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The Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Behavior

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Abstract:

This study examines how digital marketing affects brand perceptions of consumers, loyalty, and, thereby, the motivation to purchase. In this era of digital communication between brands and consumers, the part of ingredients such as consistent branding, attractive images, and social proof like reviews in building trust cannot be overemphasized.

A survey was conducted among 50 respondents located in Saudi Arabia, which data was collected on how people interact with Assaf's digital marketing efforts, laying more emphasis on social media engagement. These findings show that consumers are more likely to trust and engage with brands that have a consistent online identity. The study discloses the role that endorsements, as well as user-generated content, play in instilling brand credibility and in the process encouraging purchases. These bits of knowledge can influence companies to finely adjust their digital strategies to be able to develop stronger equality and loyalty-based interactions with consumers within the framework of the digital age.

Keywords:

Consumer behavior, Digital Marketing, Psychological factors, Digital Marketing Channels, Effectiveness, Brand awareness, Brand Loyalty

Acknowledgement:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

{وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ}

Completing this thesis has been not only an academic challenge but also a profound journey of personal and professional growth.

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List of Abbreviations:

- SEO - Search Engine Optimization
- PPC – Pay-Per-Click
- WOM – Word of Mouth
- CX – Customer Experience
- DMS – Digital Marketing Strategy
- SERPs - Search Engine Result Pages
- SMM – Social Media Marketing
- ROI – Return on Investment
- DMA - The Data & Marketing Association
- CRM - Customer Relation Management
- NLP - Natural Language Processing
- NPS – Net Promoter Score
- CAC - Customer Acquisition Cost
- CRM - Customer Relationship Management

Chapter One.

1.1 Introduction:

In the contemporary world, digital marketing has changed the way brands connect with consumers. The traditional advertising methods have been replaced by the online platforms such as social media, search engines, and email. Digital marketing is not only about people activity but also it is about building relationships that affect customers' attitude about brands, loyalty, and buying.

As almost all consumers now rely on digital channels to discover and evaluate products, a brand's online presence is indeed more important than ever.

Elements such as a well-coordinated brand identity, an engaging and eye-catching visual, and social proof (think reviews or influencer recommendations) are all part of the equation to consumer trust and engagement. Social media has been the real deal to change the game, making it possible for the consumers to communicate easily with the brands and to be able to hear from their friends whom they trust, and as a result, the brand credibility increases.

The purpose of this study is to examine how digital marketing impacts consumer behavior, especially in the areas of engagement, loyalty, and purchases. Through investigating brand visibility, cultural influences, and social proof, this study attempts to uncover the factors that make digital marketing successful.

1.2 Research problem :

The rapid development of digital marketing has resulted in a great transformation in how companies interact with people, still, there is a lack of clarity on its precise effect on consumer behavior.

This research intends to determine how various digital marketing strategies, for example, social media advertising, email marketing, and SEO (search engine optimization) influence the consumer's decision-making process, brand loyalty, and purchase intentions. Also, it aims to find out the main factors that regulate these effects, which would give businesses the insights to improve their digital marketing

1.3 Research Hypotheses:

- H1: Digital marketing strategies significantly impact consumer purchase intentions.
- H2: Higher levels of engagement with social media marketing are positively correlated with increased brand loyalty among consumers

1.4 Research Aim and Objectives:

1.4.1 Aim

This research aims to understand the impact of digital marketing on consumer behavior, focusing on how different digital marketing strategies influence consumer decision-making processes, brand loyalty, and purchase intentions.

1.4.2 Objectives

1. To analyze the relationship between digital marketing strategies and consumer purchase intentions
2. To examine how engagement on social media affects consumers' loyalty to a brand.
3. To identify key factors that mediate or moderate the impact of digital marketing on consumer behavior.

1.5 Research Questions:

1. How do different digital marketing strategies (e.g., social media, email marketing, SEO) influence consumer behavior?
2. What role does consumer engagement with social media platforms play in shaping brand loyalty?
3. What factors mediate the effects of digital marketing on consumer behavior?

1.6 Research Importance :

Recognizing consumer behavior is essential for marketers in today's fast-paced world, as it involves understanding the choices people make when selecting, purchasing, using, and disposing of products and services. This behavior is influenced by a mix of societal, cultural, psychological, and individual factors that shape how consumers interact with brands.

In the digital marketing space, recognizing these influences lets businesses create strategies that truly revolve around their audiences. As more consumer interactions move online, understanding how people engage with digital platforms becomes vital for marketers aiming to fine-tune their approach and improve overall engagement, and increase profits.

1.7 Research Methodology :

1.7.1 Research Design:

This research will employ a qualitative secondary research approach, utilizing existing literature, case studies, and data from upstanding sources to analyze the impact of digital marketing on consumer behavior. This approach will provide a

comprehensive understanding of the subject by integrating findings from various studies, reports, and articles.

1.7.2 Data Sources:

- **Academic Journals:** Peer-reviewed articles that discuss digital marketing strategies and consumer behavior.
- **Industry Reports:** Reports from marketing research firms and organizations that provide insights into current trends in digital marketing.
- **Case Studies:** Examples of companies that have successfully implemented digital marketing strategies and their impact on consumer behavior.
- **Online Databases:** Resources like Google Scholar, JSTOR, and industry-specific databases for relevant secondary data.

1.7.3 Data Analysis:

- **Thematic Analysis:** Identify and analyze themes related to consumer behavior patterns in response to digital marketing efforts.

1.8 Research Limitations:

- **Scope of Research:**

The focus on digital marketing may limit the exploration of other significant factors influencing consumer behavior, such as the impact of offline marketing strategies or interpersonal influences, which could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the consumer decision-making process.

- **Time Constraints:**

The limited timeframe provided by the university for this research necessitates a reliance on secondary data. This decision allows for a thorough exploration of existing literature without the lengthy processes associated with primary data collection, ensuring the research objectives can be met within the available period

- **Dependence on Secondary Data:**

The research relies entirely on existing literature and data, which may not capture the most recent trends or developments in digital marketing.

Chapter Two:

Literature Review

2.1 Overview of Consumer Behavior:

Consumer behavior is a diverse field that explores how individuals make decisions regarding acquiring, consuming, and disposing of goods and services. It includes a range of activities, from the initial recognition of needs to the final purchase and beyond, including post-purchase evaluation and potential disposal.

Understanding consumer behavior is crucial for businesses and marketers as it provides insights into the motivations, preferences, and influences that drive purchasing decisions

2.2 Consumer Behavior Definitions.

Several authors have defined consumer behavior in ways that highlight its diversity:

Author	Definition.
Faison and Edmund (1977)	“The assumption that people have series of needs which lead to drive state.”
Engel, et al. (1986	“Those acts of individuals directly involved in obtaining, using, and disposing of goods and services, including the decision processes that precede and determine these acts”
Kotler (1994	“The study of how people buy, what they buy, when they buy, and why they buy.”
Solomon et al. (1995)	“The study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires”
Blackwell et al. (2006)	“The activities and processes that individuals engage in when selecting, purchasing, using, and disposing of products, services, ideas, or experiences.”
Schiffman (2007)	“The behavior that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs”

Table 1: Consumer Behavior Definitions

(Dudovskiy, n.d.)

The definitions of consumer behavior from various authors illustrate the field's complexity and its foundational role in understanding market dynamics. Faison and Edmund (1977) emphasize the intrinsic link between needs and drive states, suggesting that consumer decisions are rooted in a hierarchy of needs. Engel et al. (1986) expand this understanding by detailing the actions involved in the consumption process, highlighting the significance of pre-purchase decision-making.

Kotler (1994) provides a practical perspective by focusing on the fundamental questions of consumer purchasing: how, what, when, and why. Solomon et al. (1995) further enrich this discussion by framing consumer behavior as a process of selection and disposal, emphasizing the importance of satisfying needs and desires. Blackwell et al. (2006) and Schiffman (2007) both reinforce the notion that consumer behavior encompasses a range of activities that extend from searching to evaluating and disposing of products and services. Notably, Blackwell et al. (2006) highlight that consumer buying behavior itself is a complex, dynamic issue that cannot be easily or commonly defined. This complexity underscores that the concept of consumer buying behavior has been articulated in various ways by different researchers

Together, these definitions underscore that consumer behavior is not merely about transactions; it is a multifaceted process influenced by a variety of factors. Understanding these complexities is essential for businesses and marketers as they develop strategies to effectively engage consumers. As we dive into the impact of digital marketing on consumer behavior, these insights will serve as a foundation for analyzing how digital channels reshape consumer interactions and influence purchasing decisions.

2.3 What affects consumer behavior?

At its core, consumer behavior is shaped by various factors, including psychological, social, cultural, and economic influences. Key psychological factors affecting consumer behavior include motivation, perception, learning, beliefs, and attitudes. While social factors include family, friends, and broader societal influences (The wider range of societal factors that impact or shape individuals, groups, or communities). Cultural background also plays a significant role, in affecting consumer values and consumption patterns. Additionally, economic conditions can influence consumers' purchasing power and willingness to spend. (Williams, 2024)

2.3.1 Psychological factors:

The psychological factors that influence an individual's decision to make a purchase are further categorized into the individual's motivations, perceptions, learning and his beliefs and attitudes (Callwood, 2013).

- **Motivation:**

Trehan suggests that motivation is an activated internal need state leading to goal-directed behavior to satisfy that need. Accordingly, motives can be defined as relatively enduring, strong, and persistent internal stimuli that arouse and direct behavior toward certain goals (Trehan, 2009) , (Durmaz, 2014)

While Maslow defines motivation as the drive to fulfill needs in a hierarchical manner and that unsatisfied needs are what motivate human behavior

According to Maslow (1943, 1954), human needs were arranged in a hierarchy, with physiological (survival) needs at the bottom, and the more creative and intellectually oriented 'self-actualization' needs at the top. (McLeod, 2024)

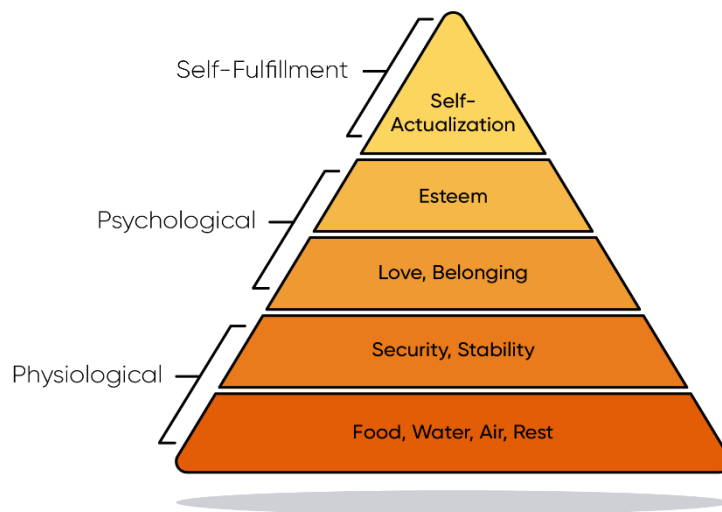


Figure 1 : Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- 1) Physiological needs are the most basic needs for physical survival, such as food, water, rest...etc
After an individual's physiological needs are met, the desire for security and safety becomes more notable.
- 2) Security/Safety is the need to feel safe in a particular environment. This includes personal, financial, and health-related security. After physiological and safety needs are satisfied, the next level of human needs is social, focusing on a sense of belonging and connection.
- 3) Social need is the need to be loved and accepted by others. Once safety is ensured, people seek social connections for a sense of belonging. This need is strongly wanted in childhood
- 4) Esteem needs: Maslow classified esteem needs into two categories, esteem for oneself 'self-esteem' (dignity, independence, achievement) , and the desire to be respected by others (Status, prestige) (Wahome, 2022)
Maslow indicated that the need for respect or reputation is most important for children and adolescents and precedes real self-esteem or dignity (Maslow A. , A Theory of Human Motivation, 1943)
- 5) Self-Actualization Needs, we can find this need at the top of the pyramid as people strive to for personal growth.
Maslow describes this level as the desire to accomplish everything that one can, and "to become everything one is capable of becoming" (Maslow A. , 1943, 1987)
While Maslow believed that few individuals could attain full self-actualization, he maintained that everyone could experience temporary

moments of self-actualization, known as 'peak experiences.' (Maslow A. , 1962)

- **Perception:**

Richard L. Solomon defines perception as “the process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions to give meaning to their environment.”

He further describes perception in consumer behavior as the process through which individuals interpret and make sense of sensory information related to products, brands, and marketing stimuli. This process involves several key stages: exposure, attention, interpretation, and retention.

- Exposure occurs when consumers encounter a stimulus through their senses.
- Attention is the selection of certain stimuli for further processing, influenced by factors like relevance and novelty.
- Interpretation is how consumers assign meaning to stimuli based on their past experiences, beliefs, and expectations.
- Retention involves storing this interpreted information for future reference, which can influence future purchasing decisions.

(Solomon, 2017)

- **Learning:**

Learning refers to the changes in an individual’s behavior that result from experience. Our perception in any given situation is influenced by our previous experiences, which create a preparatory set or expectations that help us categorize and organize new stimuli. In essence, we draw on our past experiences to achieve balance or consistency by relating to and interpreting new stimuli based on what we have previously learned. (Blythe, 2008)

According to Seongsin Lee, there are two main types of learning:

- a. Experiential Learning and it highlights the importance of real-life situations and practical application as this type of learning occurs when direct experiences lead to changes in behavior.
- b. Conceptual Learning:

On the contrary of experiential learning, this type of learning is acquired through indirect sources, such as books or lectures, and it involves understanding and applying concepts.

These distinctions help clarify how different types of learning can influence consumer behavior by shaping perceptions and expectations in various contexts (Lee, 2007)

- **Beliefs and Attitudes:**

Attitudes and beliefs represent another psychological factor that influences consumer behavior.

A belief is a conviction a person holds about something.

An attitude is a consistent view of something that encompasses the belief as well as an emotional feeling and a related behavior.

Research highlights that marketers can effectively shape consumer attitudes through strategic communication and branding efforts. By addressing and aligning with consumers' beliefs, brands can foster positive attitudes, ultimately enhancing customer engagement and driving sales. (Kotler & Keller, 2016)

2.3.2 Social Factor:

Social factors are characteristics of individuals or groups that affect thought or behavior in social contexts and influence outcomes (American Psychological Association, 2022)

The social factor is one of the most affecting on consumer behavior, it includes family, group and status.

Family members often serve as primary sources of influence, impacting decisions from brand loyalty to purchasing preferences

Groups, whether formal or informal, create reference points that help shape individual purchasing decisions. This influence often results in people adjusting their choices to align with the behaviors and expectations they perceive from these groups. Kotler defined the Group as “Two or more people who interact to accomplish individual or mutual goals” (Kotler P. , 2017)

Social Status can dictate the types of products and services individuals are interested to buy, often aligning with their identity and aspirations within their social context.

Word of mouth (WOM) is also a powerful social factor that affect consumer behavior as it comes from a trusted source such as friends and family.

Kotler emphasizes the importance of personal recommendations in consumer behavior, stating that “the impact of the personal words and recommendations of trusted friends, family, associates, and other customers on buying behavior” can significantly influence purchasing decisions. (Kotler et Al, 2017)

2.3.3 Cultural Factors:

Kotler observed that human behavior is largely the result of a learning process and as such individuals grow up learning a set of values, perceptions, preferences and behavior patterns as the result of socialization both within the family and a series of other key institutions. From this we develop a set of values, which determine and drive behavioral patterns to a very

large extent. According to Schiffman and Kanuk, values include achievement, success, efficiency, progress, material comfort, practicality, individualism, freedom, humanitarianism, youthfulness and practicality. This broad set of values is then influenced by the subcultures like nationality groups, religious groups, racial groups and geographical areas, all of which exhibit degrees of difference in ethnic taste, cultural preferences, taboos, attitudes and lifestyle.

Geert Hofstede also discussed how can culture affect behavior by stating: “Culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster.” (Hofstede, 2011).

Cultural factors include three main categories:

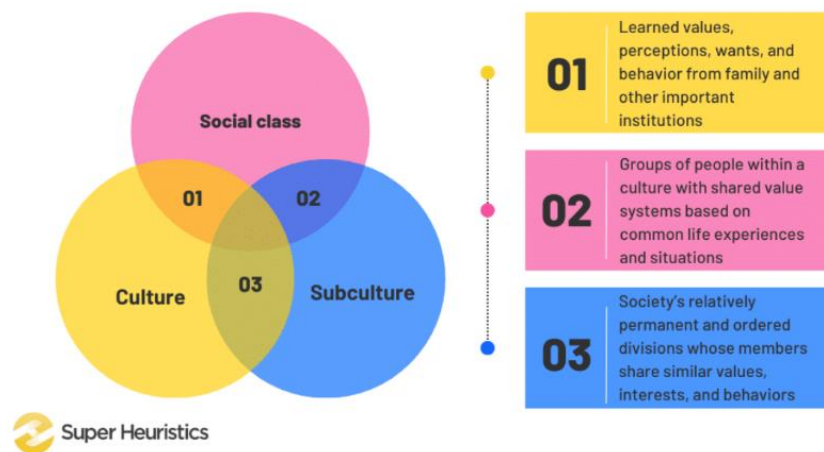


Figure 2: Cultural Factors Affecting Consumer Behavior

1. Culture, which is the set of values, beliefs, norms and customs that shapes one's identity and influence our actions. It affects everything in our life, from how we greet each other to what we wear, as it is created and founded from early in human life, starting from infancy.
2. Social class, which is influenced by factors such as income, education, and occupation, groups individuals who share similar life experiences and circumstances. There are three different social classes in our society: Upper class consumers, who spend more to maintain their status. Middle class consumers, who purchase carefully and look for cheaper options by comparing. Lastly, lower class consumers, who buy on impulse.
Therefore, marketing managers should study these groups and decide whether they want to target upper, middle or lower class to take appropriate measures to appeal to the targeted audience.

3. Subculture, each culture is made up of smaller subcultures that offer more specific identification and socialization opportunities for their members. A subculture represents a set of beliefs, values, and practices shared by a subgroup within the main culture, often defined by factors such as nationality, religion, ethnicity, or geographic location.

For example, regional differences can create subcultures that affect preferences for food, clothing, or even technology. There for, consumers in rural areas may have different priorities than those in urban centers. (Hoyer & MacInnis, , 2010)

(Ramya N & Ali, 2016)

2.3.4 Economic Factors:

This is the fourth factor that can influence consumer behavior, as the economic conditions of an individual can affect their purchasing decisions of a specific brand.

Hoyer and MacInnis noted that “The economic environment directly affect consumers' ability to spend and their willingness to make purchases, especially during periods of economic downturn.” (Hoyer & MacInnis, , 2010)

With that being said, personal and family income can make a huge impact in buying behavior. Higher income levels typically lead to increased purchasing power, enabling consumers to buy more products and services. In contrast, lower income can constrain spending and force consumers to prioritize essential items over luxuries.

2.4 Overview of Digital Marketing.

In this section, you'll find an overview of Digital marketing and its strategies before talking about how it affects consumer behavior in detail.

Digital Marketing typically refers to online marketing campaigns that appear on a computer, phone, tablet, or other device. It can take many forms, including online video, display ads, search engine marketing, paid social ads and social media posts.

Digital marketing matured only in the late 1990s with the widespread of the internet all over the world. As businesses moved online, consumers started enjoying the convenience of shopping from home. What started as an occasional online shopping experience has grown into a regular habit for over two billion digital shoppers globally, reshaping how companies approach marketing entirely. (Mundra, 2024)

2.5 Digital marketing Definitions

Author	Definition
Chaffey (2013)	“Achieving marketing objectives through applying digital technologies and media, including the internet, mobile phones, and display advertising, to engage with consumers in the digital realm.” (Chaffey, 2013)
Kotler and Armstrong (2018)	The process of promoting products or services through digital channels, using online marketing strategies like search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, content marketing, and pay-per-click (PPC) advertising.” (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018)
Ryan Deiss and Russ Henneberry (2017)	"The art and science of creating and delivering relevant content to attract and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience." (Deiss & Henneberry, 2017)
Sterne, J. (2010)	“The use of social media and online platforms to connect with consumers, engage them, and drive sales.” (Sterne, 2010)

Table 2: Digital Marketing Definitions

The definitions of digital marketing from different authors highlight its multifaceted nature and evolving significance in the modern marketplace. Chaffey (2013) emphasizes the strategic use of digital technologies to achieve marketing goals, while Kotler and Armstrong (2018) focus on the role of digital channels in promoting products and services. Deiss and Henneberry (2017) articulate digital marketing as both an art and science, centring on the creation of relevant content that resonates with targeted audiences.

Sterne (2010) further underlines the importance of social media and online platforms in fostering connections with consumers, showcasing how these tools are integral to driving engagement and sales. Collectively, these perspectives underscore that digital marketing is not just about the tools used but also about the strategic approach to engaging and understanding consumer behavior in a digital context.

In essence, effective digital marketing requires a comprehensive understanding of digital channels, consumer psychology, and the ability to create meaningful interactions that drive brand loyalty and business success.

2.6 Digital Marketing Strategy (DMS)

- Digital Marketing Strategy Definition:

Adobe Experience cloud team defined digital marketing strategy that “it is a strategy put in place by a brand to align with set objectives and goals to attract a specific type, or types, of customer using a combination of marketing techniques. These techniques include content marketing, social media marketing, earned marketing, and more.” (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2022)

A good and studied digital marketing strategy allows businesses to use different digital channels, such as social media, email marketing, search engine optimization (SEO) and pay per click (PPC), to connect with targeted customers and consumers interested in their products or services. A well-crafted strategy results in creating great customer experience (CX), customer loyalty, build a brand, bring potential customers, and more.



Figure 3: Elements of a Successful Digital Marketing Strategy

2.7 Digital Marketing Channels:

Understanding how Digital Marketing Channels works is essential for successful business as they allow businesses to reach their targeted audience efficiently and effectively. They build meaningful relationships and foster brand loyalty by offering real-time interaction with the consumer. These channels also provide measurable data, allowing companies to adjust strategies quickly based on consumer behavior and campaign performance. The main channels include:

1. Search Engine Optimization (SEO):

Search engine optimization works by raising a website's appearance in search engine result pages (SERPs), which increases organic (unpaid) traffic coming from people searching relevant content. Effective SEO techniques include creating high-quality backlinks, optimizing on-page elements like content, and managing thorough keyword research to align with user searches. These strategies help improve a website's visibility and rankings on search engines and make it easier for consumers to find your website which will lead to a change in their purchasing behavior.

SEO can also enhance your online authority and credibility by improving your website's ranking on search engines. The higher your site appears in search results, the more trustworthy it seems to both your target audience and search engines, reinforcing your business's reliability and relevance. (MOZ, n.d.)

Marketers must understand search engine algorithms and consumer search behavior to properly optimize their content.

For example, companies such as MOZ offer resources and tools to assist marketers in enhancing their SEO tactics, which eventually results in more people visiting their websites

2. Social Media Marketing (SMM):

Social media platforms, such as Instagram, X, Tik Tok, Snapchat, and Facebook, give brands the opportunity to interact directly with consumers, build brand recognition, and foster community engagement. The interactive elements of social media encourage two-way communication and allow companies to respond quickly to consumer comments and demands.

Mo Matcha, a Saudi-based online matcha store, engages with its customers through playful and interactive content on Instagram and TikTok. This approach boosts customer engagement and strengthens brand loyalty. As a result, this increased interaction and trust encourages more people to make purchases from the store, translating the positive social media presence into higher sales.

The entertaining content and direct engagement build a sense of community, making customers feel connected to the brand, which influences their purchasing decisions

3. Email Marketing:

Email Marketing remains a powerful and effective way to reach customers and engage with them. One of the key benefits of email marketing is that it has a high return on investment (ROI). The Data & Marketing Association (DMA) states that email marketing has an average ROI of \$42 for every \$1 spent. This is significantly higher compared to other digital marketing channels. Personalized email marketing may boost engagement and conversions by delivering tailored content straight to clients' inboxes. Segmentation and automation are two essential strategies for increasing email marketing's efficacy.

Email marketing offers comprehensive analytics that enable businesses to monitor various performance metrics, such as open rates, click-through rates, and conversion rates. This

capability allows marketers to evaluate the success of their campaigns and make informed, data-driven decisions to enhance future strategies. (Morse, 2024)

4. Content Marketing

Content marketing uses storytelling and information sharing to increase brand awareness. This strategy drives organic engagement and increases website traffic. A variety of media, such as blogs, videos, infographics, and podcasts, can be used for content marketing. This type of digital marketing helps in creating emotional connections with consumers which leads to building awareness, trust, and repeated interaction with the brand.

A great example for business using content marketing is Duolingo, a free app for learning languages. Duolingo targeted an audience, in the age group of 16 to 34 (GenZ and Millennials) who wants to learn a new language but doesn't afford regular language classes/courses. Their genius way in content marketing using social media, especially Tik Tok, helped them in becoming a unicorn in the industry.

Duolingo uses a hilarious way to communicate their mission of "Free language education for the world" and showcases its fun personality with "just an owl tryna vibe." Every post follows a definite brand style and an unhinged tone, while still packing a whole lot of entertainment. This resulted in great brand awareness as they now have more than 13 million followers and almost 318 million likes on Tik Tok. (Panigrahi, 2024)

5. Paid Advertising (Pay-Per-Click Advertising):

Paid advertising is using sponsorship and paid media to promote businesses. It can provide a quick boost in visibility and help establish a foothold in new markets. Paid advertising, including social media ads and pay-per-click (PPC) campaigns, offers targeted reach and immediate visibility. Marketers must continually optimize these campaigns using customer behavior insights and performance analytics.

There are several types of paid ads like search ads, display ads, and social ads.

Social ads are the most common due to the high number of users across social media networks. Social ads appear in social media feeds across different platforms. The ads are created on social media platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat, are targeted to a specific audience. Social ads are beneficial for advertisers who are looking to grow their brand or get users to engage with their products or services on their website. (Oviond, 2024)

Building a strategy for paid advertising can help you with:

Save time and money	spending some time on the strategy from the get-go will save you and your client a lot of money in the long run
Identify goals	you need to know exactly what you want to achieve with your paid advertising
Know your audience	you need to know who your paid ads will target and to understand your customers personas
Have a budget	this needs to be established in the strategy phase once you have determined your goals and audience
Decide which paid media channels to invest in	this will be the final step of your paid advertising strategy and will be based on the budget allocated to the paid advertising campaigns

Table3 : Benefits of a Well-Defined Paid Advertising Strategy

- **Conclusion:**

Digital marketing channels are essential to influencing customer engagement and behavior. Marketers can develop comprehensive strategies to engage with target audiences by leveraging paid advertising, social media, email, content, and search engine optimization. The effectiveness of digital marketing initiatives increases when one understands the distinct roles that different channels play.

Each channel has its unique advantages for engaging audiences and achieving specific goals. The table below outlines key channels, their engagement rates, and their ideal uses in a comprehensive marketing strategy.

Channel	Engagement Rate	Best for
SEO	High	Long-term visibility
Social Media Marketing	Medium	Brand engagement and awareness
Email Marketing	High	Direct communication and customer retention
Content Marketing	Medium	Establishing authority and thought leadership
Paid Advertising	High	Immediate visibility and targeted reach

Table 4: Digital Marketing Channels: Engagement Rates and Best Uses.

2.8 Digital Marketing Strategy (DMS) and its Impact on Consumer Behavior.

Digital Marketing Strategy plays a crucial part not only in promoting products and building a brand, but also for deeply influencing consumer behavior by shaping how customers perceive, engage with, and discover a brand, and how they think, feel and act, which leads to directly impact their decision-making process at all stages.

2.8.1 Key factors of how digital marketing strategies affect consumer behavior:

a) Increasing awareness and reach (Brand Visibility):

Digital marketing strategies boost and increase consumer awareness and expand brand visibility by using different channels mentioned above. Using these channels like SEO and paid advertising, allows companies to appear in consumers' searches, ensuring that their brands are discovered when consumers are seeking information or solutions which leads to an ease of access to information. This increased accessibility to information, like product details, prices, and customer reviews, simplifies the research process and makes it easier for consumers to make purchasing decisions with confidence. (Smith, Bailey, & Brynjolfsson, 2000)

Chaffey (2013) mentions that digital technologies are applied to engage with consumers and build awareness through effective targeting of audiences via online channels.

(Rafikah, 2023)

b) Building trust and authenticity:

Consumers today seek originality in brands, which digital marketing strategies can and aim to provide through transparent and consistent messaging. Social media platforms allow brands to directly interact with consumers, respond to their questions, and showcase customer reviews, which builds trust. Word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing, user-generated content, and influencer partnerships (a type of paid ads) further amplify this effect by adding credibility to the brand message which makes it seem and sound more relatable and trustworthy.

Deiss and Henneberry (2017) highlight that digital marketing is about creating meaningful interactions that build trust and engagement, which are essential for shaping consumer behavior.

c) Customer Loyalty and Retention:

Digital marketing is not only about attracting new customers and building trust, but also about maintaining existing ones in a competitive environment. This can be done by building a well-structured strategy that keeps the brand's competitive advantage and customer retention. Deiss and Henneberry (2017) emphasize that building long-term customer relationships through digital marketing is crucial to maintain these two things.

Loyalty programs, personalized offers, and consistent engagement via email marketing or retargeted ads help brands maintain long-term relationships with customers. By offering value beyond the initial purchase—such as exclusive deals or content—brands can ensure that consumers remain engaged and loyal, even in competitive markets.

Mickle Aancy stated that digital marketing, through factors like perceived convenience, and online accessibility, strengthens the relationship between brands and consumers by fostering trust and loyalty. He also suggests that consistent digital interactions and shared content help solidify these brand-consumer relationships, which directly impacts buying behavior and loyalty. (Aancy, 2023)

Take Apple for example, in 2023, the company that ranked first in brand loyalty was Apple. Apple has been in the top spot since 2022, overtaking Amazon, which had held that position for several years (Qualtrics, 2023). Apple has cultivated one of the most loyal brand followings ever seen, with users reporting that they do so because of 'blind loyalty.' Building this loyalty started with the brand's clearly defined vision and mission statement, and Steve Jobs commitment to innovation, product quality and cutting-edge design.



Figure 4: Top Brands with the Most Loyal Customers (2019-2023): Ranking Shifts and Trends

Lacey Ford, chief marketing officer at TrueCommerce said: “By creating and ‘living’ this kind of brand manifesto – by standing for something – you can create an emotional

connection with your customers, too. This is often enough to preserve customer loyalty even when things go wrong. Many Apple users find themselves emotionally invested in the products they use, in large part because those products stand for an idea. Apple usage, itself, has slowly become an identity.”

(Ford, 2015)

d) Personalization and Targeting (Personalized Consumer Experiences):

Personalized marketing is a game-changing strategy as it can target consumers based on their preferences and behavior by using tools such as SEO, customer relation management systems (CRM), and AI powered algorithms. These tools help businesses in customizing content and offers according to the consumer actions, searching behavior, past interactions and preferences.

Understanding what the consumers’ needs and what interests them by offering them a hyper-personalized experience that evolves with individual preferences enhance their loyalty and engagement which normally leads to a significant change in their purchasing behavior and choices, and an increase in their willingness to pay more. (Meduim, 2024)

Kotler and Armstrong (2018) say that digital channels like social media and email marketing are instrumental in delivering personalized experiences, helping companies foster deeper relationships with their customers.

An example of a business taking personalization to a whole new level is Sephora. As the beauty industry has a highly competitive market, Sephora knew that they needed to create not only loyal customers, but a loyal community. They achieved this by creating one of the best rewards programs in the US. Sephora encourage consumers by giving birthday gift samples to 'Meet and Greet events' to events where customers get to multiply their points. They also offer reservation assistant to book a makeover at one of their locations through a conversational interface. Clients tell the chatbot which service they need and in which store. The conversational interface uses natural language processing (NLP) to hold a conversation that feels like chatting with a friend. All clients have to do is say where they are, and the bot automatically finds them the closest location with a list of available times for appointments, and many more ways to create a great Personalized Digital Experiences.

(Gameball, 2024) (Caballé, 2023)

• Conclusion:

Digital marketing strategies has a strong impact on consumer purchase decisions by creating multiple touchpoints that guide and reinforce buying choices. Through channels like social media, email, and targeted ads, brands can keep their products in front of consumers and influence their behavior in real-time. For example, a consumer who visits a product page

might see personalized ads reminding them of their interest, which can encourage them to finalize the purchase. This strategy, known as retargeting, subtly nudges consumers by keeping the brand top-of-mind.

Hoyer and MacInnis (2010) point out that consumers' purchasing decisions are increasingly shaped by the information they encounter online, whether through social media recommendations.

Social media and content marketing also play a big role. Brands use product reviews, blogs, and comparison charts to educate consumers, giving them the information they need to feel confident about a purchase. According to Sterne (2010), direct interaction on platforms like Instagram or X through comments, live chats, and social listening can strengthen relationships and foster loyalty, making consumers more likely to choose that brand when they're ready to buy.

By engaging consumers and providing useful content, digital marketing helps build trust, which ultimately drives purchasing decisions.

2.9 Key Performance Indicators (KPI):

To effectively assess the impact of digital marketing initiatives, several key performance indicators are vital:

- **Conversion Rate:** This KPI quantifies the percentage of visitors who take a specific action, such as making a purchase. A higher conversion rate signifies the success of marketing efforts, reflecting strong customer engagement and effective messaging that resonates with the target audience.
- **Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC):** CAC measures the total expenses incurred in gaining a new customer. Marketers must manage CAC to ensure it remains below the Customer Lifetime Value (CLV), as this balance is essential for sustaining long-term profitability and growth.
- **Return on Investment (ROI):** ROI evaluates the revenue generated from marketing activities relative to the costs involved. A high ROI indicates effective utilization of marketing resources and provides insights into the overall performance of campaigns.
- **Engagement Metrics:** Metrics such as likes, shares, and comments assess how users engage with content. High engagement levels demonstrate strong connections between the brand and its audience, often correlating with greater brand loyalty.

These KPIs are essential for evaluating the effectiveness of digital marketing tactics and aiding decision-makers in making informed choices that enhance overall performance.

Channel	ROI (%)	Effectiveness (%)
Email Marketing	45%	75%
Social Media Advertising	30%	80%
Search Engine Marketing	25%	70%
Pay-Per-Click	20%	65%

Table 5: ROI Comparison of Marketing Channels

2.10 Measurement Tools and Their Functions:

Effective measurement of digital marketing efforts requires a range of tools that facilitate data processing and performance tracking.

- Google Analytics: Analyzes website traffic, helping marketers track conversions, understand user behavior, and make informed decisions.
- Hootsuite: A social media management tool that allows for scheduling posts, analyzing engagement, and monitoring social media performance.
- Mailchimp: An email marketing and automation platform that simplifies designing and sending customized email campaigns, enhancing customer engagement and retention.
- SEMrush: An SEO and keyword research tool that assists businesses in improving organic traffic and search engine visibility.

Tool	Functionality	Use Case
Google Analytics	Website traffic analysis	Understanding user behaviour on websites
Hootsuite	Social media management and analytics	Scheduling posts and analysing engagement
Mailchimp	Email marketing and automation	Sending targeted email campaigns
SEMrush	SEO and keyword analysis	Improving search visibility and organic traffic

Table 6: Tool Functionality Overview

Conclusion:

Marketers should prioritize key performance indicators and metrics to assess the efficacy of their digital marketing strategies. By analyzing indicators such as conversion rates,

engagement, and ROI, businesses can make data-driven decisions that enhance campaign effectiveness, ultimately leading to greater success in a competitive digital landscape.

2.11 The Influence of Digital Marketing on different factors.

By looking at the key factors that affect how consumers interact with digital marketing, this section directly answers the research question.

In the digital world, these elements which include psychological, social, cultural, factors have a significant impact on behavior.

2.11.1 Psychological Factors

Psychological factors, including motivation, perception, learning, beliefs, and attitudes, play a pivotal role in shaping consumer behavior, especially in the context of digital marketing.

- **Motivation:**

Digital marketing effectively influences consumer motivations by designing campaigns that address both basic need, and higher-level aspirations, such as the social status associated with luxury brands. Marketers strategically position products to align with different motivational drivers. To illustrate, luxury brands often market themselves as a symbol for status and prestige, to draw in customers who are looking for social approval.

By understanding Maslow's hierarchy of needs mentioned before, marketers can create good communication that align with consumer aspirations, ultimately driving engagement and conversion rates. This alignment creates a deeper connection between consumers and brands, as individuals are more likely to purchase products that align with their personal motivations. (Inci, n.d.)

- **Perception:**

Consumers' perceptions of brands through digital marketing channels directly influence buying decisions. Elements like visually appealing content, consistent branding, and clear messaging are crucial in shaping these perceptions. The marketplace's perception of a brand or industry is extremely important, which is why well-known big brands work hard to ensure that the general perception surrounding them, and their industry is as positive as possible. Research from the University of Arkansas suggests that when a brand present a unified identity across different digital channels, they create a deeper connection with consumers

For example, Apple represented this strategy by developing a brand story that emphasizes innovation and excellence, and by fostering an emotional connection with their audience, as previously stated, Apple achieved “Blind loyalty” by using this strategy. (Belson, 2023)

Positive consumer perceptions are linked to increased loyalty, making it essential for brands to proactively manage their image. This involves not only maintaining visual consistency, but also aligning brand messages with consumer expectations and values.

- **Learning:**

Past experiences, whether positive or negative, shape expectations and willingness to engage with brands.

Learning occurs through two primary mechanisms:

- 1- Experiential engagement, where direct interactions influence and shape preferences,
- 2- Conceptual learning, where consumers absorb information from marketing communications.

Brands that prioritize delivering valuable and engaging content can create a rich learning environment, fostering consumer understanding and loyalty over time. Consistently providing relevant information results in brands to position themselves as a trusted source, encouraging repeat interactions and boosting customer lifetime value. Additionally, leveraging data analytics can help brands tailor their learning strategies to meet the variety of consumer preferences.

- **Beliefs and Attitudes:**

Consumer beliefs are often shaped by values, experiences, and social influences are one of the main factors that shapes attitudes toward brands. These attitudes include consumers’ consistent opinions and emotional responses, which directly impact purchasing behavior. Marketers can strategically influence these beliefs through targeted messaging that aligns with consumer values, such as sustainability or social responsibility. Brands that effectively communicate their commitment to ethical practices can positively shape consumer attitudes, capitalizing on the growing demand for responsible consumption.

One of the best examples of successful attitude branding come from large companies such as Nike, as it was one of the first companies to use this strategy through their slogan “Just do it”. This slogan doesn’t promote or a reference for their shoes but it strongly promotes the a life style that consumers would have by buying Nike products . John Dobie, a freelance Senior Graphic says: “All branding and marketing follows this line, with a focus on people achieving their exercise goals. The suggestion is: ‘With Nike products, you can be your best’.” (Dobie, 2021).

In summary, by addressing motivations, shaping perceptions, enhancing learning, and influencing beliefs and attitudes, brands can create meaningful connections with their audiences, ultimately leading to increased engagement and conversion rates.

2.11.2 Social Factors

Various influences from family, reference groups, and social status, plays a huge role in shaping behavior. In today's digital environment, the rise of social media has enhanced these influences, with individuals increasingly seeking validation and approval from their networks before making purchasing decisions. This phenomenon underlines the importance of social proof, where positive reviews or recommendations from peers can significantly sway consumer choices.

- **Influence of social media:**

Social media platforms have emerged as a powerful tool for shaping consumer behavior by utilizing recommendations and social validation. Brands that engage effectively with consumers through social media can foster trust and enhance loyalty by creating authentic connections. Interactive campaigns that encourage sharing and engagement can amplify a brand's reach and credibility.

- **Community Engagement:**

Building online communities around a brand is essential for fostering consumer engagement and loyalty. Brands that interact actively with their audiences through social media, forums, and blogs cultivate a sense of belonging that encourages repeat purchases and advocacy. This two-way engagement deepens relationships and creates a more dedicated customer base. Brands that host online events or create discussion forums can enhance community bonds and drive brand loyalty.

Lego company is one of the best examples of brand communities, Lego Ideas originally started in 2008 in collaboration with a Japanese website and has since grown to become a major product ideation community. Here, Lego fans can submit construction ideas. By allowing members to submit their product ideas and launching contests, creative fans have the chance to choose what they want to see on the shelves next. Lego has managed to create a community that drives product ideation. (Harrower, 2021)

- **Family and Group Dynamics:**

Family members and reference groups play critical roles in shaping purchasing preferences and brand loyalty. Family influences choices through shared values and collective experiences, while friends can lead to conformity in buying behavior. In the digital age, social media amplifies these dynamics, making consumers more susceptible to group influences. Marketers must recognize the power of these social relationships in their strategies, as consumers are more motivated to purchase products suggested by family, trusted friends or influencers. (Liang, 2024).

- **Social Status:**

A consumer's social status often reflects their identity, aspirations, and lifestyle choices, significantly impacting brand preferences and purchasing decisions. Individuals with higher social status may gravitate toward luxury brands that signify prestige and exclusivity, while those with limited means may focus on value-driven choices. Understanding these social influences is important for marketers seeking to develop effective strategies that resonate with diverse consumer segments. Crafting messaging and product positioning to align with the social aspirations of different demographic groups can enhance engagement and conversion rates.

2.11.3 Cultural Factors:

A marketing campaign that resonates in one cultural context may fall flat in another due to variations in humor, symbols, values, and social norms. For instance, humor that is well-received in one culture might be perceived as offensive in another, underscoring the necessity for culturally sensitive messaging.

So it is clear that marketers must understand what culture the targeted audience are from and act accordingly as the cultural factor is a two-edged sword, which means using a digital marketing strategy without underrating the culture may cause in huge loss to the brand.

- **Culture:**

At its core, culture comprises the shared values, beliefs, and practices that define a group's identity and actions. These cultural elements inform consumer behavior, influencing preferences for specific products, brands, and advertising styles. Marketers must recognize that cultural nuances affect how consumers interpret marketing messages, making it crucial to tailor communications accordingly.

- **Social Class:**

Social class, determined by factors such as income, education, and occupation, significantly impacts purchasing behaviors and brand perceptions. Consumers from different social classes may prioritize different product attributes, leading to varying responses to marketing efforts. Understanding these dynamics enables marketers to craft strategies that resonate around targeted audience.

- **Subcultures:**

Within larger societies, subcultures represent smaller groups that exhibit distinct values and behaviors. These subcultures can influence specific consumption patterns and brand loyalty, necessitating targeted marketing strategies. Brands that recognize and cater to the unique preferences of subcultures, such as ethnic communities or lifestyle groups, can enhance their relevance and appeal.

- **Global vs. Local Strategies:**

The effectiveness of marketing strategies can differ significantly across cultural contexts. Successful brands, such as Coca-Cola, demonstrate the importance of adapting messaging to fit local cultures, ensuring that campaigns resonate with the

values and preferences of specific audiences. This localized approach enhances brand acceptance and fosters deeper emotional connections with consumers.

Knowing cultural influences is paramount for marketers seeking to navigate the complexities of consumer behavior in the digital landscape. By acknowledging and respecting cultural differences, brands can create more effective, engaging, and relevant marketing strategies that resonate with diverse consumer groups.

Factor Category	Key Factors	Impact on Consumer Behavior	Examples
Psychological Factors	Motivation	Drives purchasing decisions based on needs (e.g., convenience, status).	Fast delivery from Amazon; exclusivity from luxury brands.
	Perception	Shapes brand image through visuals and messaging.	Apple's design and innovative branding.
	Learning	Past experiences affect future engagement and loyalty.	Positive service leading to repeat purchases.
Social Factors	Social Media Influence	Peer reviews and endorsements guide buying choices.	Instagram influencers affecting brand perception.
	User-Generated Content	Builds trust and credibility through reviews.	High ratings on platforms like Yelp.
	Community Engagement	Fosters loyalty through shared experiences.	Brands creating online forums or groups, like Lego
Cultural Factors	Cultural Norms	Marketing must resonate with diverse cultural backgrounds.	Nike's campaigns tailored to local markets.
	Global vs. Local Strategies	Success in local markets requires tailored messaging.	Coca-Cola's region-specific flavors.

Table 7: Summary of key factors

Chapter Three:
The Role of Digital Marketing
Engagement in Shaping Consumer
Loyalty, and Perception: A Case
Study Approach

3.1 Case Study of Assaf's Perfumes and Consumer Loyalty through Social Media.

This chapter shares the results of a case study on Assaf's Perfumes, a Saudi perfume brand that started in 2021 and operates solely online without any physical stores. Despite its relatively recent launch, Assaf has gained an impressive following on social media, reaching over a million followers on Instagram and over 890,000 on TikTok in less than three years. The brand's slogan, "Either greatness, or nothing," highlights its dedication to standing out, and made fans feel strongly connected with this image.

Assaf has used social media not only to promote its products but to engage followers in a way that feels both exclusive and relatable. By casting famous figures like football legend José Mourinho, Lebanese actress and singer Cyrine Abdelnour, and Al-Hilal football star Aleksandar Mitrović in its ads, Assaf has raised its profile and connected with a wide audience. As a result, Assaf was recently nominated for the Best Perfume Brand in the Middle East award, a great honor that shows how well it echoes with consumers.

In this case study, the focus is on how Assaf's social media and digital marketing activities have affected consumer loyalty. With no physical presence, the brand relies entirely on digital marketing to reach and engage its audience.

This study was conducted and analysed through a survey using QuestionPro tool, a web-based software to create and distribute surveys, and a tool for analyzing results in real-time. This survey explores how consumers respond to Assaf's digital campaigns and whether this engagement leads to loyalty and influences their purchase behavior. The findings help show the role of social media in building strong connections with consumers and making them more likely to buy.

The survey for this study was distributed to participants across Saudi Arabia and was completed by 50 respondents. The Study Determinants focused on understanding brand awareness and customer sentiment toward Assaf Perfumes, including how respondents first encountered the brand, whether they have made a purchase, and their likelihood of recommending it to others. To assess consumer loyalty and satisfaction, the survey utilized the Net Promoter Score (NPS), which measures loyalty by asking the respondents' how willing they are to recommend Assaf Perfumes to friends or family. This data offers insights into consumer engagement with digital marketing and the brand's reach within the Saudi market.

3.2 Survey Results:

The survey revealed the following insights about their perception of Assaf Perfumes, driven by their digital marketing and social media strategy:

A. Demographic insights:

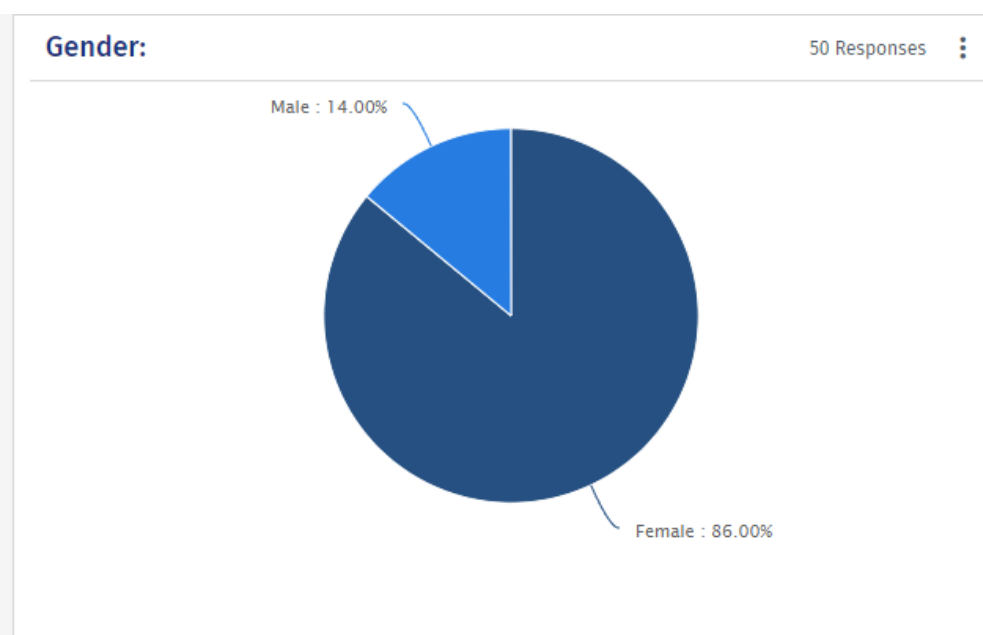
- 86% of respondents were females.
- Largest age group was 25-34, accounting for 52% of the sample

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Male	7	14%
Female	43	86%
Total	50	100%

Table 8: Sample characteristics by gender

Age Group	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Under 18	1	2%
18-24	6	12%
25-34	26	52%
35-44	14	28%
45-50	1	2%
Above 50	2	4%
Total	50	100%

Table9 : Sample characteristics by age group



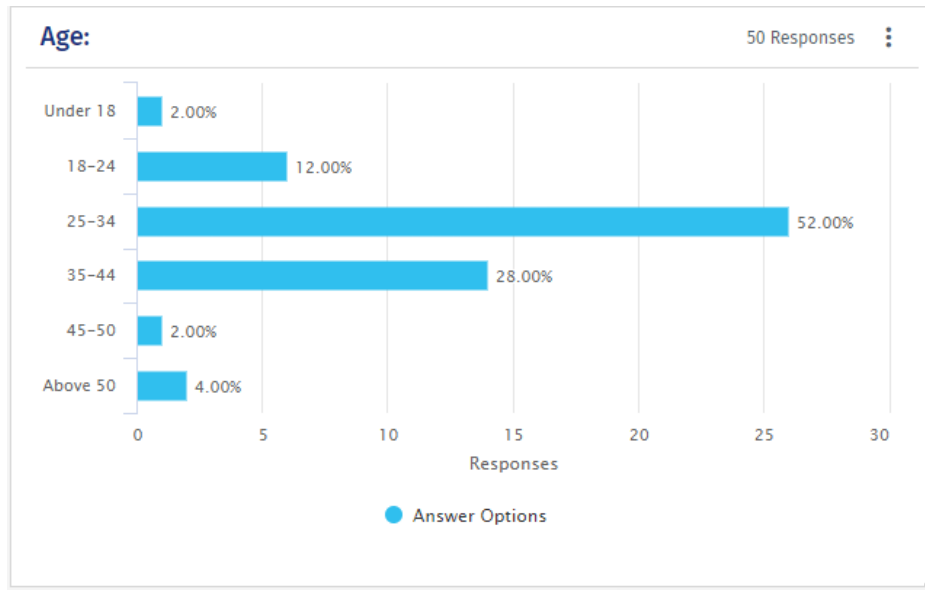
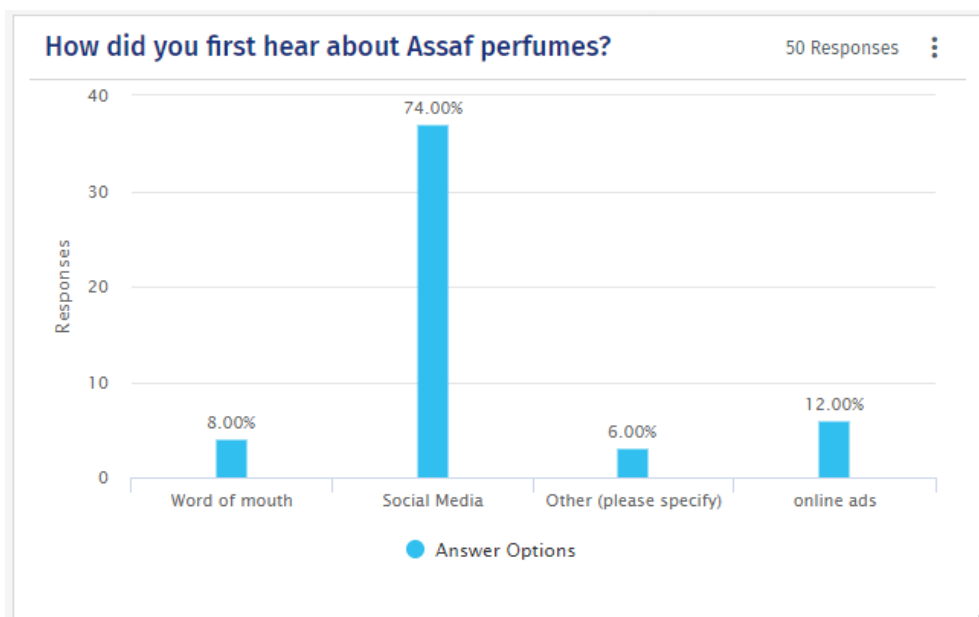


Figure5 :Demographic insights:

B. Brand Awareness and Engagement:

- 74% first heard about Assaf from social media, these channels were the primary source of brand awareness
- Engagement with Assaf's social media is notably high, particularly on Instagram, with 28% of respondents seeing their ads daily and 32% weekly.



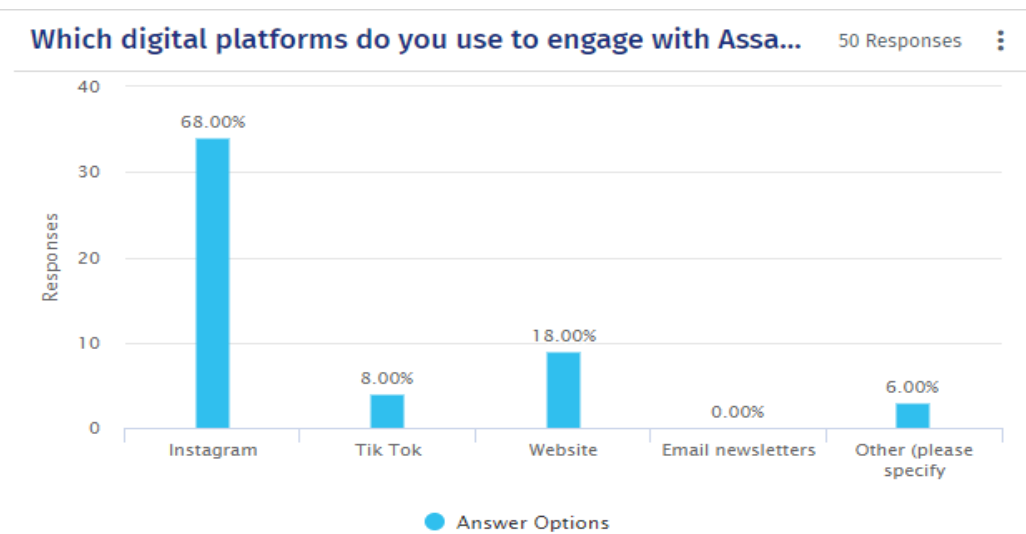
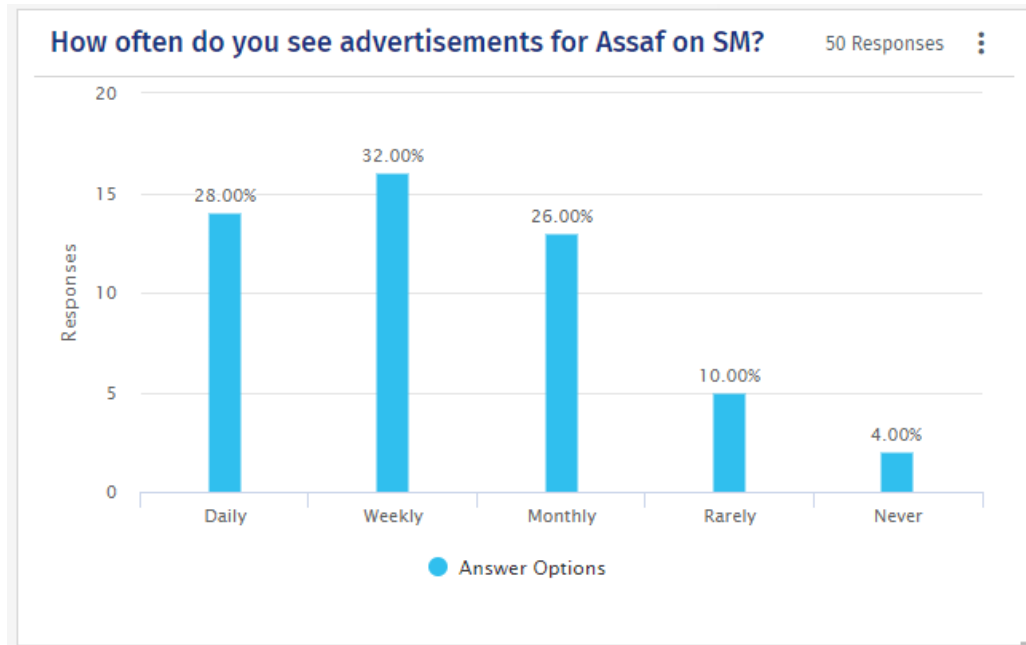


Figure6 : Brand Awareness and Engagement

C. Impact of Digital Marketing:

- Over half (54%) of respondents reported making a purchase from Assaf because of the brand's digital marketing efforts.
- 70% indicated they would likely purchase from Assaf after seeing their digital marketing campaigns.

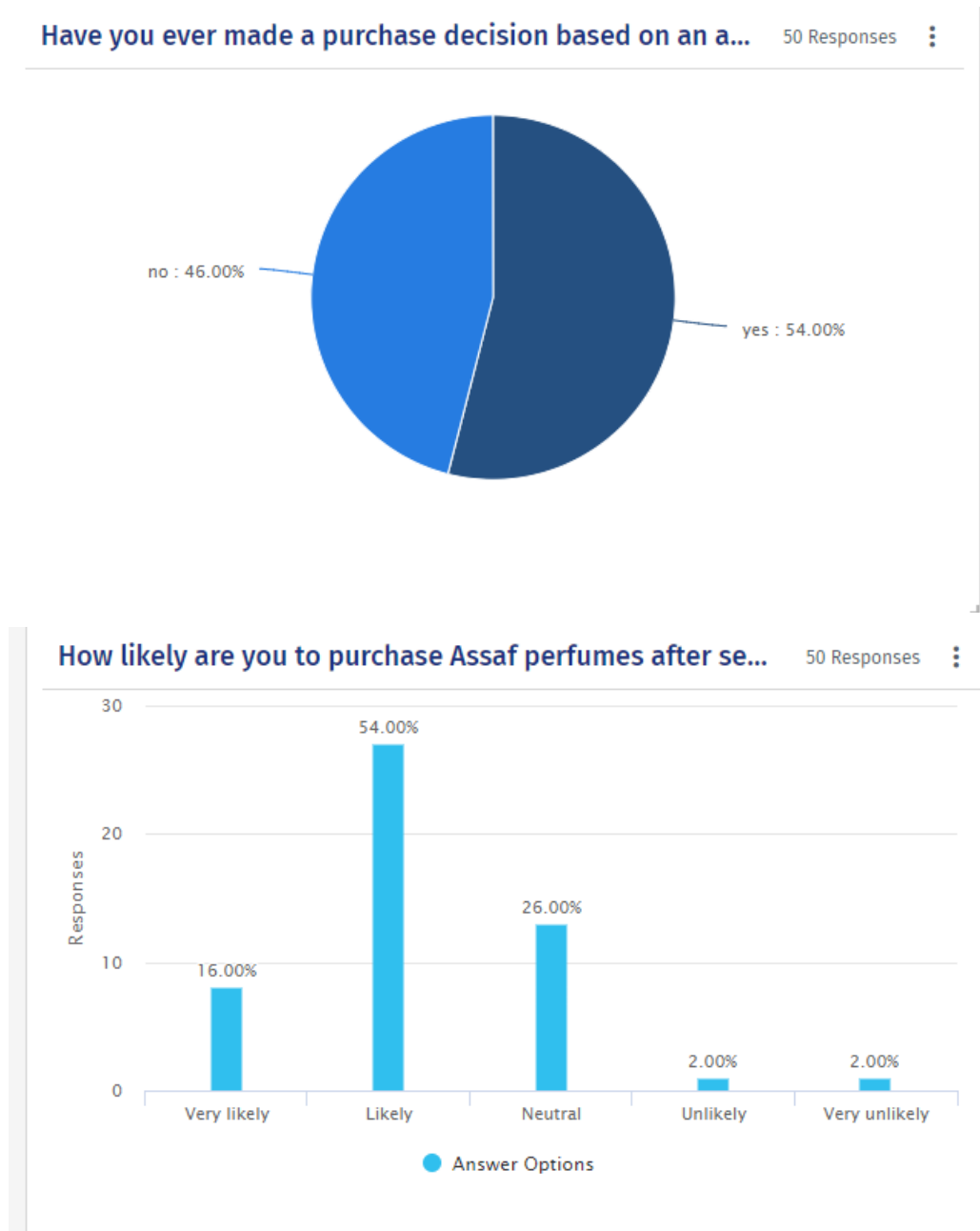
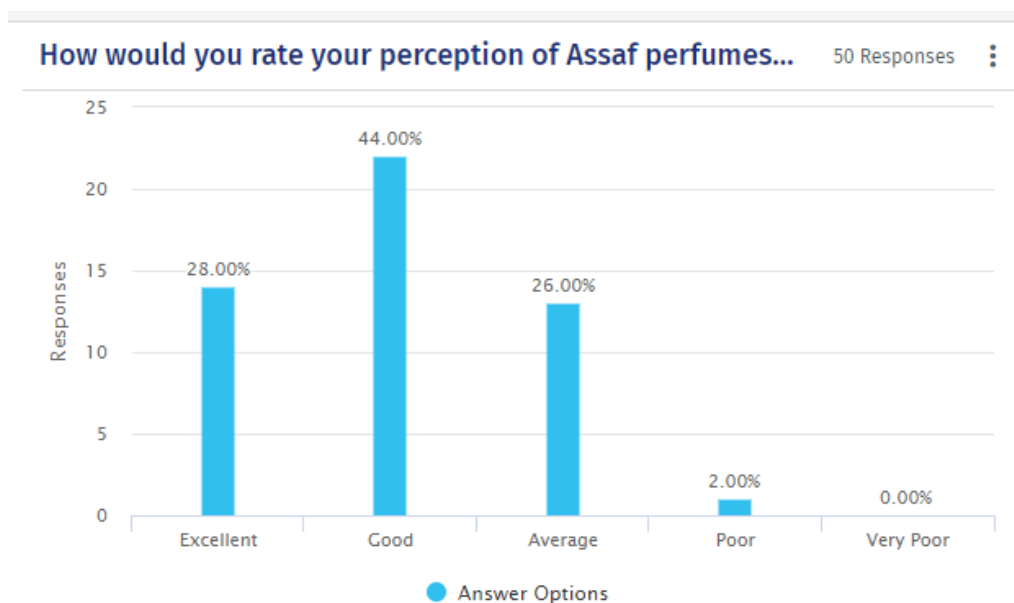
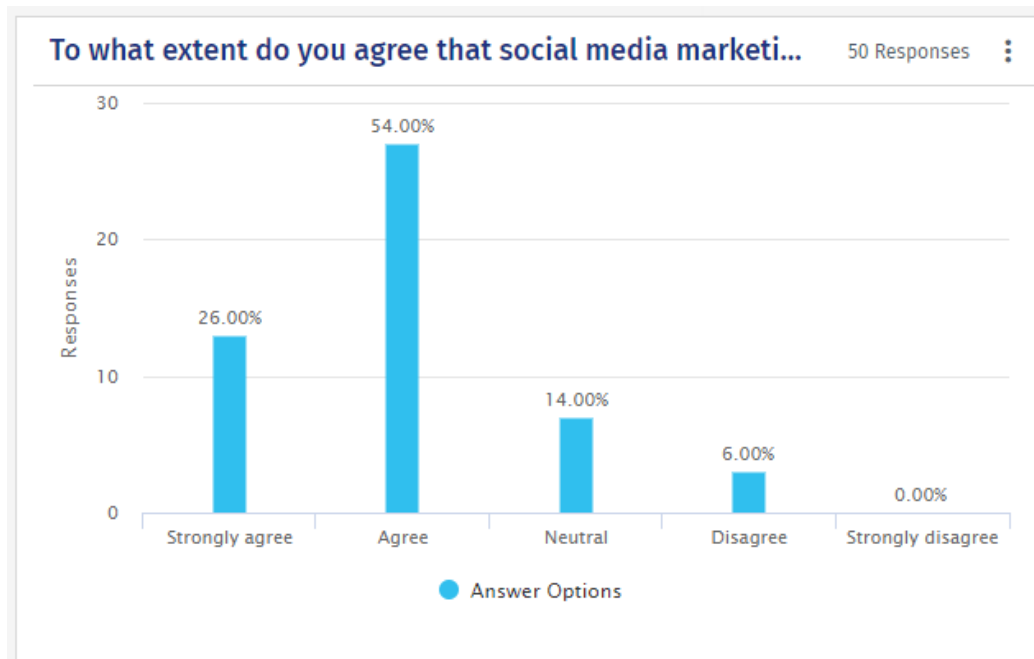


Figure 7: Impact of Digital Marketing

D. Perception and Persuasiveness:

- 80% of respondents agree that social media marketing influences their perception of a brand.
- 68% of respondents stated that their perception of Assaf Perfumes based on their Digital Marketing was good
- Visual content was identified as the most persuasive factor by 26% of respondents, while 44% found customer reviews to be most influential in their perception of Assaf.



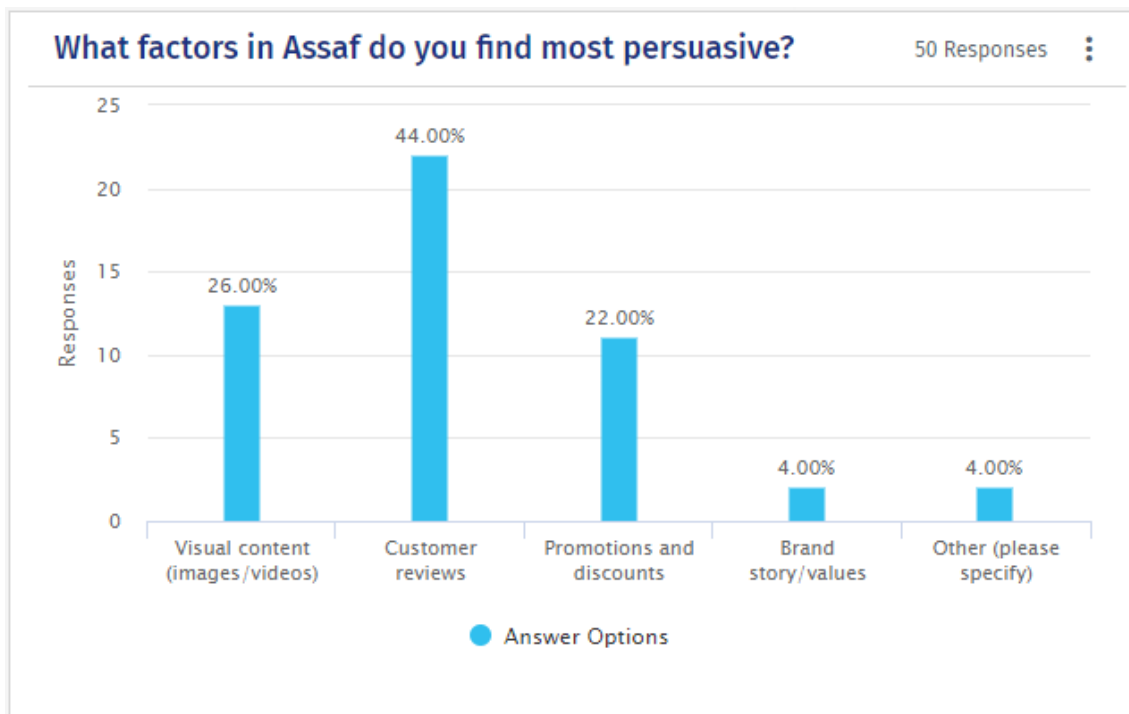


Figure8 :Perception and Persuasiveness

E. Loyalty (NPS):

NPS is calculated by subtracting promoters' percentage (Respondents choosing 9 or 10) from the detractors' percentage (Respondents choosing 1, 2,3,4,5,6)

$$\text{NPS} = \% \text{ promoters} - \% \text{ detractors.}$$

	Detractors							Neutral		Promoters	
Scoring	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Respondents' answers	0	0	0	0	3	3	2	7	5	16	14
Percentage	16%							24%		60%	

Table 10: Net Promoter Score (NPS) Distribution of Respondents' Answers

The NPS resulted from this survey was 44, with 60% (30 respondents) categorized as promoters and only 18% (8 respondents) as detractors, demonstrating a strong level of customer loyalty and brand advocacy

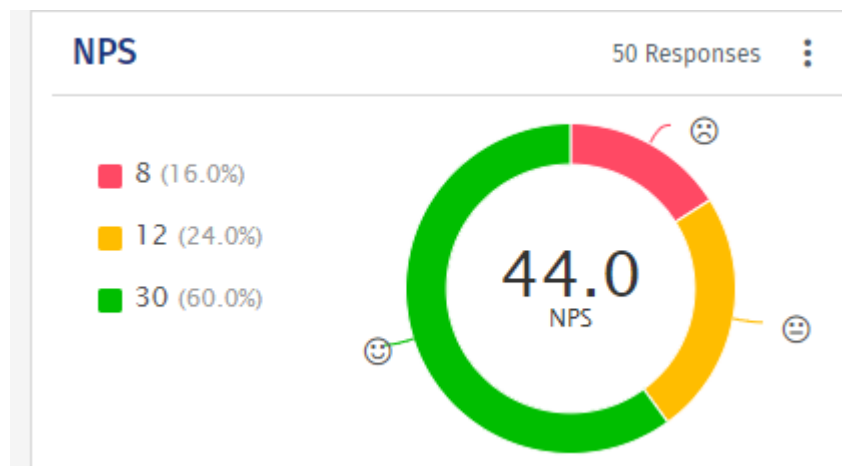


Figure9 : NPS

3.3 Conclusion

The results from the survey conducted on Assaf Perfumes highlight the strong influence of social media marketing on consumer behavior, specifically in shaping brand perception and loyalty. With 74% of respondents first discovering Assaf on platforms like Instagram and 68% rating their perception of the brand as good due to its digital marketing efforts, it's clear that social media is a critical component in Assaf's marketing strategy. This presence has led to substantial consumer engagement, with 54% of respondents confirming they purchased from Assaf as a direct result of its marketing efforts, and 70% stating they are likely to repurchase.

Social media's role in fostering trust is also apparent, with 80% of participants agreeing that digital marketing impacts their view of the brand. Visual content and customer reviews were particularly influential, as noted by 26% and 44% of respondents, respectively, emphasizing the effectiveness of relatable, user-centered content. Furthermore, the high Net Promoter Score (NPS) indicates a solid base of loyal customers who would recommend Assaf Perfumes, reinforcing the idea that effective digital marketing can enhance brand loyalty.

These insights align with the study's objective of understanding the role of digital marketing in consumer loyalty, demonstrating that consistent, engaging social media interactions can cultivate a lasting and positive consumer relationship. For Assaf, continuing to innovate its digital marketing will be crucial for maintaining brand loyalty.

The survey findings confirm the key points previously highlighted regarding the role of digital marketing—particularly social media—in shaping consumer perception and loyalty. The results focus on how digital marketing strategies, such as targeted ads, user-friendly content, and influencer partnerships, directly impact brand visibility and foster consumer trust.

- As for consumer perception and behavior the finding that 80% of respondents believe social media shapes their brand perception supports existing literature, such as Hoyer and MacInnis (2010), which posits that consumers' purchasing decisions are increasingly shaped by online information sources. Furthermore, Sterne (2010) emphasizes the value of real-time interaction on platforms like Instagram, which is reflected in Assaf's approach to engaging consumers through social media.
- The high Net Promoter Score (NPS) achieved by Assaf aligns with studies that show how positive social media engagement contributes to brand loyalty, supporting the theories in Hoyer and MacInnis (2010) on how customer satisfaction drives repeat purchases. Assaf's focuses on visual content and consumer reviews, which 70% of participants found influential, illustrates how personalized and engaging content can solidify consumer loyalty and drive repeat purchases.
- With 74% of respondents first hearing about Assaf via social media and 68% rating their perception of the brand between excellent and good based on these interactions, the survey confirms existing research that social media marketing creates a lasting impression on consumers. This finding aligns with Mickle Aancy (2023), who claimed that content shared on digital platforms, like social media significantly influences consumer buying behavior by building trust and ensuring consistent brand exposure.

Chapter Four:

Results and Recommendations

4.1 Results:

Aspect	Result
Impact of Digital Marketing	Digital marketing can directly influence behavior by shaping and creating brand awareness, loyalty and buying intentions by using strategies such as posting visually appealing content, content consistency and targeting audience using brand messaging across digital channels.
Effectiveness of Digital Channels	The different digital channels serve great roles in impacting consumer as social media enhance visibility and engagement, and emails and paid ads lead to conversion through targeted messaging
Role of social media	Social media platforms are essential for reaching and engaging with customers, using these platforms wisely can result in a change in consumer perception positively towards a brand and increase their engagement with it which leads to building strong brand loyalty, trust and repeated purchases
Trust and Social Proof	Social Proof elements such as reviews, user-generated content and influencers endorsements are powerful in building trust. Consumers are more likely to purchase from brands with positive social validation and credible reviews.
Consumer engagement and Perception	Consumers are more inclined to interact with the brands that keep on showing a single theme across all platforms and thus it helps in their recognition, gains, and trust to the brand. Branded consistent content and appealing visuals paired with easy-to-understand information would likely lead to better consumer perception, while techniques such as interaction, content personalization, and social media responsiveness also contribute to this relationship. Strong relationships, efficient communication, and a solid image of their values across all platforms and devices are the things that brands do to gain consumers' trust and increase their net promoter score (NPS) reflecting increased consumer loyalty
High Net Promoter Score and its impact on loyalty	A high Net Promoter Score (NPS) across digital platforms reflects strong brand loyalty, indicating that positive digital interactions and effective branding lead to brand advocacy and repeated purchases

Table 11: Table of Results

4.2 Results Discussion :

The results of this study provide justification to the first and second hypotheses, by proving that digital marketing strategies have a crucial influence on the purchasing intentions of the consumers and that more participation of the consumer in the social media networks is one of the determining factors of their loyalty to the brand.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Digital marketing strategies significantly impact consumer purchase intentions.

The results of this research are supportive of H1, in terms of the effect of the marketing strategies, through targeted, visually appealing content and consistent branding, directly influence consumer behavior, shaping purchase intentions and fostering brand loyalty, key results include:

- **Impact of Digital Marketing:** Digital marketing is an effective and powerful tool in creating and building brand awareness and customer retention using content that is relatable and clear to the target audience. By focusing on visually appealing content, consistent branding, and audience-specific messaging across digital platforms, brands can modify consumer perceptions and consequently make them to purchase their products This relates to the H1 greatly because it is the core strategies that help and improve the consumers' willingness to make purchases through the presentation of brands in a positive and trustworthy way.
- **Effectiveness of Digital Channels:** The study mentions that various digital channels are being used differently to affect consumer behavior. Social media is a game-changing tool because of its impact on the extent to which people can be engrossed in it and its power in capturing the attention of audiences and driving engagement, thus, it has become a critical touchpoint for influencing consumer interest and intent. At the same time, emails, paid ads, SEO and content marketing drive conversion by sending specific messages persuading you to buy. This also proves H1, as each channel contributes uniquely to guiding consumers toward making a purchase.
- **Trust and Social Proof:** Social proof, such as reviews, user-generated content, and influencer endorsements, builds trust and credibility, which in turn influences consumer purchasing decisions. From the data obtained, it is recorded that consumers are more attracted to the brands that have high social proof. Digital marketing strategies that implement elements of social proof are best by positioning a brand among a group of competitors with a customer-focused, reliable, and relate image, that leads consumers to the target goal and action of purchasing.

Summing up these results proved H1 to be correct that clever digital marketing strategies have a big role in the purchase intention of customers.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Higher levels of engagement with social media marketing are positively correlated with increased brand loyalty among consumers.

The study's findings also support H2, showing a clear connection between social media engagement and brand loyalty. Customers who engage in social media more often with a particular brand tend to build stronger more attachment to it, in accordance with the data coming from the given research:

- **Role of Social Media:** Social media is the place where all sorts of communications can take place, it is the main tool used by the brands to reach and shape their audience. Brands that embrace social media as a tool for strategic communication with customers will be rewarded by their most loyal followers as these platforms develop genuine relationships with the brand and consumers. So, meaningful interactions on social media, coupled with consistent and positive messaging, lead to increased consumer loyalty and even repeated purchases, which supports H2.
- **Consumer Engagement and Perception:** The thesis shows that consumers are more likely to support brands that provide a clear and uniformed identity on different channels. Consistent, branded content and beautiful visuals lead to better consumer perception, while interaction, content personalization, and quick response on social media are the ways of engaging methods that can be employed to enhance consumer engagement. This outcome aligns with H2, as it shows that social media engagement fosters a stronger relationship with customers which encourages them to remain loyal.
- **Survey Findings and High NPS Score:** Further evidence supporting H2 comes from the survey, which was included in this study. The survey shows a high Net Promoter Score (NPS) among respondents, which means they have a high level of brand loyalty. Most people who took part in the survey had a positive view of the brand and said they were likely to tell others about it which is the result of the brand's successful social media interactions and engagement. Thus, the marketers were able to win the trust and loyalty of the audience through the delivery of emotionally and engagingly content where they practiced two-way communication.

These findings are a testament to H2, showing that a strong social media presence combined with various participation techniques such as interactive content, and social proof make an enormous impact in establishing and boosting the loyalty of consumers. The survey results, as evidenced by the high NPS score, indicate that social media is an efficient way of customer's involvement toward brand loyalty.

In summary, the results in this study have indeed shown that digital marketing campaign and strategies has a huge influence on consumers actions and behavior, through mainly social media engagements which are the majority. For Hypothesis 1, the results show that different digital marketing strategies significantly influence consumer purchase intentions. Smart use of different digital channels from social media to email and paid ads serves as the main means to reach consumers, increase brand awareness, and lead them to the purchase.

In support of Hypothesis 2, the study reveals a strong correlation between social media engagement and brand loyalty. Brands that maintain a clear identity across platforms and interact via personalized content on social media are able to develop a deeper connection with consumers

Together, these findings highlight that an integrated digital marketing approach, with a focus on consistent engagement and social validation, not only drives purchase intentions but also builds lasting loyalty. By understanding and leveraging these factors, brands can create stronger, more meaningful connections with their audiences, positioning themselves favorably in a competitive digital landscape.

4.3 Conclusions :

The study results suggest that digital marketing strategies using especially social media can directly influence and impact consumer behavior. Here are the key conclusions found from the thesis:

1. **Digital marketing strategies' critical role in shaping consumer behavior and changing purchase intentions:** Results confirm that a well-studied digital marketing strategy have a direct and measurable impact on consumer behavior. Beside shaping behavior, these strategies can also raise awareness of a brand and foster positive perception of it, which often leads to higher purchasing rates. As consumers today rely heavily on digital channels to make a buying decision, effective digital marketing has become essential for influencing and guiding these choices.
2. **The Role of Social Media in Building Brand Loyalty:** Social Media platforms can be seen as the most affective tools in influencing consumer and build loyalty, the study suggests that brands who continuously engage with their customers through social media have more loyal customers who feel deeply connected to the brand, especially if the content is personalized, visually-appealing and had a clear identity. This engagement thus builds a trust-based, positive relationship, which is a pillar for long-term loyalty.
3. **Building Consumer Trust and Influencing Purchase Decisions Through Consistent Branding and Social Proof:** In today's digital age, trust is a main and a key factor in changing purchasing decisions, so consistent branding and social proof are extremely important for establishing this trust and positively impact these decisions. Building trust can also lead to Word-of-Mouth (WOM) marketing as consumers are more likely to trust brands recommended by friends or family. This in turn attracts new customers who are more likely to engage and make purchases based on these trusted recommendations.
4. **The Importance of Consistency and a Multi-Channel Strategy Across Digital Channels:** Maintaining a uniformed brand identity across all digital channels builds the customer's perception and trust. Therefor a multi-channel integrated

approach, including social media, emails, and paid ads could enlarge brand outreach and engagement. Each channel has its own role from building brand awareness to driving conversion and purchasing, making this method powerful and highly effective for reaching consumers throughout their whole decision making journey.

The importance of these results lies in the fact that they demonstrate how digital marketing, particularly through social media and multi-channel strategies, is a powerful tool in shaping consumer behavior in today's marketplace. As mentioned, consumers now rely on digital channels not only for product discovery but also for building trust in brands and making studied purchase decisions. Brands that maintain a cohesive identity and leverage social proof gain credibility, positively influencing consumer perception and encouraging purchasing.

Besides, the primary communication through social media becomes the most important channel of staying brand loyal as it is possible to perpetual exchange and build relationships via the creation of personalized and visually attractive content. On the other hand, the relationship is fortified by word-of-mouth marketing where friendly dependable recommendations or pointers from influencers make the size of the brand's followers and its attractiveness increased. A comprehensive multi-channel strategy additionally strengthens these initiatives by addressing consumers' every step in the decision-making process. At the initial stage they get aware of the brand until the purchase and then the brand becomes a reliable and easy-going partner, who stays with them forever.

Lastly, the results clearly proof that digital marketing plays the role of consumer loyalty, trust, and conversion driver. This reveals the importance of marketing in a consumer field that is becoming more and more affected by online interactions.

4.4 Recommendations:

Based on the study's conclusions, thus, the following suggestions are proposed to assist brands in powerfully exploiting the digital marketing strategies to improve consumer engagement, trust, and loyalty.

- **Enhance and Improve Customer Experience (CX) Across Digital Channels:**

Marketers should focus on elevating the customer experience at every digital touchpoint, as a seamless, positive CX is crucial for building long-term loyalty and trust. This includes optimizing website navigation, ensuring responsive customer service on social media, and providing quick, easy checkout processes. By continually refining CX, brands can meet consumer expectations, encourage repeat purchases, and foster stronger relationships, ultimately creating a competitive advantage in the digital marketplace.

- **Understand the Cultural and Environmental Context:**

Marketers need to appreciate the significance of the cultural and environmental context in which they work before crafting content and digital marketing strategies. By understanding local customs, values, and consumer behaviors, brands can develop messaging that is more relevant and impactful. This cultural insight not only boosts the effectiveness of marketing campaigns but also fosters trust and authenticity with the target audience. A strategy grounded in a deep understanding of the surrounding environment enables marketers to connect with consumers on a more meaningful level, strengthening relationships and promoting brand loyalty.

- **Embrace Data Analytics for Targeted Marketing:**

Gain a deeper understanding and insights of consumer behavior and preferences by utilizing data analytics. By thoroughly examining customer interactions across various digital channels, brands can identify trends, preferences, and pain points, which allows them to personalize content effectively. Utilizing Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solutions smoothens audience segmentation and helps tailor advertising to meet specific consumer needs. For example, retailers can analyze purchasing patterns to create promotions that resonate with special demographics, resulting in enhancing engagement and driving sales.

- **Prioritize Social Proof in Marketing Efforts:**

Some examples of social proof include customer reviews, user-generated content, and influencer endorsements, can significantly boost consumer trust. Brands should effectively motivate and encourage satisfied customers to write testimonials, leave reviews and showcase user-generated content to create a trustworthy brand image that resonates with potential buyers

- **Engage Consumers with Interactive and Visual Content:**

The research highlights that content that is visually attractive and interactive on social media helps to strengthen relationships with consumers. Brands ought to focus on creating high-quality visuals, captivating content, and interactive social media initiatives to enhance consumer loyalty and engagement.

By implementing these strategies, brands can navigate complexity and boost consumer engagement, leading to sustainable business success.

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Appendices

A-Survey:

Dear Respondent,

I am a master's candidate in Business Administration at Midocean University, currently conducting a study titled, The Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Behavior.

Your participation in this survey, focused on Assaf Perfumes, would be invaluable to my research. All responses will remain strictly confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

Your insights will help deepen the understanding of digital marketing's role in consumer decision-making. Thank you in advance for your time and valuable input

Section A:

Demographic Characteristics

1-Gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2-Age:

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 45-50
- ☐ Above 50

Section B:

1- How did you first hear about Assaf perfumes?

- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Social Media
- ☐ online ads
- ☐ Other (please specify)

2- Which digital platforms do you use to engage with Assaf perfumes?

- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Email newsletters
- ☐ Other (please specify)

3- How often do you see advertisements for Assaf perfumes on social media?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

4- How would you rate your perception of Assaf perfumes based on their digital marketing?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Very Poor

5- To what extent do you agree that social media marketing influences your perception of a brand?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

6- Have you ever made a purchase decision based on an advertisement or promotion from Assaf perfumes?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

7- How likely are you to purchase Assaf perfumes after seeing their digital marketing efforts?

- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Likely
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Unlikely
- ☐ Very unlikely

8- Considering your complete experience with Assaf, how likely would you be to recommend their products to a friend or colleague?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Very Unlikely

Very Likely

Section C: Open ended Questions:

1- Can you describe a specific instance when Assaf perfumes' digital marketing influenced your buying decision?

.....

2-What additional comments do you have about Assaf perfumes' digital marketing strategy?

.....

- This survey was conducted, distributed and analysed using QuestionPro tool.
- Survey Link: <https://questionpro.com/t/mK0WZK0W>

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العام الدراسي:

2024