



# The Effect of Digital Marketing Working on Purchasing Behavior

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**Abstract** The ways and forms of consumption continue to change since the first day of existence of humanity. In this context, the way in which the consumer society is guided by brands is constantly being moved to a different dimension according to the dynamics of the period. Communication and marketing activities carried out by brands through their marketing departments have evolved from traditional to digital, with the new habits brought by the Covid-19 era on consumers. Conducted under the umbrella of digital marketing studies; with the online world, investment incentives for techniques such as e-mail marketing activities, mobile marketing activities, influencer marketing, vlog videos, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) continue to increase day by day. In the same way, the impact of digital marketing activities on the online consumer group is also increasing day by day. All communication activities carried out by brands should be carried out with a single voice in order to be stable in the eyes of the consumer and to increase the rate of trust in the brand. This study examines how the investments made in the field of digital marketing return to the brand and how the consumer develops a positive or negative attitude towards purchasing behavior.

**Keywords:** Digital Marketing, Communication, Brand Positioning, Purchasing Behavior

**JEL Classification:** M31

## 1. Introduction

The most efficient area where brands can direct the level of internet usage is digital marketing. Digital marketing, the foundations of which were laid in the 1990s and 2000s; it is all the marketing activities it carries out under the umbrella of the internet, in line with the target audience and product diversity, and considering the profitability. Digital marketing can be sustained through mobile phones, computers, tablets, social media and e-commerce (Duraichamy and Srinivasan, 2020).

Especially with the new habits brought by the Covid-19 period, everyone's home has also turned into the biggest shopping mall. When things come to this, the need for and

support for the digital marketing field grows like an avalanche. Digital marketing, which has grown by an average of 30 percent for the last two years, continues to shine (Marketing Türkiye, 2021). The Turkish market also fully responds to this self-rising new marketing trend around the world. 12 Billion 50 Million Investments Made in the Media Market in Turkey in 2021 (Deloitte, 2021).

Organizations aiming to differentiate themselves from their competitors in the market through digital marketing and to create a separate 'brand identity' in the eyes of their customers with their products follow a path from service provider to brand story (Yuvaraj and Indumathi 2018). The common point and purpose of all the studies is undoubtedly to reach good sales data. Looking at the data specific to e-commerce in Turkey; It is observed that the first 6-month period of 2021 has increased by 75.6% compared to the previous year, and the number of orders for the same periods has increased by 94.4% (e-ticaret,2021).

## **2. Digital Marketing**

Digital marketing; can be defined as all the activities that a company carries out with the aim of bringing the consumer together with the 'online' ways in line with the strategies that it determines its vision and products. The channels that can fall under the umbrella of digital marketing are; the official website that the company currently owns, social media channels, online sales channels or media organizations with which it cooperates. (Desai, 2019).

The fact that digital marketing is instantly applicable and measurable is also one of the biggest factors in turning companies from traditional marketing method to online marketing. Again, the fact that customers can make comparisons between products, quickly experience the positive/negative differences between competing products and the services they are interested in also enables customers to act more quickly in revealing their purchasing behaviors (Durmaz and Efendioğlu, 2016).

### ***2.1. The Stages of Digital Marketing***

The main reasons why digital marketing studies need a structuring and organization; is that it differs from traditional marketing studies and carries out more active studies by its nature. The other is the rapid results brought by this active structure (Parsons, Zeisser and Waitman, 1998).

As with all marketing efforts, there are stages to continue in order for 'digital marketing' efforts to result in the targeted way. As stated in Figure 1, in order for a brand to complete its digital marketing processes at the desired level, it must first know its own existence and what it can do, know its followers clearly, and design content suitable for the world of its target audience.

1) <b>Know Yourself:</b> The main purpose is to determine what the team carrying out the marketing activities expects from the structure of the company and all the marketing activities it does/will do, and what it wants to get in this direction.	2) <b>Know the Room:</b> It is observed how the company's recognition of the target audience and existing customer group, which is on its radar, has an impact on the performance in digital marketing activities
3) Appropriate message transfer is provided with the technique called ' <b>Dress Appropriately</b> ' in order to be suitable for the target audience.	4) With the stage called <b>Tell Stories</b> , the architectural structure of both the text and visual world of digital marketing studies is determined.
5) Brands try to remember and communicate with their customers through digital marketing efforts. With the ' <b>Make a Connection</b> ' step, catchy messages reach their target audience via e-mail.	6) Digital marketing content that will create the expectations and perception of trust of the customers is provided. This process, called <b>Brag Modestly</b> , proposes the most efficient use of the products in the brand's product range and their distinctive features through keywords.
7) In the <b>Observe&amp;Adjust</b> stage, all activities and outputs are reported. All studies are reported numerically.	

**Figure 1. Digital Marketing Cycle**

Source : van Laer and Lurie, 2016 "The Seven Stages of the Digital Marketing Cycle."

**2.2. Trends of Digital Marketing**

With the Covid-19 virus for two years, all the people of the world; had to go through many changes in society's life, way of doing business, and most importantly, in social life. (Mandalina, 2021). Changes in all areas also showed their presence in the field of digital marketing. As Kaswengi and Diallo (2015) stated, consumers' purchasing behavior becomes more sensitive in times of crisis, and the brand/product relationship reaches a more important level in such periods. For this reason, brands tend to focus more on advertising and marketing activities in such limited periods (Eti, 2021).

With the increase in the use of social media, one of the most common application types in the field of digital marketing in recent years is seen as 'influencer marketing'. As the

data reveals, since the followers mostly enjoy watching the video and experience content, the current version of the 'word of mouth marketing' type used in the traditional period and the people positioned as the brand ambassadors are the influencers determined in accordance with the brand vision (Slijepčević, Radojević and Perić, 2019).

### ***2.3. Usage Area of Digital Marketing***

The target audience of the company determines all the issues such as which communication channels a brand will communicate more frequently or what kind of communication language it will maintain in the determined channels. First of all, if we look at digital marketing channels; companies' official websites, social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, Youtube), influencer marketing, e-mail marketing or games can be shown (Wediacorp, 2019).

The usage areas to be determined while creating the digital marketing map according to the type of service offered by the companies; B2B (Business to Business) or B2C (Business to Customer) is reserved. The digital marketing activities of the service, which has such a wide network, are also carried out within the framework of certain strategies. Strategies may vary depending on the economic conditions the brand is in or the communication style it wants to maintain. According to the model called SAF (Conformity, Acceptability, Feasibility); The company's strategy, financial strength and brand identity are acted upon (LaPlaca, 2013).

## **3. Purchasing Intent and Purchasing Behavior**

The purchasing process is the whole of the work done to bring the undecided customer to the point of purchase before shopping. In order to generate purchase intention, it is necessary to predict the performance of new channels, improve existing channels and clarify the target audience. (Peña-García et al. 2020).

The fields of economics and marketing have been conducting research on purchasing for a long time. Because the purchase may be incomplete if it is evaluated only economically. According to the Nicosia Model, marketing activities carry out direct activities with potential customers, so that customers become partners in these activities with the purchase movement (Deniz, 2012).

### ***3.1. Changes in Purchasing Habits***

The pandemic process has further accelerated the change in consumer behavior. Although the share of digital shopping in the market has been on the rise in recent years,

the pandemic process has made it significantly visible. In this situation, it is observed that the Covid-19 process and psychology have also changed the purchasing attitude of the customers. In 2021, consumers tend to buy a product not only for consumption, but also to satisfy the psychological need for belonging and relaxation created by the product (Morewedge *et al.*, 2021).

All the changes in the purchasing attitude brought the industry to a different point. According to the statement made by the Association of Electronic Commerce Operators (ETID); As a result of the purchases made in the field of e-commerce in Turkey in 2021, a budget of 400 billion has emerged. According to the 2022 projections, it is thought that the existing volume will increase up to 560 billion liras with a 40% growth leap. (Worlddef,2022).

### ***3.2. Online Purchasing Behavior***

Opportunity to shop online; it caused people to change the way they shop, their habits and the products they put in their baskets. There are many reasons why people prefer online shopping ways. Demographic factors, social class of customers or changes in their lives bring about the differentiation of their burden habits. The reasons for this are; people who want to shop in cheaper and easier ways, the variability created by the possibility of time in living conditions and the 'desire to use time in a controlled way' or the opportunity to get direct information about the product/products, purchasing earlier and online shopping are among the driving forces of online shopping (Osman, Yin-Fah, and Choo, 2010).

### ***3.3. Effects of Digital Marketing Activities on Purchasing Intention and Behavior***

The competitive market environment created by today's world requires brands to make brand positioning, especially with the activations they make in the digital marketing world. (Sabbir and Akhter 2018). With the digital marketing studies carried out, brands that want to develop purchase intention now carry out their work according to the term called 'Digital Dashboard'. As the term suggests, institutions are also at the point of participating in digitalization (Amoroso and Hunsinger, 2009).

According to studies, social media changes customers' attitudes towards purchasing. Since the mobile marketing research conducted by Antone Camera *et al.* in 2012 emerged from the common point of Basheer *et al.*'s work in 2010 to measure the purchasing impact of SMS marketing efforts; It has been observed that digital marketing studies carried out with purchasing behavior have a common denominator and feed each

other (Jagtap 2021). Again, when the reasons for digital marketing efforts to push the customer to buy are examined; price/performance, obtaining information, product perception come first (Naseeth and Chrishankar, 2018).

#### **4. Methodology**

All processes carried out as the concepts of data collection, data analysis, description or interpretation regarding any subject or problem can be gathered under the word research. In addition to the secondary data analyses, a Focus Group Study was conducted with the target audience and their reactions on the subject were observed. The effects of the shopping trend brought by the Covid-19 period to different age groups were questioned in detail in a focus group study. Group structure; consists of people who meet on a common ground in terms of similar demographic characteristics, living standards and consumption habits.

For the validity of the results of the focus group study, the analysis of the answers, the selection of suitable participants and the inclusion of the people in the group are priority points. The study was completed according to the discourse analysis technique for the evaluation of the data. In this context, the answers of the people were analyzed according to the style of the place where the discussion was held, their experiences, value judgments, professional groups or working styles (Gülcan, 2021).

##### ***4.1. Scope of the Study and Method***

The focus of the study is to reveal the origins of digital marketing studies and how the differences in purchasing behavior over time appear from the eyes of the end consumer. The effects of digital marketing studies have been observed on how the changes in the functioning of the whole world resonated in the marketing world and on the different consumption habits experienced in the time period from the offline world to the online world.

##### ***4.2. Objectives of the Research***

- a) Development of digital marketing,
- b) Change of purchasing style,
- c) The effect of digital marketing activities on the brand,
- d) The effect of digital marketing on purchase intention.

### ***4.3. Hypotheses Development***

The research was conducted with people with different demographic characteristics and focused on how these people develop attitudes towards digital marketing studies. In this sense, the study continued its studies on directly observing the effects of digital marketing activities that different groups encounter in the online world.

***Hypothesis 1:*** The fact that digital marketing activities are too frequent can negatively affect the purchase intention of the young–adult audience.

***Hypothesis 2:*** While women are more positively affected by influencer marketing in their purchase intention, men are generally influenced by price level.

***Hypothesis 3:*** As the cost of the product increases, the desire to experience the product before online shopping may be more intense.

***Hypothesis 4:*** The fact that the product is guaranteed directly by the brand is more effective for purchase intention.

***Hypothesis 5:*** With the pandemic, digital campaigns have become more effective for consumption.

### ***4.4. Research Design***

Secondary sources were used for the literature data of the study. Textbooks, academic journals, academic articles, books and news sources on websites related to the subject were preferred.

In addition to all secondary data analysis, the reactions of the participants on the subject were directly observed by using the Focus Group Study with the determined target audience. At the same time, the new shopping trends brought by the Covid–19 period in different age groups were questioned in detail in daily life with focus group studies. In the study, which consists of 3 separate groups, there are a total of 4 participants in each group. Group structure; it consists of people who have similar demographic characteristics, similar living standards, and whose consumption habits can meet on a common denominator.

Focus group studies are aimed at observing people's opinions on the issues on which their opinions are taken, within the framework of their feelings and thoughts, by adopting the focus group method in the study. A focus group study is an analysis in which the opinions of the participants are taken within the framework of their feelings and thoughts (Milena, Dalnora and Alin 2008). Focus group studies are a method for introducing new services, measuring the impact of advertising campaigns or directly measuring the impact of digital marketing efforts. The technique, which is generally

used in situations where people have difficulty expressing themselves, helps in clarifying the strategy in marketing workings (David, 2007).

#### ***4.4.1. Preliminary Qualitative Research and Focus Group Methodology***

Preliminary qualitative research; it is a research method that examines different subjects and disciplines. It is a method that explains social events based on the experiences of the people in its target audience in one-to-one ways to understand the root causes of the issue.

The main features that distinguish qualitative research from quantitative research are; the research method involves maintaining more complex processes, analyzing them with verbal methods, and finally determining the findings obtained naturally rather than numerical and statistical data (Curry, Nembhard, and Bradley, 2009).

Focus Group Methodology, which dates back to the 1930s, is a technique that examines the attitudes or behaviors of the participants and the group synergy in the face of events. Focus group studies are a pre-planned interview method with predetermined questions (Çokluk, Yılmaz, and Oğuz, 2011). The Focus Group Methodology can be carried out in groups of six and ten, and in groups of four and six. Since the technique is not scientifically based on numbers and requires verbal-visual analysis, the data should be evaluated systematically, sequentially and objectively without delay (Rabiee, 2004).

The Discourse Analysis technique, which was used for the analysis part of the research, was developed by Potter and Wetherell. Through the identified themes, the answers are examined theoretically. Discourse analysis; answers of individuals are evaluated according to the basics of social life such as social group structure, gender, and occupation (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009).

#### ***4.5. Limitations of the Research***

In the research, it was tried to determine the differences in the online trade orientation of people living in Turkey after the pandemic and the channel and campaign type of the main motivation source in this process. The process was carried out with empirical studies and the sources of motivation were examined.

Considering the limitations of the research; due to the technique used, it is necessary to examine the answers in more detail and to be sure of their accuracy. In this part, the researcher's knowledge and ability to read the facial expressions of the person or



persons should come into play. According to the research methodology, the research questions are open-ended and should be explained with examples in order to attract the attention of the participants and to give longer-term answers.

The research questions were not carried out with professionals in the field in order to perceive the general consumer profile, but were carried out with people who are directly 'customer' potential. Within the scope of the focus group study, a total of 11 questions were asked, including the antecedent options. The flow of questions goes from general to specific.

#### ***4.6. Outcomes of the Focus Group***

The first focus group study was conducted with A.K (63), B.M (59), H.D (55), N.M (61) on April 9, 2022, to observe how the middle-aged population adopted their attitude towards purchasing as a result of digital campaigns. It was completed in an average of 25 minutes. 75% of all participants are housewives and 25% are working. They have similar characteristics in terms of the channels they use on the Internet and the average time they spend on the internet. The second group, on the other hand, has similar demographic characteristics and living standards; conducted with G.Y (25), M.D (27), O.M (34), O.M (31). The study was carried out on 10.04.2022, and an average of 35 minutes was spent for the discussion of the subjects and their final completion. Among the people in the group structure, three people work in the private sector and one person continues his life as a housewife. The last focus group study was completed on 14.04.2022 in an average of 40 minutes. This group structure consists of four people; Completed with D.B (27), H.S (28), H.G (27), O.S (23). Although people have similar demographic characteristics, the cultures they come from have similar characteristics and their educational life is at an equivalent level. Each of the participants who completed their undergraduate life continues their career in the private sector.

## **5. Results and Discussion**

Brands and consumers are rapidly adapting to new lifestyles and habits brought by technology. After the pandemic, especially middle-aged people's shopping has focused on the online side compared to the past. With the new arrangement brought by the pandemic, everyone started to spend more time on the internet, regardless of age. Age factor, education level affect the reasons for using the internet and the distribution of channels. middle-age group; Google, Facebook, Youtube, game channels, young adult participants prefer Instagram and e-commerce channels. The impact of digital marketing also varies according to age. While seeing frequent advertisements for the

brand for middle-aged people does not have a negative effect, it has a negative effect on the brand for young adults. However, it can be said that the male consumption group is more uncomfortable here. The middle age group is more satisfied with seeing digital advertisements tailored to their needs. Positive/negative attitudes towards the types of campaigns carried out by brands for sales purposes vary according to age and gender. Longer experience videos for the middle age group are affected by product placement, while being negatively affected by influencer campaigns. Male participants in the young adult group have a more positive attitude towards meeting their needs with discount announcements of e-mail and SMS marketing. In the end, it can be said that male consumers are more affected by price campaigns, and female users in the young adult group tend to purchase as a result of reverse influencer campaigns.

It has been observed that the participants check the products face-to-face from offline channels before purchasing according to the cost and type of products to be purchased from online channels, and then purchase them from online channels. The reason for purchasing these products online is the price. Consumers who prefer direct online routes, on the other hand, have been observed to search the websites of the services that are more costly in terms of product types more intensively and question their originality more. On the online side, the price is the main factor, and it is in question to turn to a more suitable reliable e-commerce channel. On the other hand, the common request of all participants to purchase a product is warranty coverage. The duration of the warranty and its giving by the brand are among the basics. The fact that online channels have an 'instant connection' option makes people feel safe, while the channel's problem-solving ability is another positive factor. The responsibilities of people in life also shape the products in their baskets. In this sense, it is key for sales that digital marketing is in line with the expectations of the target audience. The middle age group is more affected by their basic needs through online means, while the young adult group is more affected by the textile and technology groups.

As indicated in Table 1, the marital status types of the participants are equal. It has been observed that the digital campaigns of the married group have a greater impact on family consumption products, while the singles tend to focus more on the clothing and game groups. People with different ways of doing business have different reactions to digital marketing. Those who work from home have turned to home products, hybrid system or office workers have turned to their routine habits.

**Table 1. Focus Group Study Group Results**

<b>Total Participants:12</b>	<b>Space</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
<b>Age</b>	23-34	8
	55-63	4
<b>Childbearing Status</b>	There is	5
	No	7
<b>Employed Institution Type</b>	Private sector	6
	Public sector	2
<b>Gender</b>	Female	8
	Male	4
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	6
	Single	6
<b>Monthly Household Income</b>	0-2.825 TL	1
	2.825-5000 TL	6
	5001-7.500 TL	2
	7.501-10.000 TL	0
	10.001-12.500 TL	2
	12.501-15.000 TL	0
	More than 15.000 TL	1
<b>Work Arrangement (For employees)</b>	Fully at the Office	5
	Full remote	1
	Hybrid	2
<b>Working Status (For employees)</b>	Low (High School and below)	5
	High (Above high school)	7

**Source:** Responses of the participants

## 6. Conclusion

With the literature research on the subject, the participation of the participant group in synergy and conversational atmosphere and the opportunity to make observations were provided through the nature of the focus group technique as a method. It has been seen that the answers come from real experiences. As the discussion environment continued uninterrupted, the participants were able to present their different experiences with examples, through listening to the questions and the answers given by others.

The results of the research have observed how economic and sociological changes have changed the routines and digital marketing campaigns of brands in this direction. The main purpose is to reveal which type of digital marketing is more effective on which audience. Today, the return of mobile phones to shopping centers has brought the acceptance of fast consumption by the majority. In the light of the results, it can be said that even if the demographic structures of the participants are similar, their online world inclinations may be different, but their online inclinations can be observed more clearly

with more specific factors such as work areas, parental status, monthly income. The education factor also affects the level of being online. It has been seen that people with a bachelor's degree view influencer campaigns more positively, and people with a lower graduation level look at it as a scam. Again, it can be said that those working from home feel more involved in online campaigns, while office workers are more cautious.

In the future, academic studies that embrace similar issues can observe the impact of digital campaign studies after explaining different campaigns to the research group in order to observe how open the purchasing movement is towards digital campaigns. In this way, it will be possible to observe which of the different digital campaign methods is more effective and which demographic characteristics create purchase intention on the group of people.

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