

Digital Sales & Marketing Impact on Asian Market during Pandemic with the Effect of Creating Online Demand: Robust Optimization of Digital Marketing Intelligence

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Abstract

Purpose: Digital market become very vast due to COVID-19 because people prefer to buy online as compared to physically. Social media apps popularity became very widespread. Asian people now depend on digital sales & marketing. Due to severe pandemic, enterprises became digitally vast whether they are small or medium. Online demand & price are very low as compared to purchase items physically. Because it also includes transportation costs etc. The focus of the study is on the expansion of digital marketing intelligence in COVID-19 pandemic. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, digital marketing intelligence expended which is also a positive sign of pandemic in digital marketing as well as negative consequences also faced because of it. **Design/Methodology/Approach:** A qualitative approach was adopted for this research study and data has been collected through interviews, telephonic and email discussion. Questionnaire formats were also used where necessary, round table conferences were conducted with marketing managers of online shopping platforms such as Alibaba.com, Taobao, Ali Express and Shopee. Data was collected from 40 marketing managers of aforementioned online shopping platforms. **Findings:** This study aims to investigate how Pandemic Covid-19 made expansion in digital marketing intelligence in such a great way which could not be imagined before 2019. It not only covered the progress of 20 years in only one/two years which is a great achievement for China as well of Asian market. **Practical Implications:** This research paper focused on digital marketing intelligence which can be helpful not only in traditional marketing but it is more helpful in digital marketing which is the need of Asian market and obviously need of whole world. **Originality/Value:** There are many more studies about social media but nobody discussed big five on-

line shopping platforms together and explained how they became more progressive after pandemic COVID-19. Due to pandemic, many businesses shut down but through digital marketing intelligence, they also raise again in a better way. No other research paper explained Asian market digital marketing intelligence progress during pandemic.

Keywords

Social Media, Digital Marketing Intelligence, Asian Market, Pandemic COVID-19

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic brought restrictions which forced changes in how to make business prove the efficiency adaptations of digital sales tools (Richter, 2020). Customer is free to choose product which is more economical for him. In digital marketing, customer is free to select items from pool of items & free to compare them in three ways such as quality, price & quantity.

This is all because of internet and social media that consumer behavior has changed and companies prefer to conduct their businesses through this (Dwivedi et al., 2021). There come various social and digital marketing opportunities over and done with low costs, awareness of brand, quality improvement and sales which are greater than before. With aforementioned these circumstances, there are some negative vibes such as annoying presence of online business messages, etc. People who are using internet and social media are 5.03 billion and 4.7 billion. This is 63.1% of the total population of the globe. Aforementioned 4.7 billion which is 59% of world's population (Statista, 2022a).

Online platform accelerates due to pandemic COVID-19 and a sudden boom occur in e-commerce growth especial in online shopping because there was lockdown everywhere and people had no other choice but to go out for anything. So the preference automatically shifts towards digital marketing. Research shows that in 2020, 79% of consumers preferred to buy household items online, there will be 19% increase from 2019 to 2020 (Inmar I, 2020). Although it was the pandemic COVID-19 which made this online shopping possible as high as 95% boom (El-kind, 2020). Aforementioned evidence proves that pandemic made this possible which shifted traditional shopping to online/digital marketing intelligence.

Companies are allowed by the social & digital marketing to do their businesses at low costs. They give competitive edge to companies to achieve their targets through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. All social media/digital marketing allows businesses to accomplish their marketing goals at their lowest costs (Ajina, 2019). Here is the summery of male and female statistics (Table 1).

81% are millennials who checked twitter daily in 24 hours. 91% of users are using social media through their mobile devices. 22% of total population uses Facebook (Lister, 2022).

Table 1. Social media statistics.

Male	Female	Social media
75%	83%	Facebook
26%	38%	Instagram

Data source: <https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2017/01/05/social-media-marketing-statistics>.

There is consumption of huge amount of time which is spend daily on searching for different products and services. It becomes a habit of people to search online information of the product to find out the product specifications as well as curious about other consumer's experiences. Some people afraid from online shopping but when they get 90% satisfaction, they became used to online shopping from different apps.

In 2006, according to the previous data, online market was not that much strong but had robust potential to grow except for other obstacles (Yu, 2006). This statement proved that in 2006, there had been potential but people were still afraid because they did not have exposure to digital marketing intelligence. Yu also explains that most Chinese consumers were internet beginners at that time, and the major concern of the consumer is to buy products physically so that could easily judge their quality and safety purpose. In 2022 nobody wants to do physical shopping due to this paradigm shift towards traditional to digital marketing intelligence. Most consumers wait for a low price or get a discount/some of the price off from actual price for their satisfaction (Wang et al., 2021). Aforementioned, consumers prefer to buy physically before pandemic but after that, they have no chance and they compromised on online shopping which become economic as well as beneficial for consumer and digital marketing.

This paradigm shift happened after pandemic COVID-19. In 2022, the whole country using digital money, digital marketing intelligence, big data, online trust, etc. China Launched new digital app in 2022 for iOS for app stores which used within China but also used across the border. Millions of users signed up e-CNY through commercial banks. Now more than 2 billion users are using digital money (Huld, 2022). It means after pandemic this change happened, otherwise it will take almost five to ten years to compete for digital marketing intelligence at this level.

When we compare past era, we conclude that customers are spending plenty of time on internet for searching and shopping but as compared to past (Ramos et al., 2017). New tools and mechanism are emerging with potential of new concepts which are directly linked with digital marketing, and transforming the whole surroundings in such a collaborative way between provider and consumers where everything has its replacement with better quality and price, where no rule of fixed price and no monopoly at all (Wymbbs, 2011), therefore it becomes more and more dynamic. By following the norms and essentials of digital marketing through three special tools (Oliveira, 2014), 1) build customer loyalty; 2)

low costs; 3) maximum profit.

For successful digital marketing intelligence, there should be active bodies who integrate different marketing strategies, which deal various channels at the same times, multiple access simultaneously, and have tools to run 24/7 as a robotic manners.

Digital marketing and social media play a great part in awareness of public services and promotions, so that social media apps are the only by which we can gather public at any good platform to promote or demote anything. Behavior of any consumer can be changed by innovative technology adaptation through use of social commerce and take decision of online shopping. This can change the attitude and influence towards online shopping by using digital and social media (Abou-Elgheit, 2018). There should be positive and negative effects of social media marketing for organizations, and some studies investigated that there has been a positive effect of social media on customer (Hanaysha, 2018).

At present, the use of social media channels has dramatically increased, massive social media marketing investment, marketing relationships need to be revisited by hook and crook. Geographically, every country has its own experience of online shopping, in some countries it considers good but on the other hand, it does consider good. What are the reasons behind it we can investigate it by **Table 2**.

Pakistan statistics show that, 23.9% user penetration in 2022 and expected 28.2 in 2027 (Statista, 2022d), June 2022, Indian people prefer to do online shopping only 24% (Statista, 2022b) whereas in Bangladesh user penetration is 35% and 49.1% expected in 2027 (Statista, 2022e). China has 80% user penetration in 2022 which will be expected more than 90% in future which is a really impressive number in digital marketing intelligence (Statista, 2022c) (**Table 2**).

As mentioned above the difference between Asian countries online shopping which shows their different culture and ethnic group digitally. The countries who are not participating in digital marketing because they have a lack of decision making or some other reasons such as insecurity, online fraud, mind set to choose online, etc. there is a need to run awareness campaigns related to digital marketing as well as secure market should be introduced. When they get awareness, they automatically change their perceptions, satisfaction level and expectations especially when they avail business experience and practices.

Table 2. Statistics of digital marketing experience.

Sr#	Country	Digital marketing experience
1	China	80% online shopping
2	Pakistan	23.9% online shopping
3	Bangladesh	35% online shopping
4	India	24% online shopping

2. Literature Review

In literature review section, there are five more sub-sections such as 2.1 is explaining digital marketing intelligence, 2.2 global market, 2.3 digital sales and marketing, 2.4 creating online demand, and 2.5 Asian market analysis. Following is the detail of all sections.

2.1. Digital Marketing Intelligence

Globally, all marketing activities are facilitated through internet, either the customers are at long distant geographically (Yu, 2006). Internet plays greater role in the development and explosion of Chinese market simultaneously. According to Yu (2006), in 2003, China's per Capita GDP was US\$ 1, 1000, which is equivalent to its purchasing power which was \$5500. In 2010, RMB 48,000 were earned by 40 million households annually, which is equal to US \$24,000 as purchasing power, and as a middle class it's enough for households by way of European or American standards. Most of the multinational forms considered china as the favorable market because of its population (Chen & Penhirin, 2004).

Immense opportunities are provided to businesses so that they can achieve their marketing goals at reasonable price through social media platform. Day by day, fame of social media increasing attention in industry as well as in academic spheres. Previous studies pointed out that, more than 50% of users followed their desired brand on twitter. In 2018, it is estimated that, social media marketing spending is USD 35.98 billion (Kusumasondjaja, 2018). This proves that the social media marketing not only opens up new opportunities but also plays vital role in development of any country. For growth and survival all companies required possible changes internally and externally for profitability, so there would be a need to collect, extract, analyze, interpret and investigate company's internal and external situation to build business strategy (Claver-Cortés et al., 2012).

Marketing intelligence is playing fundamental role in any company to facilitate business strategy. Business intelligence comprises with planned and emerging strategies (Janssen, van der Voort, & Wahyudi, 2017), it should depend on the business leaders to analyze the emerging situation information and prepare their business strategies according to their adjustment. Marketing intelligence is necessary for strategy decision making to update appropriately for unpredictable competition (Akter et al., 2016). Marketing intelligence makes a company achieve and examine their distinct features and cost structures of simultaneous product and services in market (Weng, 2021), to determine the important segment.

From big data, incredible opportunities have been opened in this intelligence era to support digital transformation through modern smart system associated with marketing intelligence (Sivarajah et al., 2017). For marketing intelligence big data is measured as a foundation (Janssen et al., 2017).

2.2. Digital Sales & Marketing

There are four ways of using internet for marketing such as 1) Sales of internet

based product; 2) Communication and advertising; 3) Online distribution of digital information or data; 4) Direct sales of existing products (Samiee, 1998). By simplifying business operations electronic transactions are allowed to companies and reduced companies reliance on direct marketing (Wilson & Ivan, 2002). It gives them permission to improve their services and feedback of customers by monitoring their websites. In addition, internet is the only thing through which large audience can be grabbed easily at a really low and reasonable price.

A lot of organizations such as non-governmental organizations, businesses, schools, professional associates, hospitals, councils etc are using digital marketing as a marketing strategy for further planning (Mehralian & Khazae, 2022). There are organizations which are using their own e-commerce business platform and others depend on internet for corporate communication strategy (Miklosik et al., 2019). Over the past decade, digital marketing platform growing so fast in consumers. Every organization/company is trying to achieve their targets by using best digital marketing techniques. In 2010, it is reported that internet users rise up to 2 billion which might be double by the year. Aforementioned literature, it is possible that digital marketing practice promoting new products and services so fast to stay in competition and can easily change the demand of consumers as well. There is another technique to send electronic messages to potential customers to cover digital marketing advertising (Nuseir & Aljumah, 2020). The next decade's development is depending upon the digital marketing and digital technology trends to reach consumers to compete globally (Smith, 2011).

2.3. Creating Online Demand

Perfect competition and market efficiency depend on the availability of product information. The explosion of online market through internet has been expected to be frictionless so that e-commerce will emerge and spread perfect information of product for perfect competition and following profit and loss of market (Brynjolfsson & Smith, 2000). According to previous literature, consumers always try to find out low price and high quality and fulfill their need in better way (Bakos, 1997), and accomplish all market competitiveness among suppliers. In per last decade, a significant amount of attention has been given academically that from online source, anyone can gather plenty of price information and price actions of sellers (Granados et al., 2012). When comparison of traditional channel with digital, it is observed that traditional channel of selling has been charged high price as compared to online price (Brown & Goolsbee, 2002; Brynjolfsson & Smith, 2000; Degeratu et al., 2000; Lee, 1998; Zettelmeyer, 2000; Zettelmeyer et al., 2006). Some authors found that online prices are higher than traditional channel (Bailey, 1998; Lal & Sarvary, 1999), this becomes the contradict in laws of expected price in perfect competition (Walter et al., 2006), debate that there is price confusion due to the e-retailer nature either in multichannel or pure play with product characteristics.

2.4. Asian Market

In Asian market ad hoc marketing research is carried out in a lot of multinational companies (Tan & Ahmed, 1999). In recent times, those companies which are commissioning more with regular advertising. Previous studies investigated that there was a significant effect of COVID-19 on global economies (Mishra et al., 2020). According to authors Sha & Sharma (2020), COVID-19 was the biggest shock for global economies and understandable to country instability which is determined by the regional level. COVID-19 has been faster and severe shock on Global economy and the consequences of pandemic are more unpredictable on markets (Sharma, 2020).

According to WHO report, 30th November 2022, it's been reported that 639,132,486 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and deaths are 6,614,082 globally and 13,042,112,489 vaccine doses have been administered (<https://covid19.who.int/>). Due to COVID-19, digital marketing intelligence promoted. During the COVID-19 times, digital market got a gigantic thrust and traditional businesses were converted to online businesses, hence it becomes the need of an hour to work with digital marketing (Ravindran, 2021). According to Ravindran (2021) major big companies such as Facebook, Google, Amazon, did not face much loss but the smaller brands met unbearable challenge to reach their clients and get profit. Digital marketing proved its worth in this scenario.

3. Significance of the Study

There are a lot of studies which discussed COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences but no researcher told about its link with the digital marketing intelligence. COVID-19 pandemic is not only a loss for businesses but also plays important role in expansion of businesses through digital marketing intelligence. Online/digital marketing is promoted during pandemic period & people especial Asian community were depending on digital sales & marketing. The main target of study is to collect data from big four online shopping platforms such as Alibaba.com, Taobao, AliExpress and Shopee. No previous research is conducted through these big five online shopping platforms. Whereas, two research approaches (Qualitative approach & quantitative approach) were used for this study which made it unique from other research studies.

Alibaba.com is a multinational E-commerce technology brand. Alibaba.com established in April 4, 1999, and its headquarter is in Hangzhou, China. Monthly visitors of Alibaba.com are 2.45 billion (Nguyen, 2021). Taobao is working as C2C and B2C, & its monthly visitors are 580 million. Shopee is established in 2012, working as B2C, Cross-border E-commerce and monthly visitors are 68.6 million. AliExpress was established in 2010, working as dropship business model and monthly visitors are 546 million (Nguyen, 2021).

4. Methodology

This study aims to investigate the digital sales and marketing impact on Asian market during pandemic and robust optimization of digital marketing intelli-

gence. Therefore the Qualitative approach was quite suitable for this study. In qualitative approach, data gather through telephonic interviews, roundtable conferences, from digital marketing managers of online shopping platforms such as Alibaba.com, Taobao, AliExpress and Shopee.40 interviews were conducted through Zoom meeting, Tencent meeting, Google meet, Skype, WeChat, etc. The primary data was collected through open ended and semi-structured questionnaires from targeted online shopping platforms such as Alibaba.com, Taobao, Amazon, AliExpress and Shopee.

The aims of this data collection are to get input from targeted online shopping platforms to understand the benefits of digital marketing intelligence. It also makes us understand the scope of the development through digital marketing intelligence in online shopping platforms whose actual location is in China which is a big market for all online shopping platform in the form of Taobao, Alibaba.com, Ali Express, etc. Before COVID-19 pandemic, these online shopping platforms were not used that much as compared to 2022.

Through all open-ended questionnaires, respondents are asked to respond about pre and post observation of pandemic in using these aforementioned online shopping platforms. It also asked the respondents that whether they prefer online or offline shopping. Almost all respondents agree to do online shopping because they are now using (habit) shop online throughout the pandemic period. Some respondents also told that they prefer to buy online shopping in future and digital marketing intelligence became a need for robust optimization through online shopping platforms. The questionnaires were drawn from aforementioned literature and round table discussions.

All the 40 respondents belonged to different cities in China such as:

- Suzhou;
- Xiangcheng;
- Jinchang;
- Hangzhou;
- Humen;
- Shishi;
- Shanghai;
- Qingdao;
- Shenzhen;
- Ningbo.

All the data was collected virtually. There are come online discussions on Tencent meeting etc.

As per table mentioned above explains the number of participant in all cities (**Table 3**).

According to the literature, the scope of digital marketing intelligence getting wider and wider, and in future it will vanish all traditional marketing and spread globally. In addition, traditional marketing has not been discouraged completely because in some areas and countries it is also used. These questions raised were sorted out by this research study. 1) How Digital sales affect Asian market?

Table 3. Number of participants per city.

Sr#	City	Respondents
1	Suzhou	4
2	Xiangcheng	4
3	Jinchang	4
4	Hangzhou	4
5	Humen	4
6	Shishi	4
7	Shanghai	4
8	Qingdao	4
9	Shenzhen	4
10	Ningbo	4

2) How digital marketing change Asian market? 3) Through Digital sales & marketing how much is price & demand affected? 4) Either online demand put positive/negative impact on price/demand & Asian market? 5) How digital marketing intelligence is significantly important for Asian market? The findings and results were given all the answers to aforementioned questions which not only contribute to literature but showed the reality of some important facts.

5. Analysis

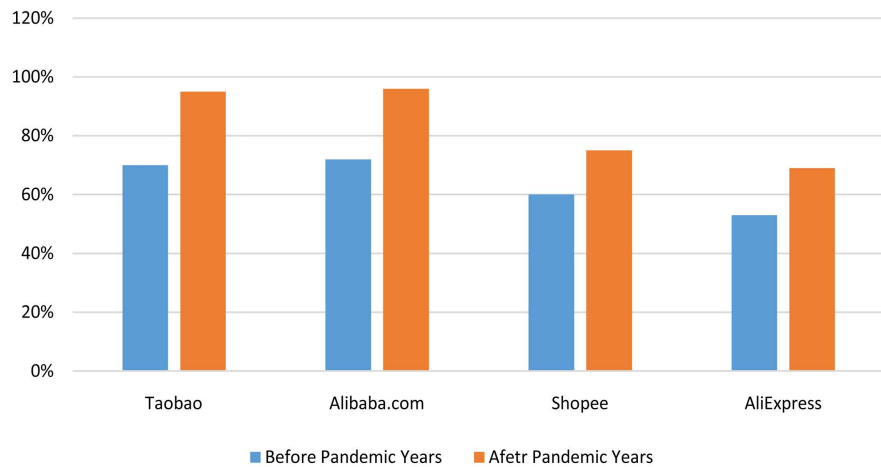
Here is the investigation of collected data which proves that due to pandemic digital market become really vast. The graph below explains that in 2018 Taobao's business conditions which is quite satisfactory but during pandemic it increased its users as well as business by trading digitally. The same situation with Alibaba.com, its growth rate is also increased due to pandemic. You can also see the AliExpress and Shopee growth which is tremendous. Before and after graph also explains that digital marketing intelligence was playing vital role in digital marketing which is not only become cause of increase in growth but also get growth in business development.

Most consumers were not that much satisfied with digital market before pandemic but pandemic not only has a negative impact but it also has a positive impact on growing businesses digitally. Digital marketing intelligence proves its worth in the pandemic period to show the real development in economy. Of course pandemic affected businesses but most of the countries survived just because of their strong digital platforms such as Taobao, Alibaba.com, AliExpress and Shopee are true examples of these successful digital platforms (**Table 4, Graph 1**).

Whenever we discuss the offline tools of marketing, some people still do traditional ways of shopping in Asian market as well as in China but most people prefer to use online shopping platforms to avail benefits of utilizing their shopping time towards their work. Aforementioned information also focuses on digital marketing intelligence as well as not ignoring the traditional ways which are

Table 4. Before & after pandemic data.

Online Shopping Platforms	Before Pandemic Years	Afetr Pandemic Years
Taobao	70%	95%
Alibaba.com	72%	96%
Shopee	60%	75%
AliExpress	53%	69%

**Graph 1.** Before & after pandemic analysis.

vital in some aspects. According to the observation there are some drawbacks of online shopping platforms which are discussed below:

- 1) You cannot use the product on the spot.
- 2) Daily useable materials such as food items are not convenient through on-line shopping platforms because you need them on urgent basis. For example: if you need milk and eggs, sugar, coffee, etc. for guests but accidentally your order stuck on the way then you become embarrassed.
- 3) Ready to pick up items are preferable for all because everyone wants to pick the items and use them as soon as possible but for online shopping platforms you have to wait for at least four to five working days.
- 4) Breakable products are also sometimes not refundable which cause in loss of money sometimes.
- 5) There is confusion in selecting product size to occur most of the time with those people who are not familiar to buy online because sometimes you order small size but you get large and on the other side you order large but you get small product.
- 6) Actual appearance of the product is also different from images posted on websites or on online shopping platforms, it also creates confusion.
- 7) There are also doubts in minds while ordering electronic materials.
- 8) Most online shopping platforms don't demand shipment charges but some online platforms also demand shipment charges.

Table 5. Demographics.

Age (In years)	Percentage
18 - 22	18.1
23 - 27	20.2
28 - 32	22.3
32 - 35	19.4
36 and above	20.0

9) If you are ordering larger quantity of items then insecurity fear occurs in your mind.

Apart from drawbacks of online shopping platforms, it has its own worth such as: Time management for work become easier. Because you can order anywhere at any time and you get the specific product the specific time. There is a platforms which directly interact to give you all information about the product so you have to search first and then order it. There is no monopoly because there are many more sellers who give you a more reasonable price with more good quality. Most online shopping platforms have return and refund policy, so if you are not happy with the product then you can return back the product and get your money back.

Some of the respondents also told that they are preferring online shopping because it is more convenient than traditional shopping methods. According to the survey of the study, 80% are young generation who are using online shopping platforms whose age between 15 years to 35 years (**Table 5**).

Although online shopping is not that much familiar before pandemic COVID-19 but now becomes the need of this era. Now this online shopping platforms not only cover China but whole Asian continent and people are using them without any hesitation which is a very significant aspect of digital marketing intelligence. Some respondents also acknowledged the fact of having good platforms such as Taobao, which offers totally shipment and reasonable price for all consumers. Apart from the scenario, respondents also admitted that the ratio of the online and traditional ways of shopping is 70:30 respectively.

6. Discussion

This research study helps to investigate and make an understanding of robust optimization of digital marketing intelligence in modern era during Pandemic COVID-19 period. It focused on online shopping platforms such as Alibaba.com, Taobao, AliExpress and Shopee and also explained about the transition from traditional towards digital marketing intelligence. It also explores the several tools and techniques that are being used the most along with identifying their aims and benefits. It conjointly provides a look at the scope of digital promoting intelligence across Asian market. According to previous research, the main focus of digital marketing intelligence is to use marketing tools wisely in a targeted

market that makes it more effective in marketing to achieve its aims and goals at less cost. It is very informative that consumers also need product information while purchasing any product and offering great benefits of the products makes consumer more loyal.

Low price also impresses consumers which is unavoidable feature but offering bulk products with low price make them impress. Digital marketing intelligence makes it possible to grab their consumers by using aforementioned features and techniques of marketing. It will be more trustable for consumers, by offering benefits to consumers through online shopping platforms such as Taobao offering free shipment. There are no charges for shipment at Taobao so most consumers in China trust it and its refund policy is also really flexible. For instance, as per the given facts of research, literature, findings, observations, and analysis proved that digital marketing intelligence is not only proven its worth during this era but also created demand for the next generation. There should be right implementation of technology and marketing tools to achieve the anticipated outputs. The answers to the research questions are:

1) How Digital sales affect Asian market?

Digital sales and marketing put a positive and significant effect on Asian market, if we observe the condition of pandemic COVID-19, it proves that people survived just because of digital marketing intelligence. Asia market is the biggest example of digital sales during pandemic which not only grow but developed for the future generation which makes life easier than ever.

2) How digital marketing changes Asian market?

All the trading and businesses get into move through digital marketing even now in 2022 most of the trading is exist digitally. It not only gives benefits but also saves travelling times & cost.

3) Through Digital sales & marketing how much is price & demand affected?

In a very positive way, monopoly does not exist now in digital market so seller tries to make less price of the product with more benefits and quality assurance, on the other hand, there are much more sellers in the market which made competition among them. Therefore, price and demand become really flexible in digital marketing which is quite suitable for consumers as well.

4) Either online demand put positive/negative impact on price/demand & Asian market?

On a lighter note, it does not create any negative impact but it is emerging through positive vibes even for a common man and he/she can easily purchase his/her favorite goods without that much efforts. But if monopoly exist, price will become high and demand becomes low. On the other side of the coin, price and demand as well as Asian market get positive effects from digital marketing. Even research indicates that the transitions from traditional to modern way of digital marketing becomes extremely beneficial for the consumer as well.

5) How digital marketing intelligence is significantly important for Asian market?

Using digital marketing strategies, it is significant to pick up the right strategy as per the consumers, demand, and competition because it is the need of digital marketing intelligence to survive.

Hence, there are positive as well as negative sides of both digital marketing and traditional marketing, but traditional marketing becomes slow and it's difficult to evaluate the impact of traditional marketing as well as the digital marketing is also annoying to handle due to tough competition. To connect with more and new consumers, it is necessary to create new ways of digital marketing techniques.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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