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12	Prospects and Opportunities in Retail Sector C.Abinaya Priya	46	28	Consumer Cases – A Scrutiny J.Mahil Kamalam	108
13	Check Dam – A Prime Tool for Groundwater Recharge Dr.G.Kavitha	49	29	Customer Satisfaction towards Reliance JIO Network Special Reference With Nagercoil Town S.Reshma Nasreen & Dr.T.P.Sherin	111
14	Investors' Behaviours towards Investment Avenues- with Special Reference to Tirunelveli City M.Nallakannu & Dr.V.M.Selvaraj	54	30	Role of Digital Marketing in Education Sector with Particular Reference in Academics A.A.Franklin Ragil & J.Jenifer	114
15	Industrial Sector in India S.Vimal Dholi	59	31	An Insight into the Indo-China Trade in Pharmaceuticals Dr.J.P.Sreeja	118
16	Exploring welfare facilities in southern Petrochemical Industries Corporation Ltd. [SPIC] P.Maria Delcia	62	32	Current Scenario of Entrepreneurial Innovation – An Overview Dr.S.Binduja	124
17	A Study on Need for Women Entrepreneurship in Jammu and Kashmir Ms.J.Pavithra	65	33	Empowerment of Fisherwomen Workers through Micro-finance Dr.M.Janet Vasantha Kumari & Dr.T.Ramachandran	128
18	A Study on Consumer Preference towards Maruti Cars in Kanyakumari District M.R.Prema & Dr.A.G.Segon Roy	68	34	Universal Basic Income: Substantial Measure to Improve Autonomy S.Lekshmi	135
19	Strategic human resource management – Linking business strategies with HRM Sherine Fredy	71	35	Crowd Funding- A New Paradigm of Alternate Finance M.P.Akhil	140
20	Study of Block Chain Dr.Y.Natarajan	74	36	A Study on Performance of General Insurance Corporation (GIC) of India P.Mangayarkarasi	144
21	Growth Analysis of Handloom Industry in India V.M.Pradeepa & Dr.P.C.Jose Paul	77	37	A Study on The Recruitment Strategies: A Pivotal Aspect in HRM Jeby Johnson	147
22	GST and Revenue Surplus- A Study M.Ahilan & Dr.C.A.Sham Shankar	81	38	A Study on the Problems of Coconut Industries in Tamil Nadu M.Ancymol, Dr.M.Krishnakumar & Dr.P.Antony Raj	151
23	Impact of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in Poverty Eradication in Tamilnadu Dr.M.Saravanan	84	39	A Study on Stress Among Bank Employees in Vilavancode Taluk Kanchana Vargheese, Dr.Antony Raj & Dr.C.Eugin Franco	155
24	A Study on the Beneficiaries of Mgnrega in Melpuram Block of Kanyakumari District K.Sowmya & R.Krishna Lekha	90	40	Exploitation of Imperialism on Indian Slaves of 19 th Century in Sea of Poppies Mr.K.Mariappan & Mr.K.Mahalingam	159
25	Preparedness to Face Tsunami – A Lesson From Kanyakumari District Dr.I.Uma Devi	93			
26	Inter-State Migration of Construction Workers in India (From Kerala to Kanyakumari District of Tamil nadu) Dr.N.Baby	99			
27	Job Satisfaction of Women Employees in Commercial Banks Dr.D.Deepa Jeya Merlin & Dr.S.Pushpalatha	104			

ROLE OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN EDUCATION SECTOR WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE IN ACADEMICS

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Abstract

With the advent of new technologies, the internet has become major search source for everything. The increased usage of internet has a great influence on the educational sector. Digital marketing is the trending marketing strategy in replacing conventional marketing. A study released by an E-Marketer illustrates, that the education sector is one of the top industries in world, currently using social media as a part of their overall strategy. The increased use of internet and digital media is a major influence in the field of education today. The education sector is completely revolutionised, since the majority of the population of students are the users of the internet. Digital marketing is the best method that can be adopted by the educational institutions to reach out the prospective students. According to research, 91% students in India use internet for research purposes. Over 60% of active social network users are college going students. Four among five Indian students consider internet as their main source of college and course information while three among four students feel that the internet is a complete source of information for the searches regarding colleges. The internet has become the major search platform, starting from courses, institutions, study material and fee payment. So implementation of digital marketing in the educational sector is the best and effective solution to reach these requirements. This paper aims to study how digitalisation is used by the respondents in choosing their career and the effectiveness of digital marketing in education sector.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Education Sector, Social Media, Digital Applications.

Introduction

Digital marketing is defined as the marketing activities which are carried out online, which includes social media, websites and e-mail marketing amongst others. Digital marketing ensures that the right message reaches the right person at the right time. In this internet age, in order to specify the existence of the business, online presence is compulsory. Adopting change has become the essential step in the path of success. Application of this great change in educational institutions will help the education sector grow to next level.

Why is Digital Marketing the Best Means to Impress Students?

There are various reasons that make digital marketing the best means of reaching out the majority of the student population today. Some of these are as follows:

- Your potential audience (i.e. students) are already searching online for education and training stuff.

- Advertisement on the internet is effective and generates good attention compared to conventional advertising. They can also be used to create brand awareness among people.
- Most students have started to verify a school or college through its online presence. Guardians read online reviews before taking any decisions.
- Parents and guardians have started season school or college based on its websites and its online presence.
- With more user friendly websites, parents consider doing online admissions and raise any queries online..
- Students spend more time on the internet rather in front of other media including television.
- Expatriates and outstation students rely heavily on the web for college admissions.

Advantages of Digital Marketing in Education Sector

Cost effective

Digital marketing platform is much affordable compared to conventional marketing strategies. Internet marketing strategies like social media, email marketing, mobile marketing requires less investment with good returns.

Quick Feedbacks

Digital marketing platforms offer quick feedback as messages or queries are read immediately and possible to receive instant feedback. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram are the best medium to obtain instantaneous feedback from students.

Power of Social Media

Using social media we can create a brand awareness of an educational institution. Today, many students has got facebook and social network applications installed on their smart phones. The more it gets shared, the more you get publicity.

Measurable Results

Unlike traditional marketing campaigns, the performance and results of various digital marketing campaigns can be tracked using tools like Google analytics. With the available statistics, we can change the marketing strategies in a way that benefits the institute. Digital marketing in the education sector helps to focus on each strategy and build a better marketing mix.

High Conversions

Digital channels help to reach a number of targeted audience through social networks and emails, which results in high conversion. Thus educational institutions can target a larger audience at a low budget and yield better conversions.

Easy accesSible Tools

Digital marketing tools or platforms are easily accessible and produce better results. Using digital marketing forms such as social networking sites like facebook, Google+, Twitter, SMS marketing and others guarantee a large focused audience.

Youth Population is on Digital

Nowadays youth is very active on digital and social platforms like facebook, twitter, instagram, whatsapp etc for messaging and communication too.

Background and Review of Literature

Our study which is exploratory has considered the perceptions of the students in the target group aged 18-25 years seeking higher education.

Reason for the Study

1. The widespread use of digital marketing in education sector.
2. The relevance of understanding the perceptions of the students regarding the digital marketing used in educational sector

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the perceptions of the students related to academics with reference to digital marketing in education sector
2. To enable the usage of various applications used in digital marketing in education sector
3. The awareness and knowledge of digital marketing in education sector observed from the respondents.

Methodology

Data was collected from a homogeneous sample comprising of 100. Post consistency, the sample size narrowed down to 93. Based on the objectives of the study, the effectiveness of digital marketing on overall consumer used for further studies, a questionnaire was designed and distributed to the respondents. The methodology adopted was an exploratory research to get a better insight from the respondents.

Different attributes and applications were used to formulate the questionnaire in order to collect appropriate data for achieving the objectives of this study. The research methodology adopted is primarily focused on primary data through which the most recent and accurate piece of information could be collected. Exploratory research was adopted so that the factors underlying decision making could be derived thus creating a scope for further research and analysis.

Scope and Limitations

The geographical scope of the study was restricted to Nagercoil town. The study being exploratory in nature, the sample size was restricted to 100 respondents (Student group). Focus was mainly on analysing effectiveness of digital marketing for education related decisions; the generalisations drawn are only indicative and not conclusive. However, there is a scope for further research where gender wise influence of digital marketing for various other decisions can be studied.

Data Analysis, Findings and Inferences

Digital marketing awareness is very high in the age group of 18-25 which was the target population for this research 92% of the respondents use digital media for getting some or other kind of information out of reference group influence emerged as the driving factor for 53% of the digital media usage.

Table 1 Usage of various digital applications by sample respondents

Sl. No.	Various applications used by the respondents	Percentage
1	Facebook	89
2	Twitter	67
3	Youtube	74
4	Google	98
5	Flashcards	26
6	Linkedin	17

Source: Primary data

If we consider the various applications used by the respondents in social media, Google is the most used application by the students, facebook stands second followed by Youtube and Twitter. As per the analysis, Flashcards and LinkedIn are the least preferred applications used by the sample respondents. (i.e) students.

Education/Admission Related Decision

The Search engine Optimisation and institute websites are very important for the elevated visibility of the institution. For admission related decision institution's websites is preferred over all other mediums. Moderately referred mediums are

review sites, blogs, discussion forums which are on an average referred by 63% of the respondents.

Table 2 Various factors considered by the sample respondents regarding the academics available in Digital Media

Sl. No.	Factors influencing the respondents	Percentage
1	Placement Details	97
2	College Ranking	83
3	College Rating	78
4	Faculty Profiles	71
5	Feedbacks	47
6	Courses Offered	19
7	Website of the Institute	72
8	Reputation of the College	66
9	Facilities Available	89
10	Accreditation	82

Source: Primary data

Institution's Placement record is one of the most significant factors for education related decisions are referred by 97% of the respondents. Other important factors include website of the institution by 72%, faculty profiles by 71%, college ranking by 83%, college rating by 78%, facilities available by 89% and accreditation by 82%. Courses offered and feedbacks are the least referred factors by the respondents as they expressed their views that they prefer only the institute where the course they choose is offered will be taken for consideration.

In order to influence the target group an institute needs to brand itself strongly by enhancing its visibility in each of the above tabulated areas projecting precise and updated information in an appealing manner.

Scope and Limitations

The geographical scope of the study was restricted to Nagercoil town. The study being exploratory in nature, the sample size was restricted to 100 respondents (student group). Focus was mainly on analysing the effectiveness of digital marketing for education related decisions; the generalisations drawn are only indicative and not conclusive. However, there is a scope for further research where gender wise influence of digital marketing for various other decisions can be studied.

Implications

The findings of the empirical study indicate there is a high degree of awareness with reference to digital marketing among the target group studied with the reasonable influence even while taking crucial decisions like admission for higher educations. Clearly indicating that academic institutes need to furnish strong credible support and statistics on important aspects like placement records and alumni data which again are prominent parameters while selecting an institute avoiding false content, ambiguity in content, outdated content, incompleteness and biasness.

Conclusion

To conclude the present analysis, digital marketing in education sector certainly place a important role in decision making for students. This study identifies that most of the respondents have an overall perception with reference to digital marketing in education sector. An attribute that emerged in the study was convenience where required data is easily available and the website also provides various factors to be considered for the respondents to engage, review and ask questions and if all the major attributes are taken

care of, it can lead to a better word of mouth and enhanced brand building.

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