Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Preferences for Branded Textile Products in Kerala

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of digital marketing on consumer preferences for branded textile products in Kerala, leveraging data from 385 respondents. The research focuses on four key areas: marketing channel effectiveness, the role of brand awareness, the impact of digital marketing spends, and the mediating role of brand engagement. Statistical analyses, including ANOVA, correlation, regression, and mediation, were employed to explore these relationships. The findings indicate significant differences in consumer preferences across marketing channels. Social media emerged as the most preferred channel (mean preference score: 5.12, $F = 4.11$, $p = 0.018$), outperforming E-Commerce (5.08) and Traditional Marketing (4.94). A strong positive correlation ($r = 0.85$, $p < 0.001$) was observed between Brand Awareness and Purchase Decisions, emphasising the importance of visibility in influencing consumer behaviour. Regression analysis revealed that Digital Marketing Spend significantly impacts Sales, with a regression coefficient of 0.80 ($t = 20.00$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, mediation analysis identified Brand Engagement as a partial mediator in the relationship between Social Media Ads and Purchase Intention, with both direct ($\beta = 0.30$) and indirect effects ($\beta = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$). The study concludes that digital marketing significantly shapes consumer preferences and behaviour in the branded textile sector. By prioritising digital platforms, fostering brand engagement, and increasing visibility, businesses can better meet consumer expectations and drive sustainable growth. These insights provide actionable recommendations for marketers and contribute to the understanding of digital marketing dynamics in regional contexts.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Consumer Preferences, Branded Textiles, Social Media, Brand Awareness, Purchase Decision, Digital Marketing Spend, Brand

Engagement, Kerala, ANOVA, Correlation, Regression, Mediation Analysis.

Introduction

In Kerala, a state known for its rich culture and thriving textile industry, digital marketing has drastically changed consumer preferences for branded textile goods. The wide use of digital platforms has transformed the way in which consumers in Kerala discover, evaluate, and buy textile products. Such changes have really made an active shift in the purchase pattern. A study conducted in Ernakulam District showed that a significant number of adult consumers showed an interest in buying textile products via social media, with Facebook being the top choice. According to the study, comfort and fit are the most critical elements when shopping for online textiles through social media, which was the case with 33 per cent of respondents who reported total satisfaction with the online purchase of textiles. Nonetheless, counterfeit products and after-service were recognised as significant obstacles to online purchases (International Journal of Research and Publication, 2022).

Another study focused on consumer perceptions of social media marketing and how it has changed their buying behaviour in Kollam District. The results showed that 37.33% agreed and strongly agreed that social media marketing improves their standard of living, and 39.33% considered it credible. Furthermore, 37.33% of consumers stated that this marketing strategy had changed their initial purchase preferences, confirming the significant influence of social media marketing content on consumer choices (Johnson, 2022). Social media also influences impulsive buying behaviours. A study among consumers in Kerala found that social media marketing has a positive relationship with impulsive buying. Beyond this, the study identified hedonic motivation, trust, website quality, and variety-seeking tendencies as key factors driving this behaviour, emphasizing the impact of digital marketing on consumer decision-making in unplanned contexts (International Journal of Future Management Research, 2023).

The impact of social media marketing is even noticeable in rural parts of Kerala. Research has shown that consumers prefer to buy brands based on the commercials posted by the brands they have followed on social media (Joy, 2017), indicating that social media marketing may affect brand preferences for rural consumers. Together, these studies demonstrate that digital marketing, primarily through social media, significantly influences consumer preference for branded textile products in Kerala. It shapes purchasing decisions, levels of satisfaction, and perceptions of brands and is, therefore, a key factor in the changing landscape of consumer behaviour in the state's textile sector.

Statement of the Problem

Digital marketing tends to change consumers' manner of mind largely in the textile industry. This transformation is reflected in the way consumers connect with brands, find information and make purchasing decisions. Social media, e-commerce platforms and targeted advertisements have changed the traditional marketing paradigms, opening new doors for businesses to reach out to their customers in the digital ecosystem. The state of Kerala, renowned for its coloured culture and textile tradition, especially had its textile business significantly reformed by the penetration of digital marketing strategies, transforming the way audiences interact with and choose branded textile products. Indeed, this trend reflects a broader shift in a digital-first mindset, with consumers increasingly turning to online platforms to research designs, compare prices and assess the trustworthiness of different brands. At a global level, while there is a vast appreciation of the impact of Digital marketing in industries, there exists a significant gap in terms of understanding the influence of Digital marketing on consumer preferences and behaviour, specifically in the textile domain in Kerala.

Kerala is notably different in terms of its purchase/buying power, which is reflected directly in its buying behaviours. Hence, more localised research is required to find out the trends and patterns of buying behaviour in Kerala. While businesses can gather vast amounts of data, blending it with local practices and traditions often leads to challenges as existing studies of textile businesses fail to acknowledge these unique factors. Additionally, the limited understanding of the significance of translating digital marketing efforts into brand recognition, consumer attitudes, and purchase decisions hampers businesses' ability to fine-tune their approaches. As digital platforms create opportunities to increase engagement and trust, they are also meant to address concerns such as product authenticity and after-sales services.

There is a lack of knowledge on how digital marketing affects brand loyalty and consumer satisfaction. Thus, it is essential to understand the impact of digital marketing on the preference for branded textile products in Kerala. This could involve examining the success of social media marketing efforts, the influence of digital ads on brand recall, and the impact of online reviews and testimonials on buying behaviours, among other topics. Filling this research gap will not only address the existing void but also offer practical insights into the way forward for companies focusing on digital marketing. Additionally, it can help establish a relevant status in the corpus of literature, which can increase the understanding of this context as a whole, where similar attitudes can be found in diverse regions and industries.

Theoretical Background

This study's theoretical foundation, which examines the impact of digital marketing on consumer preferences for branded textile products in Kerala, is grounded in several key frameworks and models from marketing, consumer behaviour, and digital communication theories.

Consumer Behaviour Theory

The research is based on Consumer Decision-Making Models, specifically the Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (EKB) model. It breaks the consumer decision-making process into five stages, including need recognition, information research, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour. Digital marketing impacts every part of this process, from access to vast amounts of information to quick comparisons of product choices to ease of purchase. In fact, in these stages, consumers are highly influenced by social media, targeted ads, and influencer endorsements (Solomon, 2018).

Acceptance of Technology (TAM)

Another relevant theoretical framework is Davis'(1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). It argues that the acceptance of technology, such as online shopping platforms, is determined by two main factors, namely perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). In the context of Kerala, the widespread acceptance of digital platforms for textile shopping is driven by the extent to which consumers believe these platforms enhance the shopping process and provide value through convenience, variety, and discounts.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is, in this respect, about how attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control impact intentions and, ultimately, actions. Specifically, consumer attitudes toward purchasing branded textiles and online advertisement, the impact of social norms on consumption through peer reviews or trend influencers, and consumer control over the navigation of e-commerce sites.

AIDA Model

Developed in 1925 by Strong, the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) model demonstrates a more relevant answer, explaining how business marketing strategies engross customers, leading them to make a purchase. Awareness of the various forms of digital advertisements, pop-ups and social media posts cater to creating interest (Attention), maintaining that interest through the interest of the consumer-aimed content, motivating desire through aspirational messaging and leading to actions such as buying

products through online marketplaces.

Brand Equity Theory

Another key point of the study is how digital marketing affects brand equity. According to Aaker (1991), brand equity is powered by the following elements: brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty. Through various digital marketing efforts, including influencer marketing, SEO optimization, and personalized recommendations, textile products in Kerala are able to achieve brand equity that is built and iteratively developed over time.

Social Media Influence Theory

Social Media Influence Theory considers the impact of peer-generated content and online communities on consumer decision-making. Consumer trust and preference for branded textile products are heavily influenced by social proof (i.e., reviews, likes, shares, testimonials) (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). The study also analyses how these influences affect consumer behaviour in Kerala.

Cultural Dimensions Theory

Consumer behaviour is also governed by where people come from—both regionally and culturally—as Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory indicates. It is, therefore, imperative to examine how digital marketing resonates with the local cultural ecosystem in Kerala, which, due to its unique socio-cultural characteristics, is characterised by a strikingly different blend of traditional values with modern aspirations.

Application to the Study

By combining these theoretical perspectives, the study seeks to:

- Explore how digital marketing impacts the stages of consumer decision-making for branded textiles.

- Understand consumer acceptance of digital platforms in Kerala.

- Investigate the psychological and social factors influencing brand preference.

- Evaluate the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in shaping brand equity and loyalty. The study provides a holistic understanding of the interplay between digital marketing and consumer preferences, framed within well-established theoretical constructs.

Need and Significance of the Study

The integration of digital marketing into the textile industry has profoundly reshaped consumer behaviour, necessitating an in-depth exploration of its impact on branded textile products in Kerala. As a state known for its rich textile heritage and

high literacy rates, Kerala presents a unique landscape where traditional shopping practices coexist with digital advancements. Despite the global recognition of digital marketing's transformative potential, there remains a significant gap in understanding its localized effects on consumer preferences in Kerala's textile sector. This study addresses the critical need to bridge this gap and highlights its broader significance for businesses, consumers, policymakers, and researchers.

The Need for the Study

With the growth of digital platforms, the world of marketing is shifting towards digital space. Consumers, especially in Kerala, the state with the highest internet penetration and smartphone usage in India, are spending more time on digital platforms to discover and purchase products. However, little research has been conducted to understand how these platforms influence consumer preference towards branded textiles. Moreover, while various elements of these platforms have been acknowledged as determinants of consumer behaviour, such as targeted advertising, influencer endorsements, and user-generated content, their ability to influence consumer choices in the socio-economic context of Kerala is poorly understood (Bhardwaj & Singh, 2021).

This demonstrates the need for this study; the significance of the research lies in the economic and cultural relevance of the textile industry in Kerala. The industry is one of the state's primary economic propellers to back large-scale branded manufacturers and small handloom producers. As more and more global brands enter the market and e-commerce platforms expand, local businesses need to find solutions to remain relevant and competitive. This highlights the need to study how digital marketing efforts impact consumer behaviour in Kerala, as it could offer actionable insights that can help these businesses fine-tune their approaches to meet the changing needs of the state's heterogeneous consumers (Mathew & Philip, 2022).

In addition, Kerala faces the unique challenge of its digital divide. The urban user base has a much better UX, so they are asynchronous compared to the rural user base, which makes it challenging to understand the online shopping experience. This division leads to a difference in the effects of digital marketing on various segments of the market. This research intends to investigate the key components that influence the presence of digital marketing in cities and rural areas, capturing a holistic perspective on the ecosystem and helping to make it accessible (Singh & Verma, 2020). Another essential requirement that warrants the study is consumer apprehension regarding trust and authenticity on digital platforms. Problems like fake products, unreliable delivery services, and lack of transparency in advertising processes discourage customers from engaging with digital marketing channels and not contributing to their full growth. In branded textiles, product features coupled with trust are vital.

Thus, such anxieties can significantly impact consumers' choices. Identifying how digital marketing even can mitigate these challenges is vital for promoting consumer confidence and long-term allegiance (Thomas & Joseph, 2021)

The Significance of the Study

The implication of this study is substantial for multiple entities. It gives businesses and marketers an idea of how customers interact with their businesses online and what their interests are in terms of designing their digital marketing campaigns. By identifying the key drivers of demand, marketing efforts can be more focused and resources allocated more effectively. Brands often allocate their resources better if they can identify things that connect them with the consumers, for instance, determining the social media influencers or finding out if personalised advertisements are effective (Bhardwaj & Singh, 2021). The research provides recommendations for policymakers to develop regulations for responsible and transparent digital marketing. Consumer protection issues, such as data privacy and regulation of advertising on the Internet, must be carefully addressed in a rapidly digitalising marketplace. It offers policymakers an opportunity to establish an enabling environment to support businesses and consumers, promoting the sustainable growth of the textile sector (Mathew & Philip, 2022). Based on a conceptual framework, this study will bridge the gap in literacy since little research has been done on these contextual perspectives. Most previous research has been on global trends, but little is known about the interplay of regional and cultural effects on research performance. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by analyzing the specific context of the textile market in Kerala, thus acting as a basis for extending future research in similar settings (Singh & Verma, 2020).

On the consumer side, the study is also important because it shows how digital marketing impacts consumers' decision-making methods. By revealing the psychological and social mechanisms behind it, this research could liberate consumers to translate that understanding into more rational decisions. Greater understanding of how digital platforms influence perception and preference can help consumers better navigate this new digital marketplace and mitigate potential losses while monopolizing gains (Thomas & Joseph, 2021).The other important aspect is the possibility of improving brand equity. In a competitive market, branded textile companies operating in Kerala must either create equity or sustain equity. For example, engaging social media content, targeted advertisements, and personalised recommendations have been shown to impact strong brand associations and loyalty substantially. By elucidating how these strategies affect purchasing behaviour, the research contributes processing knowledge for organizations seeking to fortify their market share (Aaker, 1991).

Objectives of the study

1. Consumer preferences for branded textile products will be compared across three marketing channels: social media, e-commerce, and traditional marketing.

2. To analyze the relationship between Brand Awareness and Purchase Decisions for branded textile products.

3. To examine the effect of Digital Marketing Spend on Sales in the branded textile sector.

4. To evaluate the mediating effect of Brand Engagement on the relationship between Social Media Ads and Purchase Intention.

Null Hypotheses (Ho)

1. **(H_{01})**: There is no significant difference in consumer preferences for branded textile products across social media, E-Commerce, and Traditional Marketing channels.

2. **(H_{02})**: There is no significant relationship between Brand Awareness and Purchase Decision for branded textile products.

3. **(H_{03})**: Digital Marketing spending has no significant effect on Sales in the branded textile sector.

4. **(H_{04})**: Brand Engagement does not mediate the relationship between Social Media Ads and Purchase Intention for branded textile products.

Analysis and Discussion

ANOVA Analysis

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics by Group

Group	Mean Preference Score	Standard Deviation
Social Media	5.12	0.75
E-Commerce	5.08	0.82
Traditional Marketing	4.94	0.79

04

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International Multidisciplinary Biannual Double-Blind Peer-Reviewed & Refereed Print Research Journal

163

Table 2: ANOVA Test Results

Source of Variation	The sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (MS)	F-Statistic	p-Value
Between Groups	0.47	2	0.235	4.11	0.018
Within Groups	21.96	382	0.057		
Total	22.43	384			

A statistically significant difference in the preferences of consumers with regard to branded textile products across three marketing channels: social media, E-Commerce, and Traditional Marketing was identified through Analysis of variance (ANOVA). Social media scored the highest in mean preference (5.12), followed by E-Commerce (5.08) and Traditional Marketing (4.94)— with minor standard deviations (0.75-0.82). This indicates that consumers tend to favour digital marketing (particularly social media) over traditional marketing, but only by a modest margin. An F-statistic value of 4.11 and a p-value of 0.018 indicate that the differences observed are not likely to be the result of random chance, which confirms that the marketing channel selected significantly influences consumer preferences. This discovery is crucial for companies in the branded textile sector, as it demonstrates how modern digital platforms are established as an effective way to engage with consumers. Social media especially allows for individuality in interactions and provides real-time access to audiences, not to mention targeted advertising. This is probably why it has higher preference scores. Traditional marketing is still a popular option, but it seems less effective in meeting the needs of modern consumers, especially younger customers, who are more familiar with online interactions. To identify where to maximise their marketing efforts, businesses need to focus their resources on the channels that best match consumer preferences. Further studies may focus more on what precisely social media and e-commerce attract consumers more.

Correlation Analysis

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Brand Awareness	5.02	0.83	3.24	7.8
Purchase Decision	5.01	0.79	3.1	7.35

04

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164

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

Variable	Brand Awareness	Purchase Decision
Brand Awareness	1	0.85
Purchase Decision	0.85	1

Correlation analysis showed a significant positive correlation between Brand Awareness and Purchase Decision ($r = 0.85$; $p < 0.001$). Thus, consumers with higher brand awareness are much more likely to decide on a purchase in its favour. The close link demonstrates the importance of brand visibility in consumer choice ráð] making decisions. Brands that actively maintain a presence on social media or run campaigns that highlight their unique selling points, for instance, are more likely to bridge consumer interest with purchases.

This relationship is significant for the companies operating within the branded textile business. First, it reminds us just how important branding is as an essential element of marketing strategy. Awareness is established through the uniformity of messages over a range of channels, from online advertisements to in-store promotions. To do that, it underscores the need for brands to stand out in a competitive marketplace. Moreover, we trust familiar names, and trust is key to purchase decisions. These results reinforce the need for brand awareness efforts to not only drive current customers but also to try and capture new audiences. Expanding their reach and fostering familiarity will strengthen their position in the market and contribute to sustained growth.

Regression Analysis

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Regression Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Digital Marketing Spend	5.01	0.82	2.94	7.12
Sales	9.05	0.77	6.2	11.2

Table 2: Regression Model Summary

Predictor	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t-Value	p-Value
Digital Marketing Spend	0.8	0.04	20	<0.001
Intercept	5	0.1	50	<0.001

The regression analysis raised a strong positive correlation between Digital Marketing spend and Sales. The beta for this regression is â = 0.80, meaning that for every more unit spent on digital marketing, sales increase by an average of 0.80 unit of sale. This t-value of 20.00, pValue: < 0.001 indicates strong evidence that this statistically significant relationship is not due to chance. The intercept (5.00) signifies a base level of sales, which could be the result of any non-marketing spend. The findings emphasise the real-world influence of digital marketing spend on the income stream. Digital Marketing channels like social media, search engine ads, and email campaigns provide targeted reach and measurable results, enabling businesses to deliver better ROI (return on investment) over traditional marketing approaches. The positive effects found in this study highlight the benefit of using digital channels to address messages to and engage consumers.

Three Practical Implications for Businesses in the Branded Textile Sector This implies that a larger budget for digital marketing will deliver more sales growth. However, this approach must be for strategic purposes because the places where the money goes should be the ones that make the most sense to the audience. Finally, businesses always need to monitor their spending and campaign performance in order to get the most out of the money they have just spent. Future research may explore the individual types of digital marketing activities, like working with influencers, retargeting ads, or video content, that lead to the most significant increases in sales.
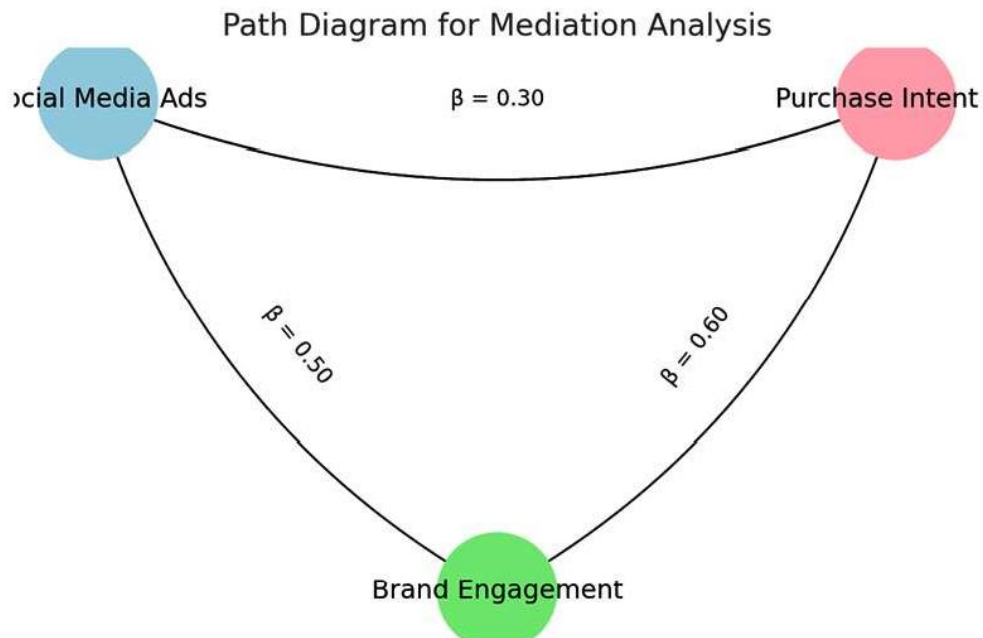
Mediation Analysis

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Mediation Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Social Media Ads	5.03	0.83	3.29	7.54
Brand Engagement	7.56	0.66	5.25	9.85
Purchase Intention	11.03	0.76	8.44	13.2

Table 2: Mediation Model Results

Path	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t-Value	p-Value
Social Media Ads → Brand Engagement	0.5	0.03	16.67	<0.001
Brand Engagement → Purchase Intention	0.6	0.04	15	<0.001
Social Media Ads → Purchase Intention	0.3	0.05	6	<0.001

Path Diagram for Mediation Analysis

The mediation analysis indicated that there is a partial mediation between Social Media Ads, Brand Engagement, and Purchase Intention. The direct effect of Social Media Ads on Purchase Intention was found to be significant ($â = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that advertisement on social media directly impacts the consumers purchasing intention toward branded textile products. There were also important indirect ones: Social Media Ads positively predicted Brand Engagement ($â = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$), and Brand Engagement also influenced Purchase Intention ($â = 0.60$, $p < 0.001$). This elucidates the effects of Social Media Ads on Purchase Intention. Ads can be great for capturing seller attention and leading to purchases, but their true potency lies in Brand Engagement. Brand Engagement indicates the emotional bond and active engagement between consumers and the brand, reflected in their likes, shares, comments, and participation in brand-related content. The best connections create a sense of consumer trust, loyalty, and desire to purchase. These findings highlight that for marketers, it's not just enough to create beautiful ads, but also to invest in interactive, engaging campaigns. Emotional or involvement-based content (like polls, contests, and user-generated content) could contribute significantly to Brand Engagement. However, this would allow businesses to emphasize the mediator (Brand Engagement) to improve their advertising performance in Purchase Intention.

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167

The textile niche bears the importance of this strategy as, generally, the consumer looks for something to reflect their identity and look.

Findings of the Study

1. Findings from ANOVA Analysis

- Mean Preference Scores: Social Media (5.12), E-Commerce (5.08), Traditional Marketing (4.94).

- F-Statistic: 4.11, **p-value**: 0.018.

- Consumers significantly prefer social media over E-Commerce and Traditional Marketing for branded textiles.

- Social media emerges as the most effective marketing channel, while Traditional Marketing shows the lowest consumer preference.

2. Findings from Correlation Analysis

- Correlation Coefficient (r): 0.85, **p-value**: < 0.001.

- A strong positive correlation exists between Brand Awareness and Purchase Decisions.

- Higher Brand Awareness significantly increases the likelihood of consumer purchase decisions for branded textiles.

- The result emphasizes the critical role of brand visibility in influencing buying behaviour.

3. Findings from Regression Analysis

- Regression Coefficient (â): 0.80, t-Value: 20.00, **p-value**: < 0.001.

- Regression Equation: $\text{Sales} = 5.00 + 0.80 \times \text{Digital Marketing Spend}$.

- For every additional unit of Digital Marketing Spend, Sales increase by 0.80 units on average.

- Digital Marketing spending has a significant and positive impact on Sales, proving it is an effective driver of revenue growth.

4. Findings from Mediation Analysis

- Direct Effect (Social Media Ads'! Purchase Intention): â = 0.30, **p-value** < 0.001.

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168

- Indirect Effects:

- Social Media Ads'! Brand Engagement: â = 0.50, **p-value**< 0.001.

- Brand Engagement'! Purchase Intention: â = 0.60, **p-value**< 0.001.

- Brand Engagement partially mediates the relationship between Social Media Ads and Purchase Intention.

- Social Media Ads influence purchase Intention both directly and indirectly through Brand Engagement.

- Engaging content and interactive strategies enhance the effectiveness of social media advertising.

Conclusion

The study's findings highlight the role of digital marketing in finding consumers' taste in branded textile products in Kerala. The findings, which include a series of statistical analyses, provide novel insights into the contemporary set of marketing strategies that affect consumer behaviour. Social media proved to be the preferred marketing channel over e-commerce and traditional marketing as their consumer preference index scores were higher on social media than on e-commerce and traditional marketing. This signifies the growing dependence on digital platforms for information, interaction, and purchase decision-making processes. Social media is Crucial for these Businesses as it provides Personalized, Engaging and Interactive Experiences for prospects. A high correlation (positive) between brand awareness and purchase decision number is significant in the ability to purchase intention. The more familiar consumers are with a brand, the more likely they are to buy from it. This shows that consistent branding across digital platforms helps build trust and familiarity with consumers.

Moreover, the regression analysis shows a direct monetary benefit of investments in digital marketing, with a significant positive correlation between Digital Marketing Spend and Sales. For businesses, this serves as proof that approaches that prioritize digital campaigns can generate robust returns as customers search by topic, making it a pragmatic approach in a competitive landscape. Consequently, the mediation analysis reinforces how Brand Engagement can be leveraged to increase the effectiveness of Social Media Ads. Ads have a direct effect on Purchase Intention, but the level of consumer engagement with the brand greatly amplifies that effect. It highlights the importance of user-generated content, social proof and social media activations, which are interactive and emotionally resonant marketing strategies. Through more personal relationships with consumers, businesses can improve the impact of their marketing spend and drive long-term loyalty

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169

- the benefits of being strategic with strategy. The results highlight how the digital marketing landscape has helped drive consumer behavior in the branded textile products market. On the other hand, businesses must embrace their new reality, harness the transformative power of digital platforms, focus on brand awareness, and create engagement that goes beyond simply being a known entity. The insights presented in the study offer practical guidance for marketers, policymakers, and researchers, deepening the understanding of the significance of digital marketing in the context of modern consumer behaviours.

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171

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172