

A Study on Digital Marketing Strategies on Customer Attraction in Fashion Retail Outlets in Chennai City

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of digital commerce has forced the fashion retail sector in urban India to radically transform its customer acquisition and engagement models. This study investigates the strategic efficacy of digital marketing channels and their direct impact on consumer attraction within the competitive retail landscape of Chennai City. While contemporary global literature largely argues that modern shoppers are transitioning entirely to online e-commerce platforms, local market dynamics often reflect a distinct set of consumer preferences. To examine this phenomenon, primary data was gathered through structured surveys from a sample of 120 retail consumers across major commercial hubs in Chennai, including T. Nagar, Adyar, and Anna Nagar. The empirical results demonstrate that a substantial majority of the target demographic remains highly active, with 66% of respondents shopping for fashion products on a weekly or monthly basis. Crucially, the data reveals that the physical retail space retains strong resilience; 33% of consumers prioritize the tactile ability to try on apparel before purchasing, making it the single most influential factor in store selection. Concurrently, 38% of respondents prefer interacting directly with official fashion retailer websites rather than generic online marketplaces. These findings indicate that consumer behavior in Chennai is not shifting toward a purely virtual model, but rather toward an integrated, hybrid consumption pattern. Ultimately, these empirical observations demonstrate that fashion retailers in metropolitan markets should transition from isolated digital campaigns toward an integrated 'phygital' strategy, utilizing social media and web channels as primary informational touchpoints to drive physical foot traffic and in-store conversion.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Consumer Attraction, Social Media Platforms, Influencers, Consumer Preference.

Introduction

As a primary commercial capital and economic driver in South India, Chennai represents a highly dynamic retail ecosystem where rapid digitalization is actively altering traditional consumer touchpoints. In historically dense shopping districts such as T. Nagar, Adyar, Anna Nagar, and Tambaram, the traditional brick-and-mortar business model is undergoing a structural evolution. Established regional legacy brands like Pothys, Naidu Hall, and The Chennai Silks, alongside national apparel conglomerates including Max, Trends, Pantaloons, and Zudio, are increasingly deploying official web platforms and social media campaigns to bridge the gap between virtual

discovery and physical in-store purchasing. This strategic shifting is largely accelerated by intense marketplace competition. Retailers must navigate a crowded market alongside localized, high-volume wholesale hubs like Sowcarpet and Washermanpet, which naturally attract large consumer volumes due to their diverse seasonal product variations and aggressive pricing structures. Consequently, digital marketing has transformed from a secondary promotional asset into an essential competitive mechanism required to build brand equity, maintain consumer goodwill, and secure long-term customer loyalty within the metropolitan area.

The profound shift in how modern consumer cohorts interact with fashion brands requires a thorough re-examination of localized marketing efficacy. While internet accessibility allows consumers across all age groups to compare price ranges, assess product varieties, and discover active discounts from the convenience of their personal devices, the actual conversion process remains highly nuanced. Modern fashion marketing is no longer just about generating generic sales volume; it requires creating a continuous, multi-channel narrative that accommodates shifting generational shopping habits. For instance, although digital platforms excel at initial customer acquisition and widespread information distribution, they frequently face limitations regarding the tactile assurance that regional shoppers value. By implementing targeted digital advertising, corporate social media engagement, and localized web infrastructure, contemporary fashion enterprises can construct a more responsive marketing funnel. Understanding these precise behavioral touchpoints allows retail executives and researchers alike to identify which digital strategies genuinely generate sustained customer attraction versus those that merely create temporary online visibility.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Digital Channels and Interactive Marketing

Social media ecosystems, data-driven promotional metrics, and interactive mobile applications have fundamentally altered consumer touchpoints across diverse global operational landscapes. Within the modern digital ecosystem, visual platforms such as Instagram function as vital structural intermediaries for regional market development by directly amplifying consumer attraction metrics, bridging the experiential gap between digital content engagement and final consumer choice (Abbasi, 2021). This shift is equally visible in parallel consumer-facing service sectors, including hospitality and aviation, where the strategic deployment of targeted promotional mixes, integrated e-commerce applications, and dynamic pricing transparency has proven vital to sustaining brand equity in volatile market environments (Natakusumah et al., 2017; Moghadam et al., 2018). Organizations within these sectors increasingly rely on advanced digital channels to optimize their client acquisition frameworks and maintain operational agility against competitors (Moghadam et al., 2018). Consequently, sustaining a distinct competitive advantage in these industries relies on a brand's long-term capacity to proactively adapt to shifting technological standards, post-pandemic safety expectations, and individualized consumer experiences that demand constant digital modernization (Bardukova, 2023).

Core Determinants of Consumer Attraction

Beyond immediate digital communication channels, traditional marketing parameters such as core product quality, localized cultural tailoring, and ethical operational practices remain foundational to shaping modern consumer behavior. Empirical studies in localized culinary markets reveal that unique product designs, structural presentations, and specific flavor profiles serve as primary determinants for initial customer acquisition and long-term brand equity (Syam et al., 2024). These findings highlight that digital visibility must be backed by tangible product excellence to prevent consumer dissatisfaction (Syam et al., 2024). Similarly, in specialized digital sectors like sports e-marketing, structured modeling confirms that deeply rooted cultural variables, including regional lifestyles, community traditions, and language preferences, strongly dictate online consumer trust, transactional safety, and retention (Jabbari et al., 2020). Furthermore, the rigorous, ongoing implementation of active marketing research combined with clear corporate ethical standards correlates positively with heightened customer satisfaction, short-term profitability, and long-term enterprise growth across emerging economies (Kura, 2019; Seid & Venkataram, 2016). Navigating these varied strategic dimensions allows firms to build a resilient customer acquisition model that balances digital outreach with trust-building consumer practices (Kura, 2019; Seid & Venkataram, 2016).

RESEARCH GAP

While global empirical literature extensively documents the dominant role of digital content marketing in accelerating international brand engagement and e-commerce conversions, these frameworks widely assume an absolute preference among younger consumer cohorts for purely virtual shopping environments. However, a significant contextual gap emerges when applying these global assumptions directly to localized Tier-1 retail markets in India. This study addresses this gap by investigating the fashion retail landscape of Chennai City. In contrast to international trends that suggest a total abandonment of brick-and-mortar storefronts, the empirical data gathered in this study indicates a resilient preference for traditional, tactile shopping experiences among local consumers. By identifying that a major portion of the local demographic balances digital research with physical store visits, this study provides a geographically specific framework that fills the gap left by broad, generalized e-commerce research.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify effective marketing strategies on digital platforms.
- To understand consumer behaviour towards the fashion retail industry.
- To know about the recent trends in the fashion industry.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Research Design:** The present study examines the role of digital marketing strategies in enhancing customer attraction and brand engagement within fashion retail outlets in Chennai City. Digital marketing has transformed into a critical component of modern omnichannel retailing and urban consumer behavior studies. Strategic promotional tools—such as targeted social media advertising, official brand websites, interactive content,

influencer collaborations, and digital discounts—significantly influence consumer awareness, channel preferences, and final purchase intent (Kotler et al., 2018). The fashion retail sector of Chennai holds immense economic, commercial, and cultural importance within the South Indian retail ecosystem. Despite high transaction volumes and market depth, the industry faces intense localized competition from both expanding e-commerce platforms and traditional wholesale hubs. Therefore, this study evaluates a retail engagement framework that balances digital outreach with the tactile preferences of modern consumers. This section details the empirical framework, geographical sampling criteria, data collection protocols, and descriptive statistical metrics applied to evaluate consumer responses.

- **Study Area:** The study was conducted across selected high-volume commercial shopping clusters located within the metropolitan boundaries of Chennai City, Tamil Nadu, specifically T. Nagar, Adyar, Anna Nagar, and Tambaram. These urban retail zones were selected due to their high concentration of corporate retail outlets, legacy fashion showrooms, diverse consumer demographics, heavy foot traffic, and active digital marketing practices.
- **Sources of Data & Data Collection Instrument:** The study utilizes both primary and secondary data sources to ensure structural validity. Secondary data were gathered systematically from peer-reviewed academic journals, retail industry whitepapers, market reports, and corporate annual publications. Primary empirical data were collected directly from respondents using a structured field questionnaire designed to capture consumer purchasing frequency, preferred digital touchpoints, platform choices, and in-store selection factors.
- **Sampling Technique & Target Population:** The target population includes active fashion retail consumers, walk-in shoppers at brick-and-mortar showrooms, digital brand followers, and store managers operating within Chennai City. Primary data were gathered from a sample of 120 respondents using a non-probability convenience sampling technique across the specified commercial shopping hubs in Chennai.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC	NO. OF. RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Age		
20-30 years	35	29%
30-40 years	43	36%
40-50 years	32	27%
Above 50 years	10	8%
Total	120	100%

Gender		
Male	50	42%
Female	70	58%
Total	120	100%
Educational Qualification		
High School Diploma	5	4%
Bachelor's Degree	35	29%
Graduate or Professional Degree	30	25%
Currently in university	35	29%
Others (research scholars)	15	13%
Total	120	100.00%
Occupation		
Student	51	43%
Employed	35	29%
Unemployed	10	8%
Homemaker	10	8%
Others (research scholars, business)	14	12%
Total	120	100.00%
Monthly or Family income		
Below Rs. 25000	45	38%
Rs.25000-Rs.50000	33	28%
Rs. 50000-Rs. 75000	14	12%
Rs.75000-Rs.100000	16	13%
Above Rs. 100000	12	10%
Total	120	100.00%

INTERPRETATION:

According to the above table, 36% (43) of the respondents are between the ages of 30 and 40, 58% (70) are female, 29% (35) have bachelor's degrees and are currently enrolled in university, 43% (51) are students, and 38% (45) have incomes below Rs. 25000.

TABLE 2 SHOWS HOW OFTEN YOU SHOP FOR FASHION PRODUCTS.

PARTICULAR	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Daily	15	13%
Weekly	40	33%
Monthly	40	33%
Less than a month	25	21%
Total	120	100.00%

INTERPRETATION:

The survey highlights that 66% of the Chennai respondents prefer to shop weekly and monthly, while 21% shop less than once a month and 13% shop daily.

**TABLE 3 IDENTIFIES THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE DECISION TO SHOP
FOR FASHION IN A PHYSICAL STORE VERSUS AN ONLINE**

PARTICULAR	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Price	23	19%
Selection/ Variety	30	25%
Ability to try on clothes	40	33%
Convenience	12	10%
Brand Preference	15	13%
Total	120	100.00%

INTERPRETATION:

Regarding online preference, the results reveal that the ability to try on clothes is the most significant factor, accounting for 33% of the respondents, next is 25% variety or selection, 19% price, 13% brand and finally 10% convenience.

**TABLE 4 FINDS THE ONLINE PLATFORMS USED MOST FREQUENTLY FOR
FASHION SHOPPING.**

PARTICULAR	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Fashion retailer website	45	38%
Online marketplaces	30	25%
Social media platform	35	29%
Resale platform	10	8%
Total	120	100.00%

INTERPRETATION:

In terms of digital platform preferences, 38% likes to use the official websites of the fashion retailers, followed by 29% social media platforms, 25% online marketplaces, and finally 8% resale platforms.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- **Demographic Concentrations:** The largest respondent segment falls within the 30-to-40-year age bracket (36%), with a predominant female participation rate of 58%.

- **Income and Occupation:** Students constitute the single largest occupational group at 43%, which directly correlates with the finding that 38% of the total sample records a monthly income below Rs. 25,000.
- **Purchasing Frequency:** Retail engagement remains highly consistent, with 66% of the surveyed population executing fashion purchases on either a weekly or a monthly basis.
- **Tactile Resilience:** Despite high digital adoption, the tactile evaluation and physical ability to try on apparel remains the primary choice factor for 33% of respondents, highlighting the sustained relevance of brick-and-mortar retail outlets in Chennai.
- **Platform Preferences:** When utilizing digital avenues, 38% of consumers express a distinct preference for dedicated fashion retailer websites over third-party open marketplaces or resale networks.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The structural shift toward omnichannel retailing presents several avenues for subsequent academic inquiry. While this study outlines the base preferences of a localized consumer sample in Chennai, future research could expand the geographic scope to include a comparative analysis between Tier-1 and Tier-2 retail environments. Furthermore, given the rapid integration of advanced web technologies, future studies should explore how emerging interactive tools—such as augmented reality (AR) virtual fitting rooms and artificial intelligence-driven personal style assistants—alter the traditional tactile requirements of consumers. Finally, a longitudinal study tracking shifting brand loyalty metrics specifically across distinct generational cohorts (such as Generation Z versus Millennials) would provide deeper insights into the long-term survival of physical retail spaces.

CONCLUSION

Digital marketing serves as a high-impact, strategic mechanism for establishing direct communication and brand awareness across modern urban retail ecosystems. The empirical evidence compiled throughout this study indicates that across various demographic groups in Chennai, modern shoppers leverage digital touchpoints primarily for information gathering, price transparency, and checking product variety. However, physical retail environments display remarkable resilience due to the enduring consumer demand for tactile evaluation and garment fitting. Consequently, fashion brands cannot treat online platforms and brick-and-mortar stores as isolated entities. To remain competitive in Chennai's market, retailers must focus on unified omnichannel marketing strategies that purposefully utilize digital advertisements and brand websites to drive physical foot traffic into stores.

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