**Abstract**

**Purpose:** This paper aims to examine the factor influencing the digital marketing platform preference in the management educational institutions, and to create a conceptual model to understand the relationship between the factors.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** Factors influencing the digital marketing platform preferences were identified based on extensive literature review and empirical investigation has been carried out using the survey data collected from 217 colleges in and around the state of Karnataka.

**Findings:** The variables, Reachability (R), Competitor Analysis (CA), Cost Effectiveness (CE), and Conversion Rate (CR) have shown positive impact and, the variable Data Threat (DT) have shown a negative impact on intuitions’ overall digital platform preference.

**Research limitations/implications:** The research result could help the management educational institutions to understand the factor influencing and to make an optimum investment in digital marketing.

Future research is needed to determine if other cities to conduct the factor influence the digital marketing platform and whether other samples produce the same interpretations.

**Keywords:** Digital Marketing Platform, Reachability, Cost Effectiveness, Conversion Rate, Competitor Analysis, Data Threat.

**Introduction**

**Digital Marketing**

One of the most rapidly evolving areas is digital. Artificial Intelligence (AI) was a distant future just a few years ago, but now it is at the centre of global business and industry. Users may apply AI to automate ad buying with programmatic advertising, which helps businesses narrow down the target audiences. Conversational marketing establishes a one-on-one relationship between customers and digital marketers.
“Digital marketing, also called online marketing, is the promotion of brands to connect with potential customers using the internet and other forms of digital communication. This includes not only email, social media, and web-based advertising, but also text and multimedia messages as a marketing channel.”

By involving individuals in online discussions, social media marketing can increase traffic and brand exposure. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are the most popular social media marketing platforms, with LinkedIn and YouTube not far behind.

**Digital Marketing in India**

The marketing activity of promoting goods/services using digital means is known as digital marketing. And nowadays, practically everyone has access to the internet. The number of people who have access to the internet has expanded tremendously as a result of cheap data and affordable cell phones.

Karan Shah (2020) According to Dentsu Aegis Network, India’s overall advertising business was worth INR 68,475 crores in 2019 and is expected to reach INR 75,952 crores by the end of 2020. That’s a staggering 10.9 per cent increase. Here’s a glimpse at how much money will be spent on digital advertising in 2020, 2021, and 2022.

| Year | Digital Advertising Industry | Advertising Industry |
|------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 2020 | ₹15,782 cr ($2.16 Bn)       | ₹56,490 cr ($7.74 Bn) |
| 2021 | ₹18,938 cr ($2.59 Bn)       | ₹62,577 cr ($8.57 Bn) |
| 2022 | ₹23,673 cr ($3.24 Bn)       | ₹70,343 cr ($9.64 Bn) |

11.59% CAGR 22.47% CAGR

**Digital Marketing in Educational Sector**

Samokhvalova, A. (2017). A growing middle class, new appealing study destinations, and a corresponding shift in student mobility tendencies have created a new dynamic in international higher education recently. Countries use marketing methods to advertise and “sell” their higher education to worldwide students-cum-customers in order to stay competitive. The importance of online channels in higher education promotion is becoming increasingly crucial as more people utilise the Internet to seek study locations. Suhasini, B., & Kumar, N. S. (2018). Digital marketing and communication are essential for establishing long-term consumer relationships and delivering high-quality service. Customer interaction has risen fast as a result of improved multi-touchpoint communication enabled by Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solutions.

The Government of India’s active promotion and numerous projects initiated by them have set a precedent and trend across all corporate and social sectors in India to strive towards the digitization of various services that they aim to give to their clients in a speedy and easy-to-use manner. In terms of consumer reach activities during admission and enrolment, course delivery for teaching and learning, skill development, and other digital initiatives, the higher education sector is one that is playing a big role and catching up with all of the latest developments.

Al-Thagafi, A., et al., (2020). In the global struggle for foreign student recruitment, higher education institutions want to stand out. SAPUs face societal and economic problems that have

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an impact on their domestic and worldwide recruitment. Paulk et al., (1995) a digital marketing capability maturity model (CMM) can assist the public universities in Saudi Arabia (SAPUs) in addressing digital marketing difficulties in international student recruitment while also emphasising the value of branding at all levels of the model. Momen, M. A et al., (2019). For firms to establish brand image and brand equity, internet-based marketing communication has become a critical component. There is no exception when it comes to higher education. Configuring the correct combination in the age of social networking sites and numerous online displays, as well as continually changing search engine optimization algorithms, has become a huge difficulty today. As a result, the goal of this research is to set up integrated online marketing communication for the growth of higher educational institutions’ brand image and brand equity.

**Why Should Institutes Go For Digital Marketing?**

digital marketing is the most effective technique to reach the greatest number of people in the shortest amount of time. It provides a globalised platform on which may communicate 100% accurate information about the educational institution with all stakeholders. From a technical standpoint, in the digital economy of 2020, roughly 4.5 billion individuals, or 60% of the world population, will be active internet users, around 3.8 billion will be social media users, and 5.19 billion will use smartphones. Given these figures, establishing a strong online presence for the educational institution can be critical in enhancing the institution’s reputation.

In fact, effective planning of an internet presence can help to reach out to potential students and boost the educational institution’s credibility. As a result, one must use digital marketing services to keep the educational institution ahead of the competition and achieve a competitive advantage in the education field. Keep in mind that this generation prefers to go to websites first before going to educational institutions!

**Review of Literature**

Pollačk, František, and Peter Markoviˇc. (2021). The use of marketing communication tools in an online context is a huge topic. Market development frequently influences the innovation of standard practices. The current study investigates a number of elements that may influence the use of digital marketing tools in small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). Most businesses, regardless of their size, are still hesitant to invest in digital marketing. Previous experience, on the other hand, is a crucial factor in how people view the benefits of using the internet for business. Organizations that use online marketing tools greatly value their contribution to their bottom line.

Eze, S. C. et al. (2020). Micro-businesses adoption of digital marketing devices (DMD) is shaped by a number of crucial success variables. The research was conducted in a qualitative manner. Unstructured and semi-structured interviews were done with a total of 26 micro-businesses selected from an online database and supported by the TOE framework (technology, organisation, and environment). This helped to identify 14 essential success criteria driving microbusinesses’ adoption of DMD in Nigeria.

Kitsios, F. et al., (2021). Big data analytics opens up a slew of possibilities for bettering our understanding of hospitality management and assisting in decision-making. Hotel management can use user-generated content (UGC) to get input from customers and improve certain product or service qualities to boost company value and help marketing efforts.

Dashaputre, S. (2011). The focus of this research is to look into the phenomena surrounding Internet Marketing’s growth and tendencies. As a result, three entities were considered: consumers, companies, and third-party agencies.
Das, B. B. (2019). Digital and Social Media Marketing (DSMM) is a term that refers to digital marketing communications and activities that use social media and social networks. This dynamic, energetic, and collaborative system is named DSMM because of the combined effect of the internet as a technology-based infrastructure and the interactivity of the participants (consumers and service providers). Digital technologies and internet-based communication channels are fundamental to the framework of social media marketing.

Dholakia, R. R., & Kshetri, N. (2004). Small and medium businesses (SMEs) can use the Internet to expand their market reach and operational efficiency, as well as contribute more to the US economy. This paper presents the findings of an empirical study done to determine the factors that influence SMEs’ use of the Internet. The level of Internet involvement is predicted using internal and external characteristics such as business size, self-efficacy, past technology use, and so on. This involvement is investigated in terms of website ownership (adoption) and the usage of the Internet for selling reasons (routinization). The association between internal and external factors and SMEs’ interaction with the Internet is investigated using logistic regression.

Kaur, G. (2017). Newer options for reaching out to target audiences have emerged as a result of improved Internet technologies. Digital marketing has now become an integral aspect of every organisation, regardless of its size or industry. The growing importance of digital marketing has influenced how firms market their products and services to existing and potential clients. In the tourism business, where clients have fast access to all types of information on the latest deals and greatest pricing, the necessity for digital marketing has never been greater. In today’s world, digital marketing is vital to the success of every tourism-related firm.

Tay, H. L., & Low, S. W. K. (2017). Lean is a management technique that focuses on increasing operational productivity and organisational performance. It’s a systemic attitude that focuses on meeting customer requirements, reducing waste, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Many higher education institutions (HEIs) have used technology to enable flexibility in learning and just-in-time training for learners in recent years, in an effort to improve both the internal processes of course delivery and the quality of education provided. The goal of this research is to identify the important characteristics that promote the conversion of printed learning resources to e-learning resources in HEIs by recognising these trends in HEIs.

**Statement of the Problem**

Digitalisation is part of all kinds of organisations, the educational sector is one of the fast-growing and digitalisation is necessary for their admission processes. Education institutions are finding it difficult to identify the factor influencing the adoption of digital marketing platforms in the admission process.

**Research Methodology**

**Research Design**

Factor influencing the digital marketing platform preferences were identified based on extensive literature review and empirical investigation has been carried out using the survey data collected from 217 colleges in the state of Karnataka.

**Objectives of the Study**

- To understand the preference of digital marketing adoption in educational institutions
- To determine the impact of factors influencing respondents preference towards digital marketing platforms.

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Conceptual Model

Data Analysis

A multiple regression model for the college’s perception about digital platforms was attempted keeping the variables: Reachability (R), Competitor Analysis (CA), Cost Effectiveness (CE), Data Threat (DT) and Conversion Rate (CR) as the independent or predictor variables.

The multiple Regression model is

\[ \text{OP} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (R) + \beta_2 (CA) + \beta_3 (CE) + \beta_4 (DT) + \beta_5 (CR) \]

Where OP is the overall perception of institutions’ digital platform usage, \( \beta_0 \) is the constant and \( \beta_1 \) to \( \beta_5 \) are regression coefficients to be estimated from the data. Regression Model Summary generated using SPSS is presented in Table 5.1 and results of ANOVA for Regression Analysis (Results from SPSS) is presented in Table: 5.2

### Table 5.1: Regression model summary

| Model | R   | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-----|----------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1     | .841a | .707     | .697              | .63298                    |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Reachability, Competitor Analysis, Cost Effectiveness, Data Threat and Conversion Rate

### Table 5.2: Analysis of Variance

| CANOVA | Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F    | Sig.   |
|--------|-------|----------------|----|-------------|------|--------|
| 1      | Regression | .707        |     | .697        | .63298 |        |
|        | Residual |             |     |             |      |        |
|        | Total   |             |     |             |      |        |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Reachability, Competitor Analysis, Cost Effectiveness, Data Threat and Conversion Rate
The model was tested with 5 predictor variables and all 5 variables met the entry requirement and were thus included in the model. The multiple correlation coefficient $R = 0.707$ shows a substantial correlation between the predictor variables and the dependent variable. The value of $R^2= 0. 707$ indicates that about 71% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the 5 predictor variables. The values of regression coefficients, reveals the relative influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

From the Table of coefficients, it could be seen that the variables, Reachability (R), Competitor Analysis (CA), Cost Effectiveness (CE), Data Threat (DT) and Conversion Rate (CR) have proved to be significant in this empirical model. Multiple regression models with computed regression coefficients are presented in Table: 5.3

| Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | t  | Sig  |
|--------------|----------------------------|----|------|
| B            | Std. Error                 | Beta|      |
| (Constant)   | .428                       | .238| 1.800| .074 |
| Reachability | .305                       | .061|.259 | 5.032| .000 |
| Competitor  | .344                       | .053|.323 | 6.502| .000 |
| Cost Effectiveness | .305 | .047|.346 | 6.538| .000 |
| Data Threat | -.115                      | .045|- .113| -2.572| .011 |
| Conversion Rate | .190 | .056|.195 | 3.396| .001 |

a. Dependent Variable: Perception

Therefore, the constructed multiple regression model for the dependent variable overall perception (OP) predicted with 5 independent variables is,

$$OP = 0.428 + 0.305 \times (R) + 0.344 \times (CA) + 0.305 \times (CE) - 0.115 \times (DT) + 0.190 \times (CR)$$

From the above table, it could be inferred that all the independent variables have got a significant effect on the dependent variables. Beta values of each independent variable indicate the magnitude of their effect on the dependent variables.

| t-test for Equality of Means | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | t   | df  | Sig. p (2-tailed) |
|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----|-----|-------------------|
| Institution Type            | N              | Mean            |     |     |                   |
| Perception                  | Management Institution | 144 | 3.4792 | 1.18244 | .09854 | -2.922 | 215 | .004 |
| Management with other Courses | 73            | 3.9589          | 1.05985 | .12405 |                   |

From the above table, as the calculated p-value for the t-test is < 0.05, it is inferred that there is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction between different types of institutions at a 99% confidence level.
Table 5.5: T-test for the Independence of Samples (Location)

| Location | N  | Mean   | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | t     | df  | Sig. p (2-tailed) |
|----------|----|--------|----------------|-----------------|-------|-----|------------------|
| Perception | Rural | 54 | 3.5926 | 1.15772 | .15755 | - .349 | 215 | .727 |
|           | Urban | 163 | 3.6564 | 1.16736 | .09143 |           |     |          |

From the above table, as the calculated p-value for the t-test is > 0.05, it is inferred that there is no significant difference in perception level towards digital platforms between the locations of the institutions at a 99% confidence level.

Table 5.6: Mean and Standard Deviation (Affiliation)

|               | N      | Mean   | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean |          |          |
|---------------|--------|--------|----------------|------------|---------------------------------|----------|----------|
|               |        |        |                |            | Lower Bound                      | Upper Bound |          |
| Universities  | 45     | 3.7333 | 1.17551        | .17523     | 3.3802                          | 4.0865    |          |
| Affiliated Colleges | 103   | 3.4951 | 1.20354        | .11859     | 3.2599                          | 3.7304    |          |
| Autonomous Colleges | 69   | 3.7971 | 1.07894        | .12989     | 3.5379                          | 4.0563    |          |
| Total         | 217    | 3.6406 | 1.16262        | .07892     | 3.4850                          | 3.7961    |          |

From the above table, it is inferred that autonomous colleges had a higher mean value (3.7971) towards their perception level towards digital platforms, and affiliated colleges had the lowest mean value (3.4951). Universities using digital platforms for their admission process had expressed a mean value of 3.7333 on their perception level.

Table 5.7: Analysis of Variance (Affiliation)

|          | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig. |
|----------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 4.256          | 2   | 2.128       | 1.583 | .208 |
| Within Groups    | 287.707        | 214 | 1.344       |       |      |
| Total            | 291.963        | 216 |             |       |      |

From the above table, the calculated p-value (.208) for analysis of variance test is > 0.05 for college affiliation status and hence, it is inferred that there is no significant difference in college’s affiliation and their level of perception on digital platforms used for admission.

Findings / Results

A multiple regression model for the college’s perception about digital platforms was attempted
- The variables, Reachability (R), Competitor Analysis (CA), Cost Effectiveness (CE), Data Threat (DT) and Conversion Rate (CR) have proved to be significant in this empirical model
• The variables, Reachability (R), Competitor Analysis (CA), Cost Effectiveness (CE), and Conversion Rate (CR) showed positive impact, the variable Data Threat (DT) impacted negatively on Overall Perception.

• It could be inferred that all the independent variables, Reachability (R), Competitor Analysis (CA), Cost Effectiveness (CE), Data Threat (DT) and Conversion Rate (CR) have got a significant effect on the dependent variable, Overall Perception.

• There is no significant difference in college’s affiliation and their level of perception on digital platforms used for admission

Limitation

• Considering the timeframe, the study has been limited only to 217 colleges in Karnataka state.

• The future study can be carried out to consider the other factors impacting the perception of digital marketing.

Practical Implication & Conclusion

Regardless of the size or type of business, digital marketing has become an essential component. Today digital marketing plays a critical role in the success of each business that exists in the educational industry. The educational institutions will get the quality and diversified students on digital platforms used for admission. Digital marketing platforms are cost-effective and return on investment (ROI). The Government has to encourage digitalisation in education institutions admission process.

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