

Presenting a Model Based on a Systematic Review for Digital Marketing During the Outbreak of the Corona Virus

Karen Kabaiev

Department of Management, Faculty of Accounting and Management, National University of Life and Environmental Sciences, Ukraine

Abstract

The outbreak of covid-19 brought significant changes, especially changes related to marketing, which led to the use of digital marketing. The purpose of this article is to determine the prospects and effects of digital marketing during the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus and to develop the concept of digital marketing. The methodology of this article is using a descriptive qualitative approach with the analysis of different digital marketing literature in a systematic review way. The results of this study showed that advances in information technology and determining the boundary between ethical and unethical issues, environmentalism, government regulations, attention to the harms of consumerism, the effects of digital marketing influence and attention to the social responsibility of companies in the development of digital marketing, especially It has played a role during the outbreak of Kovid-19. Describing digital marketing from an ethical perspective will open new avenues for future research. This research contributes to the development of digital marketing from an ethical perspective by introducing and describing potential new fields of ethical marketing research.

Key words

Digital marketing,
Information technology development
Social responsibility

Original article

Corresponding author: kabaiev.k@gmail.com

Received:
20 Sep 2022
Accept:
30 Nov 2022

Introduction

Corona virus is a new disease caused by covid-19, which is currently affecting the lives of people all over the world. The outbreak of Covid-19 is one of the global health crises. According to the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention, Covid-19 is an infectious and deadly virus. In different countries of the world, the number of people who get infected with the corona virus and have lost their lives has been increasing in recent years. Therefore, necessary measures are

needed to reduce the spread of the pandemic virus at the global and national level (1).

According to the statistics of the World Health Organization, the rate of transmission of the corona virus in the world entered a new level on November 1, 2021, because the total number of people infected with Covid-19 in many countries exceeded one million people. In the published reports, Iran ranks 36th in the list of countries with the highest number of corona patients in the world. The number of infected people in Iran also has the potential to surpass the average number of infected people in the world in the future, if the number of new patients is consistently above 7000. According to the latest data published by the Special Group for Accelerating the Handling of Covid-19 on November 1, 2021, the total number of positive cases of Corona in Iran has now reached more than 6 million sick patients (2).

The outbreak of Covid-19 has affected different areas of life. In the business world, the spread of the corona virus is forcing companies around the world to ask millions of workers to work from home in terms of social distancing conditions (3). At least 900 million people in 42 countries have been asked to stay at home, and the shift to virtual work has left vulnerable workers laid off. Many employees are quickly adapting to the digital transformation, with online video conferencing software Zoom reporting a 78% increase in usage and Google Meet reporting a 60% increase in user traffic during the coronavirus outbreak, where People spend 2 billion minutes communicating online every day. Although businesses need to make this transition as efficiently and quickly as possible, several other consequences that are critical to business continuity are being overlooked. One of the most neglected cases is the impact of Covid-19 on consumer behavior and the market. Recently, many management and academic experts have addressed the issue of the spread of Covid-19 and its impact, but they generally focused on the digital transformation of the workplace (4). Due to the "pure urgency effect", people tend to devote more of their resources and time to problems (5). According to a recent survey of 304 businesses, 42 percent are worried about revenue. However, most managers, instead of taking action to improve the situation, their approach

in facing the spread of the corona virus is to wait for the end of the spread of this disease (4).

Managers may expect sales to recover only as citizen consumption increases after the outbreak ends. However, this pandemic affects consumer culture to some extent and may change the structure of the market. Pandemics also affect digital transformation in terms of consumer behavior and how businesses adapt to digital marketing. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to examine the business opportunity with digital marketing during the pandemic and to examine the perspective of ethical marketing. Consumer insights during the coronavirus outbreak show that the market is shifting to digital marketing. The rise of online transactions provides new opportunities for marketing success post-Covid-19.

In the digital age, the transformation of communication channels is a challenge for everyone. As the researchers stated, "digitalization of marketing is a phase of change in the history of communication" (6). Researchers state that changes in technology and consumer behavior have always been the main drivers of changes in marketing strategies. In today's changing digital environment "speed, communication and complexity are very important elements" (7).

A lot of research has been done on digital marketing or online marketing, which provides many definitions of digital marketing. According to researchers, digital marketing is a form of direct marketing that connects customers with sellers electronically using interactive technologies such as email, websites, online forums and newsgroups, smartphones, etc. Based on this, digital marketing is a plan of conventional marketing, tools and strategies, in the context of the Internet. The digital world and its application in marketing has led to the development of channels, formats and languages that lead to marketing tools and strategies. The Digital Marketing Institute refers to digital marketing as "the use of digital technology to create integrated, targeted, and measurable communications that help attract and retain customers while building deeper customer relationships." Digital marketing is a branch of traditional marketing and uses modern digital channels for product placement, both definitions are useful; The first is because it emphasizes the importance of a strategic foundation for any marketing approach that is measurable

and integrable. It also focuses on relationships and communication. The functions of the second definition are good for smart strategies and communication. Any use of digital marketing should be effective in promoting products or services (8). Therefore, it can be concluded that digital marketing is the marketing of products or services using digital channels to reach customers. In other words, the main goal is to promote the brand through various forms of digital media.

Digital marketing has become a new phenomenon that unites regulation and mass distribution to achieve marketing goals. The convergence of technologies and multiplicity of devices has led to the opening of thinking about marketing on the Internet and has pushed the boundaries towards new concepts of digital marketing that are user-centered, more scalable, inclusive and interactive. Developing digital marketing strategies offers great potential for organizations. Digital marketing provides opportunities for businesses to gain economic value through collaboration with stakeholders, customers, and employees (9). Business leaders should incorporate digital marketing strategies into their business plans to reduce the likelihood of failure, grow their business, and make more profits. Therefore, the advantages of online marketing are:

1. economic prices;
2. targeting different populations simultaneously;
3. providing products and services easily;
4. allows customers to easily research products and services to speed up purchasing decisions (10).

Advances in technology provide opportunities for business people to evaluate data and use the information to increase their productivity (11). The practical use of various online tools by business people leads to new opportunities (12). The Internet is a reliable source for consumers before purchasing products and services. Businesses use the Internet as a marketing tool for financial success and to help strengthen communication with visibility and create online sales channels and social media advertising to have a powerful way to reach different markets for business expansion (13).

Researchers believe that consumers use Internet technology to increase the number, which provides opportunities for businesses to communicate with more peo-

ple through websites and social media sites (14). Studies also show that 69% of consumers use social media to share information about products and services. However, success in online marketing requires resources to create content and build quality followers (15).

Technology is changing many aspects of business and market activities. Technological advancements have given rise to a method of exchange called e-commerce. The Internet has many attractions and benefits for consumers and organizations. The Internet is also the last electronic medium that supports e-commerce and is experiencing rapid growth (16).

The importance of ethical principles in digital marketing has attracted a lot of attention due to the elimination of commercial barriers, the emergence of technology-oriented companies, and the globalization of markets (17). As more and more companies expand their business digitally, ethics and ethical practices are becoming major topics of interest, both in academic circles and professional groups. Undoubtedly, digital marketing is an area where ethical questions are often raised as many companies expand their operations into foreign markets with different cultures, values, norms, behaviors, laws and regulations. give (18 and 19).

Today, the main concerns in the field of digital business ethics are: human rights, labor standards, corruption, environmental protection, compliance with financial rights and money laundering control (20). Racism and discrimination is also a global problem for global business ethics (21). Along with the process of industrialization, the search for better business ethics has become a global phenomenon (4). Doing business online comes with many difficult decisions, whether you should follow the laws and customs of the markets you enter, or whether you should follow the local host's laws and customs.

Many ethical dilemmas and conflicts arise in this field, and company managers need new guidance (22, 23). The structure of this article is as follows. In the first part, the concepts of ethics, the theoretical foundations and approaches of ethics, and the importance of ethics in digital marketing are expressed. In the second part, the issues related to ethical and unethical issues in digital marketing are discussed. and the forces affecting the company are expressed. The goal is to show that an

ethical behavior creates long-term benefits for the company and strengthens the company's image online. Finally, the conclusion about the issue and importance of ethics in digital marketing is presented.

Research Methodology

This research is based on objective criteria, practical and qualitative in terms of execution method. In order to collect data, the study of all existing internal and external documents related to the research topic was used and the process of data collection continued in connection with the discovery and identification of the components of the ethical marketing model. The huge volume of scientific writings in a special specialized field makes it difficult for researchers to use it and update their information. This problem becomes acute when there are conflicting reports of research results. Systematic review partially solves this problem. That is, the huge volume of literature forces researchers to use methods such as systematic review to make an informed decision and summarize the results of past research. This method minimizes the biases, because the selection and summarization of the past research is done based on certain protocols, these protocols determine which research will be included in the study and which research with what characteristics will be excluded from the study. The steps of the research method in this article include defining the problem, locating the research selection, critical evaluation of the research, data collection, data analysis and presenting the results, interpreting and interpreting the results, and improving and updating the literature review and revisio.

Findings

During the interview process, the interviewees were asked to provide their opinions related to the formulated questions, and as necessary, they were asked to provide more and more complete explanations related to the question. Each interview lasted between one and two hours, and in some cases even answering the questions was postponed to the next meeting. Related to the topic of the research, it has also been used, so that the study of the available sources and documents has been done first, and then the interview questions

have been formulated and implemented. The statistical population includes experts (university professors and experts) who have sufficient experience and knowledge in relation to the research topic. The analysis strategy in this research has been thematic analysis, which was used to extract overarching, organizing, and basic themes by using the conducted interviews. The model extracted from the opinions of experts included 7 criteria for the digital marketing model, which were:

- Determining the boundary between ethical and unethical issues
- Environmentalism
- Development of information technology
- Government regulations
- Attention to the disadvantages of consumerism
- Influence effects of digital marketing
- Attention to the social responsibility of companies.

Some issues are on the border between moral and immoral issues. These distinctions depend on nationality and cultural backgrounds. The problem here is that the word good has different interpretations and its scope is vague and there is no standard line for it. This issue is more complicated in digital marketing. In addition, according to the researchers' point of view, national, geographical and political categories are not an objective basis for measuring values, maintaining ethics in digital marketing is an important concern (24).

As some interest groups gain more power to influence business behavior, the consumers who use the product are the only factors that influence the company's marketing decisions, other stakeholders that are affected by the activities of the company. company, employees, society, shareholders and media.

Consumers are usually more aware of the company's ethical behavior when deciding to buy a product or be loyal to a brand. The researchers believe that we are currently living in the age of ethics, and thus society's expectations of marketers have changed, and marketing managers must consider the well-being of groups that are affected by their marketing decisions and respect them. let them Today, beneficiaries with better education have more thoughts and expectations. They

process information and make decisions based on options that affect companies. Therefore, the method of using the product, the production process, advertising

activities, etc., may require a specific cultural and environmental moral concept of a country so that product or service is accepted.

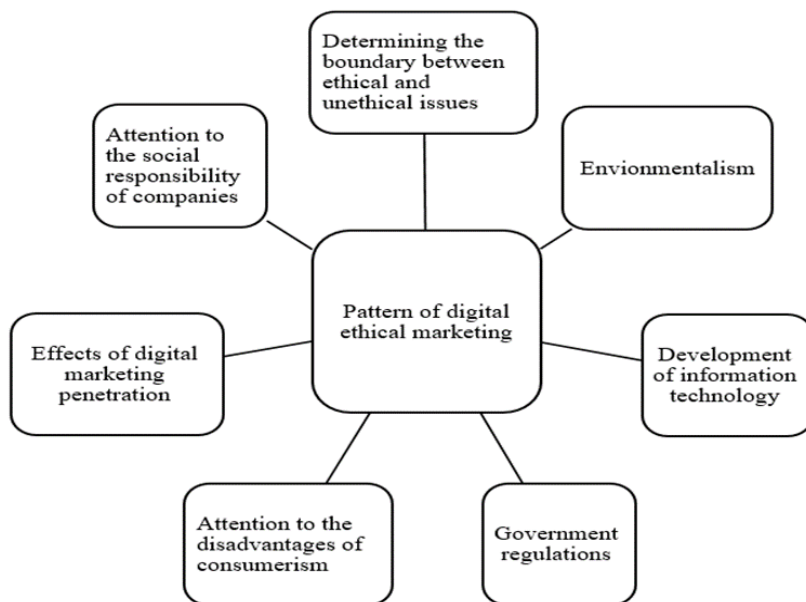


Figure 1: Ethical digital marketing model

With the help of information technology, the world has become smaller and problems caused by inappropriate information have decreased, as a result, the speed of quick access to the data of interest and interest has increased. This is the reason why ethical behavior is vital and necessary for company decisions.

In the late 20th century, environmental ideas grew in popularity and recognition. This issue is not only due to the significant destruction of the environment but also due to the growing awareness of the world's citizens. Contributors to environmental issues have increased in many countries and these have significant implications for product marketing policies. Currently, many organizations such as the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, the European Environment Agency support the development of environmental policies. Currently, many companies are setting up corporate strategies to respond to these issues. For example, Ford has adopted ISO 4001 environmental standards as a global standard, and Sony has taken environmental considerations into account in its production planning (25).

Most people and groups are consciously looking for ways to protect consumer rights and interests. Their main idea is to develop consumer interests from short term to long term. The formation of consumer organizations helps customers to make better choices in the market and leads to the reduction of unethical marketing behaviors such as deceptive pricing.

The law plays an important role in raising consumer expectations of ethical marketing behavior. Governments try to take advantage of legal procedures to protect consumer rights in the long term by creating specific laws and regulations. For example, the government may require businesses to disclose detailed information about products, especially when it is a public health or safety issue (26).

Digitization and removal of trade barriers has led to the creation of powerful digital organizations such as the World Trade Organization, the European Union, etc. These organizations, which are the result of cooperation between a number of states, the purpose of their creation is to establish regulations and laws to oblige

all member states to comply with a common set of ethical norms and standards.

In order to create financial and social returns, the ethical concept should be included in the daily business activities, technology-oriented companies should try to create an ethical concept while maintaining social professional characteristics (27).

Discussion

Digital marketing has grown rapidly. Advances in information technology have changed many aspects of business, marketing activities, and methods of online exchange. During the Covid-19 pandemic, businesses have transformed transactions through digital marketing. During the pandemic, the growth of digital marketing has accelerated, which affects the changing behavior of consumers towards online transactions. However, digital marketing development should follow and be guided by ethical values.

Consumers living through a pandemic can change, and the changes can persist long after the outbreak is over. According to a recent survey, 46 percent of respondents plan to cut spending during a pandemic. Although demand is increasing in certain categories such as food or home appliances, discretionary spending is expected to decline as about 60 percent of respondents plan to cut spending on consumer electronics or vehicles. Managers may expect sales to improve somewhat as the situation subsides. Whether and how many customers will return after a pandemic may depend on how well the business adapts to the consumer culture that develops because of a pandemic.

Today, marketing managers should try to bring more marketing ethics into their business. Marketing ethics refers to the ethics in the field of interaction between the company and the customer, because the ethical behavior determines how customers perceive the company, plays a major role.

Ethical marketing helps to establish long-term relationships with customers, build company goodwill and strengthen brand value, so the most effective way of digital marketing is to consider ethics in order to maintain profits in the long run. It means that the use of ethics to increase the satisfaction of stakeholders leads to brand loyalty and thus increases profitability.

With the ethical consumer, companies are expected to show more responsibility for their performance in the business world. A company must follow unwritten ethical rules and apply pressure from stakeholders to determine an ethical practice. Doing this will not only strengthen the image of the company but also bring many benefits in the long run. One of the aspects that should never be forgotten in digital marketing is cultural sensitivity, which has a great impact on the success of companies in the markets they intend to enter. Ignoring ethical obligations for the company has many negative consequences. Today's companies depend more than ever on the power of public opinion.

Among the limitations of the current research is the limitation of library resources and related researches in this field, due to the novelty of the research and the limited number of researches in the field of the current research in the country. Also, the outbreak of covid-19 caused the research data collection process to face time constraints. In line with the obtained results, it is suggested that managers and owners of digital businesses consider the key issues related to digital marketing ethics and try to develop it at all levels of the company. Also, companies can use ethical marketing methods as a way to gain customer trust and develop ethical marketing.

Conclusion

Among the limitations of the current research is the limitation of library resources and related researches in this field, due to the novelty of the research and the limited number of researches in the field of the current research in the country. Also, the outbreak of covid-19 caused the research data collection process to face time constraints. In line with the obtained results, it is suggested that managers and owners of digital businesses consider the key issues related to digital marketing ethics and try to develop it at all levels of the company. Also, companies can use ethical marketing methods as a way to gain customer trust and develop ethical marketing.

References

1. Fernandez A A, Shaw G P. (2020). Academic Leadership in a Time of Crisis: The Coronavirus and COVID-19. *Journal of Leadership Studies*;12:1-12.
2. Kim R Y. (2020). The Impact of COVID-19 on Consumers: Preparing for Digital Sales. *IEEE Engineering Management Review*; 8581: 1–1.
3. Zhu M, Yang Y, Hsee C K. (2018). The Mere Urgency Effect. *Journal of Consumer Research*;45: 673–690.
4. Rangaswami A, Gupta S. (2000). Innovation Adoption and Diffusion in the Digital Environments: Some Research Opportunities. In Vin Vijay Mahajan, Eitan Muller, and Yoram Wind (Eds.). *New Product Diffusion Models* (pp.85–101). Springer.
5. Jung J. (2009). *Strategic Management in the Media: Theory to Practice*, by Lucy Küng . *International Journal on Media Management*; 11(1): 46–47.
6. Royle J, Laing A. (2014). The digital marketing skills gap: Developing a Digital Marketer Model for the communication industries. *International Journal of Information Management*; 34(2): 65–73.
7. Purkayastha A, Sharma S. (2016). Gaining competitive advantage through the right business model: analysis based on case studies. *Journal of Strategy and Management*; 9(2):138–155.
8. Dumaz Y, Efendioglu I H. (2016). Travel from Traditional Marketing to Digital Marketing. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research: E Marketing*; 6(11): 173.
9. Keegan B J, Rowley J. (2017). Management Decision Evaluation and decision making in social media marketing Article information. *Management Decision*; 55(1): 15–31.
10. Gaikwad M J, Kate P H. (2016). E-Marketing: a Modern Approach of Business at the Door of Consumer. *International Journal of Research in Commerce & Management*; 7(9): 56–62.
11. Banica L, Brinzea V, Radulescu M. (2015). Analyzing Social Networks From the Perspective of Marketing Decisions. *Scientific Bulletin : Economic Sciences*; 14(3): 37–50.
12. Bolat E, Kooli K, Wright L T. (2016). Businesses and mobile social media capability. *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*; 31(8): 971–981.
13. Smith C, Smith J B, Shaw E. (2017). Journal of Business Venturing Embracing digital networks : Entrepreneurs' social capital online. *Journal of Business Venturing*; 32(1): 18–34.
14. Leonidou L C, Barnes B R, Spyropoulou S, Katsikeas C S. (2010). Assessing the contribution of leading mainstream marketing journals to the international marketing discipline, *International Marketing Review*; 27(5): 491–518.
15. Murphy P E, Laczniak G R. (2001). Marketing ethics: A review with implications for managers”, *Review of Marketing* 1981 (pp.251–266). Chicago, IL: American Marketing Association.
16. Alsmadi S, Alnawas I. (2012). Consumer rights today: Are they in business or out of business?. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*;4(1): 159–167.
17. Kline J. (2015). *Ethics for International Business*, Routledge, London.
18. Chua A. (2004). *World on Fire*, Arrow Books, London.
19. Brown M T. (2015). *Corporate Integrity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
20. Nantel J, William A W. (2006). Marketing Ethics: is there more to it than the utilitarian approach?. *European Journal of Marketing*; 30 (5): 9-19.
21. Carrigan, M, Svetlana M, Isabelle S. (2015). Ethics and international marketing – Research background and challenges. *International Marketing Review*; 22 (5): 481-493.
22. Singhapakdi A, Mohammed YA, Rawwas J K M, Mohd Ismail A. (2019). A cross-cultural study of consumer perceptions about marketing ethics. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*; 16 (3): 257 – 272.
23. Al-Khatib J A, Scott J V, Mohammed Y, Rawwas A. (2017). Consumer ethics: a cross-cultural investigation. *European Journal of Marketing*; 31 (11/12): 750- 767.
24. Ford C W, Sarath A N, Gail I H. (2015). A Cross-cultural comparison of value systems and consumer ethics. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*; 12: 36 – 50.
25. Doole I, Robin L. (2014). *International Marketing Strategy: Analysis, development and implementation*, 4th ed., London. Thompson Learning.
26. Malhotra N K, Lan W, Whitelock J. (2015). An overview of the first 21 years of research in the *International Marketing Review*, 1983-2003. *Emeraldinsight*; 22(4): 391-398.
27. Hill R P, Debra S, Iain S. (2013). Corporate Social Responsibility: An Examination of Individual Firm Behavior. *Business and Society Review*; 108 (3): 339–364.