existing descriptive findings that directly relate to comparative marketing influence and digital marketing perceptions.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Digital marketing and changing consumer touchpoints

Kannan and Li (2017) developed a framework for understanding digital marketing and its implications for marketing strategy. Their review highlights how internet-based, mobile and other digital touchpoints have expanded the opportunities available for communication, consumer interaction and marketing measurement. This framework is relevant to FMCG brands because consumers may encounter marketing messages at several stages of the purchasing process, including initial awareness, information search and product evaluation.

Lemon and Verhoef (2016) examined customer experience across the customer journey. Their work emphasises that customer experience develops through multiple interactions rather than a single

communication encounter. Applied to FMCG retailing, this perspective suggests that digital advertisements and traditional promotions may contribute to different stages of the same consumer journey. For example, online content may introduce a product, while a store display or retailer recommendation may reinforce the consumer's choice.

2.2 Social media, consumer interaction and brand communication

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) discussed the opportunities and challenges associated with social media. Social platforms allow users to create, distribute and interact with content, distinguishing them from many traditional one-way advertising formats. For FMCG brands, social media can support product demonstrations, promotional announcements, consumer discussions and brand-related content.

However, the presence of interaction does not necessarily establish purchasing effectiveness. Likes, views, comments and shares are communication indicators, not direct evidence of additional sales. A comparative assessment must distinguish engagement from purchase behaviour and commercial outcomes.

Dwivedi et al. (2021) reviewed research directions in digital and social media marketing and highlighted the importance of understanding changing digital environments, consumer responses and marketing outcomes. Their work supports the need to investigate digital marketing as a multidimensional phenomenon rather than assuming that online visibility alone guarantees consumer preference or brand success.

2.3 Online information and purchase intention

Erkan and Evans (2016) examined the influence of electronic word of mouth in social media on consumer purchase intentions. Their study highlights the importance of online information and the processes through which consumers adopt information when considering products. For FMCG purchases, reviews, recommendations and social content may supplement the information available through conventional advertising.

At the same time, the effect of online information may vary across products and consumers. The perceived credibility of the source, relevance of the information and consumer's existing brand familiarity may shape the response. These factors indicate that digital marketing should be evaluated through consumer perceptions and behaviour rather than reach alone.

2.4 Traditional marketing and integrated communication

Traditional marketing continues to provide communication opportunities through television, print, radio, outdoor media and retail-based promotion. These channels can create broad exposure, support repeated brand messaging and reach consumers who do not regularly use the same digital platforms. Their relevance depends on the target audience, media consumption patterns, geographic reach and campaign objectives. The distinction between digital and traditional marketing is therefore not necessarily a choice between an effective and an ineffective channel. Integrated marketing communication recognises the importance of coordinating messages across communication channels so that consumers receive consistent information. Digital platforms may provide interaction and measurable response indicators, while traditional media may offer broad visibility and reinforcement. The relative contribution of each channel must be examined in its specific market context.

2.5 Research gap

The literature provides substantial conceptual support for digital marketing, social media interaction and the customer journey. However, a local comparison of consumer-reported digital and traditional marketing influence within the FMCG retail environment of Durg District offers a distinct regional perspective. The present study contributes descriptive evidence from 300 surveyed respondents.

The contribution should be interpreted narrowly. The study does not claim to represent all consumers in Chhattisgarh, nor does it independently measure campaign costs, verified sales conversions or the return on investment of individual media channels. Its primary contribution is to document the reported preference for digital versus traditional marketing among the surveyed respondents and place that finding in the context of their reported digital marketing awareness.

3. Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

1. To compare respondents' reported influence of digital and traditional marketing in the FMCG retail sector of Durg District.
2. To describe respondents' awareness of digital marketing campaigns.
3. To examine respondents' perceptions of digital marketing's contribution to product awareness and purchase decisions.
4. To discuss the implications of the findings for FMCG marketers and retail businesses.
5. To identify methodological limitations and directions for further comparative research.

4. Research Questions and Hypothesis

The study addresses three research questions:

- **RQ1:** Which form of marketing—digital or traditional—is more frequently reported as influential by the surveyed FMCG consumers?
- **RQ2:** What proportion of respondents report awareness of digital marketing campaigns?
- **RQ3:** How do respondents perceive digital marketing's contribution to product awareness and purchase decisions?

A formal hypothesis for the primary comparison may be stated as follows:

H₀: There is no difference in the population proportions of FMCG consumers who report digital marketing and traditional marketing as more influential.

H₁: The population proportions of FMCG consumers who report digital marketing and traditional marketing as more influential are different.

The existing aggregate frequency table can describe the sample distribution, but a formal inferential test requires confirmation that the response categories were mutually exclusive, that the measurement question was worded appropriately and that the statistical assumptions are satisfied. The hypothesis should not be described as statistically accepted or rejected until the underlying data and test output have been verified.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research design

The paper adopts a descriptive, cross-sectional survey-based approach. It analyses selected quantitative findings from the researcher's doctoral thesis on digital marketing and FMCG consumer behaviour. The study compares respondents' reported marketing influence and summarises selected indicators of their digital marketing perceptions.

A descriptive design is appropriate for reporting the distribution of responses at a particular point in time. However, because the study does not manipulate marketing exposure or follow consumers over time, it cannot establish causal effects.

5.2 Study area

The geographical scope is Durg District, Chhattisgarh. The thesis identifies Durg Urban, Bhilai Nagar, Bhilai Charoda, Patan, Dhamdha and Gunderdehi as study areas. The research context includes FMCG purchasing through physical retail outlets and exposure to digital marketing communication.

5.3 Population and sample

The thesis reports a final sample of **300 respondents**, selected using **non-probability convenience sampling**. Respondents were approached on the basis of accessibility, availability and willingness to participate in the survey.

Convenience sampling is practical for a district-level consumer study, but it does not give every member of the target population a known probability of selection. Accordingly, the results should be interpreted as findings from the surveyed respondents rather than precise estimates for the entire district.

For the comparative findings presented in this paper, the analysis treats the 300 observations in the thesis table as the relevant respondent base. Before submission, the researcher should verify that the comparative table includes 300 eligible consumer responses and that no retail-stakeholder responses have been combined with consumer responses.

5.4 Data sources and instrument

The study draws on primary survey results reported in the doctoral thesis and secondary academic literature relevant to digital marketing and consumer experience. The thesis describes the use of a structured questionnaire covering respondent characteristics, awareness, digital marketing exposure, consumer perceptions and purchase-related responses.

The original questionnaire should be consulted to verify the precise wording of the digital-versus-traditional marketing question. This is important because respondents may interpret “influence” differently from “preference,” “exposure,” “trust” or “actual purchase.”

5.5 Variables used in the paper

The principal variable is the respondent’s reported comparative marketing influence, categorised as digital or traditional. Supporting indicators include awareness of digital marketing campaigns, perceived improvement in product awareness and perceived influence on purchase decisions.

These indicators are analysed separately. The paper does not treat them as a single validated scale, nor does it infer that respondents who favour digital marketing necessarily make more purchases or demonstrate greater brand loyalty.

5.6 Statistical techniques

The paper uses frequency distributions and percentages to summarise the thesis findings. Percentage calculations are based on the reported sample size of 300. No new respondent-level statistical test is presented in this paper because the underlying respondent-level dataset and the original comparative variable coding have not been independently examined here.

5.7 Ethical considerations

The study uses survey findings previously reported in the researcher’s doctoral thesis. Before journal submission, the author should provide the actual applicable information concerning informed consent, institutional ethical approval or exemption, participant confidentiality and permission to reuse the dataset. No approval number or consent procedure should be stated unless supported by the research records.

6. Results and Analysis

6.1 Comparative influence of digital and traditional marketing

Table 1. Respondents' reported comparative marketing influence

Marketing type	Frequency	Percentage
Digital marketing	186	62.0%
Traditional marketing	114	38.0%
Total	300	100.0%

Source: Researcher's doctoral thesis, Table 5.21, "Digital vs Traditional Marketing Influence."

Table 1 shows that 186 respondents (62%) reported digital marketing as more influential, while 114 respondents (38%) reported traditional marketing as more influential. The difference between the two reported sample proportions is 24 percentage points.

The distribution indicates that digital marketing was more frequently identified as influential by the surveyed respondents. This finding is consistent with the importance of online communication touchpoints discussed in the digital marketing literature (Kannan & Li, 2017). Digital channels can expose consumers to brand information through social media, online advertisements and mobile devices.

Nevertheless, the result does not establish that digital marketing is universally more effective than traditional marketing. The table records respondents' reported comparative influence, not experimentally measured advertising effectiveness. It also does not measure the amount of money spent on each channel, campaign exposure frequency, sales generated, or the profitability of marketing expenditure.

The 38% who reported traditional marketing as more influential also represent a substantial segment of the sample. Their responses caution against assuming that traditional channels have become irrelevant in the local FMCG retail environment.

6.2 Awareness of digital marketing campaigns

Table 2. Awareness of digital marketing campaigns

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	267	89.0%
No	33	11.0%
Total	300	100.0%

Source: Researcher's doctoral thesis, Table 5.4, "Awareness of Digital Marketing Campaigns."

The thesis reports that 267 respondents (89%) were aware of digital marketing campaigns, compared with 33 respondents (11%) who were not. This suggests that digital marketing communication was familiar to a substantial majority of the surveyed respondents.

Awareness is an important early stage in marketing communication, but it should not be equated with favourable attitudes, purchase intention or actual buying behaviour. A respondent may recognise a digital advertisement without trusting its claims or purchasing the advertised product. The finding therefore provides contextual support for the comparative result but does not independently prove the superiority of digital marketing.

6.3 Perceived contribution to product awareness

Table 3. Perceived effect of digital marketing on product awareness

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	33%
Agree	40%

Neutral	15%
Disagree	8%
Strongly disagree	4%
Total	100%

Source: Researcher's doctoral thesis, Table 5.5, "Digital Marketing Improves Product Awareness."

The combined proportion of respondents selecting "strongly agree" or "agree" is 73%. This indicates that nearly three-quarters of the sample perceived digital marketing as contributing positively to product awareness.

Digital content may provide repeated opportunities for consumers to encounter brand names, product images and promotional messages. Social media and online advertising can also make information available outside the immediate shopping occasion. These mechanisms are consistent with the wider digital marketing framework discussed by Kannan and Li (2017).

However, the result reflects respondents' perceptions rather than an objective pre- and post-campaign measure of awareness. It should therefore be interpreted as a positive self-reported assessment, not as proof of a 73% increase in awareness.

6.4 Perceived influence on purchase decisions

Table 4. Perceived influence of digital marketing on purchase decisions

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	27%
Agree	39%
Neutral	17%
Disagree	11%
Strongly disagree	6%
Total	100%

Source: Researcher's doctoral thesis, Table 5.6, "Digital Marketing Influences Purchase Decision."

The combined positive response is 66%, comprising 27% who strongly agreed and 39% who agreed that digital marketing influences purchase decisions. Neutral responses account for 17%, while 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The result indicates that a majority of surveyed respondents perceived digital marketing as relevant to their purchasing decisions. Yet purchase influence is not equivalent to completed purchases. Other factors, including product availability, price, quality, household needs, retailer recommendations and established brand habits, may also affect FMCG purchasing.

This distinction is important because the present study compares reported marketing influence rather than linking verified exposure to transaction-level sales.

6.5 Summary of descriptive findings

Table 5. Summary of key results

Indicator	Reported result	Interpretation
Digital marketing identified as more influential	62%	More frequently reported than traditional marketing
Traditional marketing identified as more influential	38%	Remains relevant to a substantial sample segment

Awareness of digital marketing campaigns	89%	High reported campaign awareness
Positive perception of product-awareness contribution	73%	Favourable self-reported perception
Positive perception of purchase-decision influence	66%	Perceived relevance to purchase decisions

Source: Researcher's doctoral thesis, Tables 5.4–5.6 and 5.21. Percentages are reproduced from the thesis.

Taken together, the results suggest that digital marketing is prominent in the reported preferences of the surveyed FMCG consumers. The findings also show that awareness and perceived influence are not identical measures: 89% reported awareness, while 73% perceived a positive contribution to product awareness and 66% perceived an influence on purchase decisions. These measures should not be interpreted as a causal progression because the analysis does not establish individual-level transitions between them.

7. Discussion

The main finding is that 62% of respondents reported digital marketing as more influential than traditional marketing. Within the surveyed sample, this provides a clear descriptive indication of the prominence of digital communication. It is consistent with research describing the expansion of digital marketing touchpoints and their role in consumer interactions (Kannan & Li, 2017).

The high reported awareness of digital campaigns further indicates that online promotional communication is familiar to many respondents. For FMCG marketers, this may support the use of social media content, online video, mobile-friendly promotions and digital information to maintain brand visibility. However, familiarity alone does not guarantee consumer trust or conversion.

The 73% positive response regarding product awareness suggests that respondents commonly perceive digital marketing as helpful for discovering or recognising products. This can be understood in the context of a customer journey involving repeated and varied touchpoints. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) emphasise that customer experience develops through multiple interactions, which supports the value of examining digital and traditional communication as potentially connected rather than entirely separate processes.

Similarly, 66% of respondents perceived digital marketing as influential in purchase decisions. This finding indicates perceived relevance, but it should not be interpreted as evidence that 66% of purchases were caused by digital advertisements. Consumers may be exposed to several channels before choosing a product, and the study does not isolate the independent effect of each channel.

The 38% preference for traditional marketing deserves equal consideration. It suggests that a meaningful proportion of the surveyed consumers continued to report traditional communication as more influential. Traditional channels may contribute to broad brand familiarity and reinforcement, while store-based displays can make promotional messages visible at the point of purchase. The study does not measure which specific traditional channel was most influential, so such explanations remain plausible interpretations rather than demonstrated findings.

The results therefore support a balanced conclusion: digital marketing was more frequently reported as influential in this sample, but traditional marketing retained perceived relevance. An integrated strategy may be more appropriate than a universal shift to one channel. FMCG businesses should consider

consumer segments, product categories, campaign objectives and channel-specific performance data when deciding how to allocate marketing resources.

8. Managerial Implications

8.1 Develop an integrated marketing communication strategy

FMCG marketers should coordinate digital and traditional communication rather than automatically discontinuing traditional media. Digital campaigns can introduce promotions and encourage interaction, while packaging, retail displays, print communication and other traditional formats can reinforce recognition. Consistent branding across touchpoints may help consumers recognise the same product and message in different settings.

8.2 Use digital channels for measurable engagement

Digital platforms can provide indicators such as reach, clicks, video completion, engagement and website visits. These metrics can help marketers evaluate how consumers respond to content. However, they should be connected to appropriate business outcomes where possible. Engagement metrics alone should not be treated as proof of additional sales.

8.3 Segment campaigns according to consumer needs

The findings should encourage businesses to investigate differences among consumer groups rather than assume a uniform preference. Future analyses could compare responses by age, location, shopping frequency and digital exposure, provided these variables and the underlying data are available. Such analysis could help identify where digital communication deserves greater emphasis and where traditional media remains useful.

8.4 Connect online communication with physical retail

Because the study concerns FMCG retailing, digital marketing should be evaluated in relation to the consumer's physical shopping experience. Retailers and brands can consider consistent promotional messages, clear product information, in-store offer communication and mobile-accessible product details. Any claim that these interventions increase sales should be assessed through appropriate campaign tracking or controlled evaluation.

8.5 Measure outcomes beyond stated preferences

Marketing managers should distinguish awareness, engagement, purchase intention, actual purchase and repeat purchase. Where feasible, campaign evaluation can combine survey feedback with sales data, redemption records, retailer observations and campaign expenditure. Such evidence would allow a stronger assessment of channel effectiveness than a preference question alone.

9. Limitations of the Study

The findings should be interpreted in light of the following limitations.

First, the study uses non-probability convenience sampling. The sample may not represent all FMCG consumers in Durg District, and the findings should not be generalised to the entire district or other regions without additional evidence.

Second, the comparison relies on self-reported influence. Respondents' stated preferences may differ from their actual purchasing behaviour. The study does not use transaction records or an experimental design to estimate the causal effect of marketing channels.

Third, the main comparative table classifies respondents according to whether digital or traditional marketing was more influential. It does not provide detailed channel-by-channel comparisons of reach, trust, expenditure, conversion or return on investment.

Fourth, the reported aggregate tables do not allow independent verification of relationships between marketing preference and demographic characteristics. Respondent-level data would be required to examine such differences reliably.

Fifth, the results are based on the measures and coding used in the original thesis. The exact wording of the comparative question and its respondent-level coding should be checked against the questionnaire and dataset before submission. The paper also requires confirmation that the comparative table contains eligible consumer responses only.

Finally, the descriptive percentages do not establish statistical significance for the difference between digital and traditional marketing. No inferential result should be reported without an appropriate test based on the original data and a clearly specified hypothesis.

10. Directions for Future Research

Future research can improve the comparative evidence in several ways. A probability-based or more systematically stratified sample could improve the basis for population-level inference. Researchers could also compare digital and traditional marketing preferences across urban, semi-urban and rural locations, subject to suitable sample sizes and sampling procedures.

Further studies could distinguish among television, radio, print, outdoor advertising and in-store promotions on the traditional side, and social media, search advertising, influencer content, mobile applications and online video on the digital side. This would provide a more detailed understanding than a two-category comparison.

A longitudinal design could investigate whether reported exposure and attitudes are associated with later purchasing behaviour. Experimental or quasi-experimental designs, where feasible, could compare campaign outcomes across groups or periods. Linking campaign data to verified sales, offer redemption or other behavioural measures would also help distinguish perceived influence from actual conversion.

Finally, future research could examine whether age, digital literacy, household purchasing roles, product category or shopping frequency are associated with channel preferences. Such analyses should be specified in advance and supported by appropriate statistical procedures.

11. Conclusion

This study compared the reported influence of digital and traditional marketing among 300 respondents surveyed for a doctoral study of FMCG retail consumers in Durg District, Chhattisgarh. The thesis findings show that 62% of respondents identified digital marketing as more influential, compared with 38% who identified traditional marketing. The study also reports 89% awareness of digital marketing campaigns, a 73% positive response regarding digital marketing's contribution to product awareness, and a 66% positive response regarding its influence on purchase decisions.

The findings indicate that digital marketing has a prominent position in the reported preferences of the surveyed consumers. Nevertheless, the continuing preference for traditional marketing among 38% of respondents suggests that traditional communication remains relevant to a substantial segment of the sample. The evidence therefore supports an integrated and audience-sensitive approach rather than the assumption that digital marketing should replace traditional media in every context.

The study contributes district-level descriptive evidence to discussions of digital marketing in the FMCG retail sector. Its conclusions remain bounded by convenience sampling and self-reported perceptions. Further analysis using respondent-level data, validated measures and behavioural or sales outcomes would be needed to determine whether the reported preference translates into demonstrably superior marketing performance.

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