

Digital Marketing and Consumer Millennials : A Comparative Study of Men, Women, and Transgender Consumers' Buying Behaviour in Punjab

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Abstract

Millennials play an enormous role in digital marketing as they are the ones who have grown up in a social media world. They are considered as a key target market for many digital marketing campaigns. Therefore, it is important to study the buying behavior of these consumers to know about their tastes, preferences, and expectations. The purpose of this study was to determine the most preferred digital marketing strategies by consumer millennials and also to compare the buying behavior of men, women, and transgender consumers in Punjab. There are many studies which have focused mainly on male and female buying behavior, but hardly any studies have been conducted, which have focused on comparing the buying behavior of men, women, and transgender consumers. This study considered transgenders also as this is the community which has different tastes and preferences as compared to other genders. The sample size for the purpose of the present study consisted of 250 respondents. The study concluded that the most preferred digital marketing platform by men was Instagram ; whereas, for women, the most preferred platforms were videos, blogs, and social media posts. On the other hand, transgenders' purchase decisions were mostly influenced by Instagram followed by Facebook. The study provides the implications to the marketing companies to focus on the buying behavior of men, women, and transgenders to market their products.

Keywords : digital marketing, consumer millennials, buying behavior, male consumers, female consumers, transgender consumers

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Digital marketing is the advertising of various products and services using digital technologies with the help of the Internet using mobile phones, computers, tabs, and other digital mediums. The concept of digital marketing has led the companies to promote their products and services through these digital marketing platforms. Digital media is so prevalent in today's era that consumers have ease of access to all relevant information related to products or services any time and at any place. It is the practice used by various companies for promoting their products and services through digital distribution channels. With the emergence of digital marketing, it is not an easy task anymore to meet the needs of present as well as potential customers. The

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consumers tend to compare the products online for various brands and prefer to buy that product which is of good quality with less cost along with various offers (Rameshkumar & Vikraman, 2018 ; Simon & Manohar, 2017). Companies nowadays are making more efforts to attract the consumers online, mainly the consumer millennials as they are the group of persons who are using this platform more. Growth of new generation's (Y) purchasing power is settling in and is going to be highest through a time period of approximately 2020 – 2050, with average millennials (Gen Y) playing a big role in the era of digitalization as they have grown up in the world of social media. It makes this group a key focus group for various digital marketing campaigns. Marketing to millennials is challenging (Jose & Koshy, 2018). These consumers are known to be budget-conscious, skeptical, and way ahead of the game when it comes to technology. The attractive looks of the products really convince them to go ahead with the purchases. These consumers will make comparisons of different products and brands and will go for the one that suits them the best in terms of all matching elements they are looking for (Kotni, 2018). To match up the standards of the consumer, every brand needs to make their presence felt on the social media platforms.

Millennials are going online for shopping, social networking, entertainment, and news. Digital marketing has become an effective way to communicate with consumer millennials due to their high usage of digital media. Therefore, it is considered to be the most promising medium for reaching this generation for the purpose of promotion of products or services (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007).

Review of Literature

(1) Consumer Millennials : Ordun (2015) identified the shopping preferences of consumer millennials and other generations and evaluated the patterns and motives behind the shopping behavior of these generations. The consumer millennial generation loves to buy from the digital platform and analyze associations between brand loyalty and consumer behavior of different generations.

Moore (2012) determined the model of consumer millennials on their usage behavior of interactive technologies in the current environment. The study revealed that millennial consumers use more interactive technologies than generation X and Y. The study also found that millennial consumers use these technologies to gather insights of information, and they are less focused towards online shopping.

Gurău (2012) studied the comparison between brand loyalty of consumer millennials and generation X consumers. The findings of the study revealed significant effect of life stage model on consumer millennials and generation X consumers and both these groups showed similar pattern in their behavior towards brand loyalty.

(2) Digital Marketing : Guilbeault (2018) identified the role of digital marketing in the disinformation age. The study emphasized on the global rise of digital marketing and its contribution to the consumers. The study found out that there was a need to go digital to attract the customers or disseminate the information in the current era.

Bala and Verma (2018) identified the impact of digital marketing on the business and in making consumers aware. The study attempted to find the key factors the companies target for making their brand known to the consumers. The study analyzed the effectiveness of Internet marketing and concluded that digital marketing is creating new opportunities for companies to attract the customers through their preferable digital platform.

Mohiuddin and Ahmed (2016) reviewed the effects of digital marketing on customer relationships. The study identified the factors that are important to be studied to make the customers loyal to brands. The study concluded that in today's era, there is high demand of the customer to make brands available on digital media, and that is actually impacting on the consumers through this medium.

(3) Buying Behavior : Teo and Yeong (2003) focused on the consumer buying behavior in an online shopping environment. The findings of the study revealed that there is a positive relationship between evaluation of deal and consumer inclination to buy online, and negative relationship between risk and overall evaluation of the deal.

Darley, Blankson, and Luethge (2010) provided a comprehensive review of online consumer behavior and decision - making processes. The results of the study found out the number of components that are important to make decisions in the online environment.

(4) Gender Diversity : Gopaldas and Fischer (2012) studied the importance of intersectionality beyond gender. The study also identified the relationship between consumer behavior, gender, and intersectionality and defined intersectionality as the phenomenon as a shared objective. The study pointed out the broader view of gender by defining the intersectionality concept.

Bae and Lee (2011) investigated the impact of gender differences on online consumer reviews. The results of the study revealed that there was a stronger effect of female customers on online intention than males. The females were found to be attracted more from negative reviews than positive reviews. The findings of the study paved way for the online companies to focus on the consumer reviews to engage females towards online shopping.

Richard, Chebat, Yang, and Putrevu (2010) assessed the role of gender and proposed the model for consumer behavior and investigated the change in the behavior of men and women during web navigation and proved that women were more involved in online websites than men. The study was focused to provide a future online communication strategy.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are :

- (1)** To determine the most preferred digital marketing strategy by consumer millennials.
- (2)** To compare the buying behavior of men, women, and transgender consumers in Punjab.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis concerning the objectives of the study is created as follows :

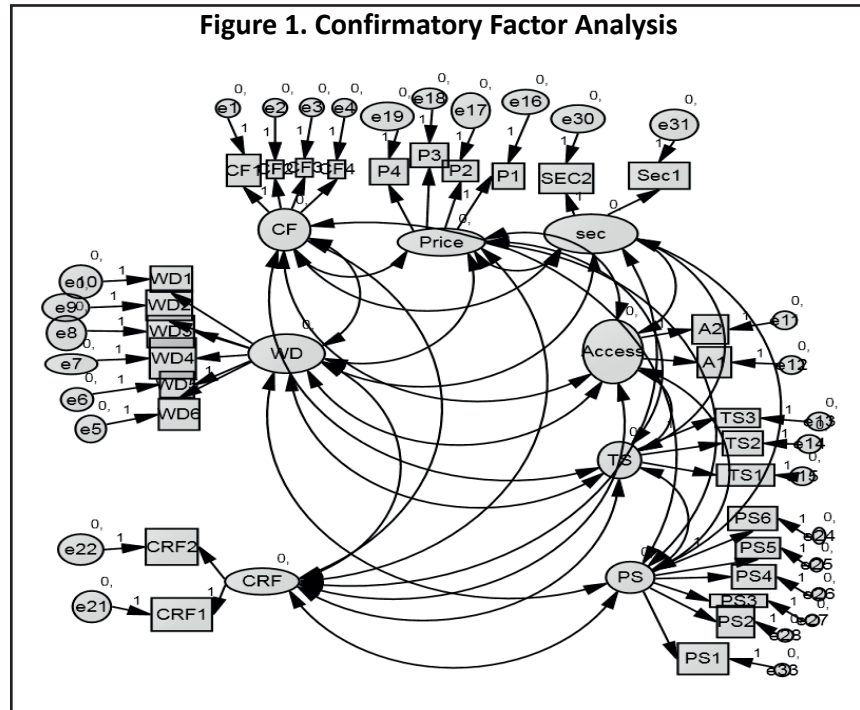
✎ **H₀ :** There is no significant difference between the buying behavior of men, women, and transgender consumers in Punjab.

Research Methodology

This is an exploratory study. It endeavours to study the buying behaviour of millennial consumers. It aims to compare the buying behaviour of men, women, and transgender consumers in Punjab.

(1) Sample Size and Technique : The sample size for the purpose of the present study consisted of 250 respondents considering 100 respondents from each category of male & female and 50 respondents from the category of transgenders as the population of transgenders is less as compared to others. The study collected data from three largest cities of Punjab, that is, Amritsar, Ludhiana, and Jalandhar. The selection of cities was done on the basis of highest population and area.

Further, the study uses purposive convenience sampling technique to collect data from the respondents. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed, out of which only 191 responses were received, but further seven questionnaires were found to be incomplete ; hence, the study could not consider the incomplete data for analysis purposes. The final sample size which was considered for analysis purposes was 184 responses out of 250



respondents. The final data considered for analysis was 91 male respondents, 75 female respondents, and 18 transgenders.

(2) Scale Reliability : The study uses the scale developed by Sultan and Uddin (2011) for analysis purposes. Furthermore, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is applied using AMOS-20 to check the reliability and validity of the scale (see Figure 1).

As the p - value of the model is 0.000 (Table 1), it shows that the scale is valid to consider for further analysis purposes. Moreover the values in the Table 2 are also more than 0.7, which confirms its reliability.

Table 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis - CMIN

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P-value	CMIN/DF
Default Model	115	916.389	349	.000	2.626
Saturated Model	464	.000	0		
Independence Model	29	3252.354	435	.000	7.477

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis - Baseline Comparisons

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI Rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI Rho2	CFI
Default Model	.718	.749	.805	.749	.799
Saturated Model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence Model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Analysis and Results

To analyze the data, it is important to check the assumption regarding normality and the study uses Kolmogorov – Smirnov test. It is found that the data is not normal. The variation in the data was removed by taking logarithm and even by removing outliers, but still, the assumption regarding normality is not met. Therefore, the data is analyzed with the help of non-parametric Mann-Whitney test for checking significant differences between the different categories of consumers as it does not compare the mean scores ; instead, it compares the median scores of two different samples. The differences are checked at the 5% level of significance. The objective of the study is to determine the most preferred digital marketing strategy by consumer millennials and the results of the same have been presented in graphic format in Figure 2.

The results shown in Figure 2 depict that the most preferred digital marketing platform by males is Instagram followed by top results shown by search engines; whereas, purchase decisions of females are influenced mostly by videos, blogs, and social media posts shared, that is, through content marketing strategies. On the other hand, transgenders' purchase decisions are mostly influenced by Instagram followed by Facebook.

Another objective of the study is to compare the buying behavior of men, women, and transgender consumers in Punjab. To describe the information related to the mean scores of each buying behavior sub - scales, the study uses the non-parametric Mann-Whitney test as the data were not normal. The purpose of this technique is to find out whether the individual sub - scale is significantly related with the categories of the buyers or not.

Further, the statistically significant results are shown followed by the calculation of Mann-Whitney test for each of the buying behavior sub-scales to determine which of the specific sub - scales have significant differences between males, females, and transgenders. Further, the comparison of mean scores and the p - values of Mann - Whitney test for each of buying behavior sub - scales are shown in Table 3 and Table 4, respectively.

Table 3 depicts the mean rank and sum of ranks for the three consumer millennial groups such as males and females, males and transgenders, and females and transgenders. The Table 4 depicts that there is a significant difference between the buying behavior of males and females for factors such as convenience frequency (p - value = 0.00), website design/features (p - value = 0.05), time saving (p - value = 0.029), promotional strategies (p - value = 0.00), and security (p - value = 0.07) as p - value for these factors is less than

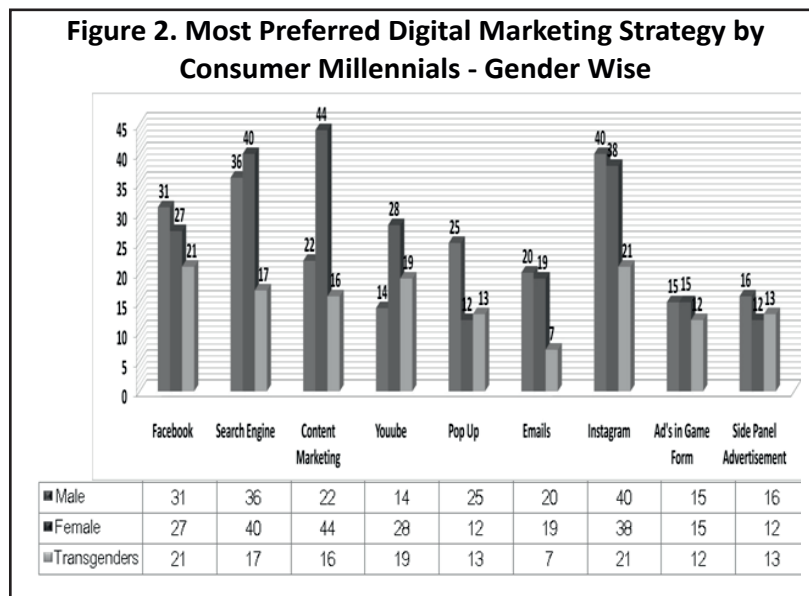


Table 3. Mann Whitney *U* -Test - Mean Rank

Groups	Group-1		Group-2		Group-3	
Factors	Gender	Mean Rank	Gender	Mean Rank	Gender	Mean Rank
Convenience Frequency	Male	90.46	Male	53.69	Female	43.92
	Female	75.05	Transgender	61.61	Transgender	59.83
Website Design/ Features	Male	78.7	Male	54.9	Female	48.1
	Female	89.32	Transgender	55.53	Transgender	42.42
Time Saving	Male	86.8	Male	55.45	Female	46.77
	Female	79.49	Transgender	52.72	Transgender	47.97
Accessibility of Brands	Male	85.87	Male	54.51	Female	45.86
	Female	80.62	Transgender	57.47	Transgender	51.75
Price	Male	84.71	Male	56.84	Female	48.37
	Female	82.03	Transgender	45.69	Transgender	41.31
Promotional Strategies	Male	75.95	Male	54.51	Female	48.86
	Female	92.67	Transgender	57.47	Transgender	39.25
Credit Facility	Male	86.75	Male	55.97	Female	47.17
	Female	79.55	Transgender	50.11	Transgender	46.31
Security	Male	87.3	Male	53.63	Female	44.98
	Female	78.89	Transgender	61.92	Transgender	55.42

0.05 (refer to Table 4). Therefore, the null hypothesis of the study is rejected for these factors as the *p*-value is less than 0.05. Moreover, the results of the study conducted by Yeesuntes and Buran (2017) are in support with our study that consumer buying behavior gets affected with purchasing convenience, attractive product display, and

Table 4. Mann Whitney *U* - Test - Test Statistics.

Particulars		Convenience Frequency	Website Design/ Features	Time Saving	Accessibility of Brands	Price	Promotional Strategies	Credit Facility	Security
Group-1 : Male and Female	Mann-Whitney <i>U</i>	3.886	4.209	4.350	4.509	4.711	3.887	4.523	4.256
	Wilcoxon <i>W</i>	7.876	1.011	8.341	8.499	8.701	9.786	8.514	8.247
	<i>Z</i>	-4.280	-2.807	-2.189	-1.519	-.563	-4.240	-1.409	-2.689
	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000*	.005*	.029*	.129	.574	.000*	.159	.007*
Group-2 : Male and Transgenders	Mann-Whitney <i>U</i>	6.608	6.270	5.152	6.190	5.414	6.108	6.464	6.340
	Wilcoxon <i>W</i>	6.560	6.527	5.932	6.970	6.194	6.510	7.244	6.534
	<i>Z</i>	-.124	-.645	-2.382	-.798	-1.968	-.890	-.347	-.557
	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.901	.519	.017*	.425	.049*	.373	.728	.577
Group-3 : Female and Transgenders	Mann-Whitney <i>U</i>	4.272	5.121	4.838	5.475	4.657	4.590	5.344	4.629
	Wilcoxon <i>W</i>	4.418	5.901	5.618	6.255	5.437	5.370	4.525	4.453
	<i>Z</i>	-2.299	-.700	-1.228	-.046	-1.569	-1.680	-.290	-1.667
	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.021*	.484	.219	.963	.117	.093	.772	.095

Note. *Significant at the 5% level.

easy access. Hence, it is implied that males and females act differently when it comes to convenience to buy products, attractive designs and features of websites, saving of time while searching products, security while shopping online as well as while making online payments, and promotional strategies adopted by companies to attract customers such as discounts, coupons, and freebies, etc. The results of the present study are also in line with the study results obtained by Banerjee, Mehta, and Bagchi (2014) that customers tend to look for convenience and accessibility in their shopping options. Further, to have deeper insights into the results, the mean score of men and women is compared. It is found that there is a significant difference in buying behavior of men and women for few factors, but here the question is who is more concerned amongst males and females while online shopping for such significant factors.

The mean score (Table 3) in case of convenience frequency as well as time saving is more for males as compared to females. Men always tend to make easy selection without spending much time on comparison. They generally choose the product which is most convenient to purchase, that is, a product which is easily available anytime 24 hours a day while shopping online, where there is home delivery option, where detailed information about products is available, and which also provide product suggestions to ultimately save the time. Our results are in support with the findings of the study conducted by Sharma and Uniyal (2017) that men try to complete their shopping as quickly as possible, but women take more time.

The mean score in case of security also is higher for males as compared to females. It is implied that men are more likely to feel safe and secure while shopping online than women. Women tend to prefer to buy products by visiting shops instead of shopping online as they do not find it as a much secure option. A woman seeks security (Sharma & Uniyal, 2017).

Moreover, website designs/features and promotional strategies attract women more as compared to men because the mean scores as per results are more for females than for males. The results of Ifezue (2010) are in line with our study's results that advertisement and promotional strategies give effect to buying behavior of women. They are more likely to get attracted with attractive website designs, heavy sale discounts, coupons, credit points, and freebies etc ; whereas, in case of other factors such as accessibility of brands, price, and credit facility, it is found that men and women have similar buying behavior. Both are equally concerned with price of a product, availability of credit facility or EMI facility, and its accessibility.

Furthermore, the mean score comparison of males and transgenders show a significant difference in case of time saving and price. Therefore, the null hypothesis of the study is rejected for time saving and price factors as the p - value is less than 0.05, but it is accepted for other factors. The mean scores in these two factors are more for men as compared to transgenders. It is implied that men are more likely to make easy selection without spending much time on comparison as compared to transgenders and they also are more concerned about the price of a product. In case of other factors, there is no significant difference found. It is implied that the buying behavior of men and transgender respondents is not significantly different for convenience frequency, website design/features, accessibility of brands, promotional strategies, credit facility, and security.

The mean score comparison of females and transgenders show a significant difference in case of convenience frequency. Hence, the null hypothesis of the study is rejected for the convenience frequency factor as the p -value is less than 0.05, but in case of other factors, the null hypothesis is accepted and there is no significant difference in the buying behavior of females and transgenders. Hence, it is implied that transgenders generally choose the product which is most convenient to purchase. Likewise, transgenders also do not waste time in searching for a product. They choose the product which is easily searchable and available everywhere. Further, it is found that there is no significant difference amongst females and transgenders in case of website design/ features, time saving, accessibility of brands, price, promotional strategies, credit facility, and security. They behave almost in a similar way.

Moreover, the common factor which is significant amongst all consumer millennial groups is convenience

frequency. The analysis of the results implies that males as well as transgenders both look for products which are easily available as compared to women. Instead of focusing on details of a product, they prefer to purchase a product which is most convenient to buy and where there is home delivery option. Therefore, companies should adopt strategies to make ease of comparison of products for men and transgenders as they do not want to make efforts to search the products online. They tend to buy the products which are easily available without much bothering about their details and descriptions. It is suggested that the advertisements of companies should be detailed for women and less detailed for men and transgenders. It will save the cost of advertisement as men and transgenders are unlikely to refer to detailed advertisements.

Marketing for the customers must be done along with work-ethics. Therefore, companies must not only identify the challenges or issues on which they will be taking action, but also ensure that everyone gets on board throughout the value chain. For the same cause, companies should plan carefully about the adoption of digital marketing strategy which will ultimately increase the sale of their brands and products. Hence, companies should adopt striking designs of the websites and should also provide more offers to attract women. Companies should create innovative customer experiences and specific strategies for media to identify the best path for driving up the digital marketing performance. Companies can use any devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, televisions, game consoles, digital billboards, and media such as social media, SEO (search engine optimization), videos, content, e-mail, and lot more to promote their products and services to attract consumer millennials as this is the most promising medium for reaching this generation.

Conclusion

In the era of digital age, the role of digital marketing cannot be overlooked as consumer buying behavior nowadays is affected by such practices. Gen Z is more towards using cell phones and purchasing the material online and that particular practices are identified by comparing the consumer buying behavior of the three categories. Each and every company nowadays is using the digital platform to go global and lot of initiatives are being taken and the present study attempts to define the key practices the companies should focus upon to deal with the changes in the consumer buying behavior of men, women, and transgenders. The results of the study reveal that the most preferred digital marketing platform by males was Instagram ; whereas, purchase decisions of females were influenced mostly by videos, blogs, and social media posts, that is, through content marketing strategy. On the other hand, transgenders' purchase decision was mostly influenced by Instagram followed by Facebook. Furthermore, it is also found that men and transgender respondents (as compared to women) were more likely to buy those products which were more convenient to buy and which do not require much effort to search. Companies should create innovative customer experiences and specific strategies to attract consumer millennials.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

In the present study, the data were collected from Amritsar, Ludhiana, and Jalandhar cities only, and therefore, the results cannot be generalized for the entire country. There are time and cost constraints that are attached while making a survey using a questionnaire. The findings of this study are based on the expressed opinions of the respondents and reliability of their responses are subject to the respondents' bias. Though every attempt was made to take a representative sample, but the survey may not be symbolic of the views of the rest of the target population.

Future studies could include a larger sample of millennials from other parts of India. Future studies may analyze certain classes of generations and compare their responses with millennials. Future studies could also use the current study as a point of reference to explore evolving attitudes for digital marketing as technology advances.

Authors' Contribution

Pooja Sharma conceived the idea and encouraged Sushant Gupta and Deepika Kapoor to investigate about this topic and find out what is to be done in this area. Sushant Gupta and Deepika Kapoor collected the data from the respondents. Dr. Pooja Sharma contributed in the analysis of the results. All the authors discussed the results and contributed to the writing of the final manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest, or non-financial interest in the subject matter, or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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