



AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF CONTENT MARKETING ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTIONS TOWARD FASHION APPAREL

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Abstract:

Although content marketing has a significant impact on customer behaviour, any effort is pointless unless it can generate a buy intention and then turn it into actual purchase. The study's goal is to determine the degree to which content marketing might affect customer purchase intentions for fashion items. The qualitative research being conducted is deductive. 131 individuals were polled at branded fashion clothing retailers in Coimbatore using convenience sampling. For this goal, a structured questionnaire technique was deployed. The main data were analysed using statistical procedures such as percentage analysis, descriptive analysis, ANOVA, and the independent sample t-test. It is possible to infer that using appealing, relevant, and consistent information in content marketing increases the attractiveness of the promoted product or brand. Furthermore, content marketing is effective in converting buy intent into real sales. As social media marketing becomes more prominent, the value of utilising high-quality content grows exponentially. The uniqueness of the content increases the likelihood of purchase intent even higher. It might be argued that content marketing is very important in today's digital marketing environment. Marketers must focus on providing appealing, unique, and relevant content to boost customer perceptions of fashion clothing items.

Keywords: Content marketing, social media marketing, public relations, marketing strategy, consumer behaviour, consumer purchase intention

Introduction:

The creation and dissemination of pertinent, helpful material—such as blogs, newsletters, white papers, social media postings, emails, videos, and similar items—to existing and future clients is known as content marketing. When done well, this material demonstrates competence and makes it obvious that a business

appreciates the customers it serves. Using content marketing consistently helps businesses build and maintain connections with both current and potential clients. When the target market views the business as a partner invested in their success and a reliable source of information and direction, they are more likely to pick the business when the time comes to make a purchase (Paljug, 2022).

The content should be centered on the viewer's main issues throughout the initial stage of the sales process. Businesses have the highest opportunity of connecting with them via creating content about their problems, obstacles, and inquiries. At the awareness level, the content should be instructional and instructive. During the consideration and closing stages is when businesses should sell. Content should provide a mix of useful information and marketing during the contemplation stage. It ought to inform the reader about the qualities or capabilities to seek as well as how different aspects cater to different demands. Of course, the focus of the writing should be on the services that the company provides. When a potential customer is about to make a purchase, content marketing is crucial. One may concentrate on sales at this point as long as the content designer keeps accentuating why the business is the greatest option rather than simply how excellent their services or goods are (Denesh Khanal, 2022).

Content marketing is vital because it helps you create trust, develop connections, enhance conversions, and generate leads by answering the brand audience's queries. Customers now want constant, high-quality content from their favourite companies. One of the many elements that affect any company's development and success is the consistency of its brand message. Big companies understand how to consistently represent their brand across all consumer interactions. The same logic holds for content marketing; the material must have a distinct and recognisable voice, style, and pitch across all channels of distribution. Consistency in the content enhances brand authority, fosters relationships of trust, and improves brand reputation (Duncan et al., 2016).

Understandably, content marketing influences consumer behaviour, but any effect is fruitless if it is unable to create a purchase intention and then convert it into actual purchase. The undertaken study wishes to address the extent to which content marketing can influence consumer purchase intentions towards fashion apparel.

Hence the primary objective of the study is to investigate the impact of content marketing on consumer purchase intentions towards fashion apparel.

Literature review:

A content marketing strategy's initial pillar is the bare minimum of promotion, followed by active promotion and active promotion for advanced users. There is some ambiguity around the idea or concept of content marketing, and international experts have not yet reached a consensus. Because it is a type of forced marketing, content marketing is often described as the art of interacting with potential clients without trying to sell them anything directly but achieving sales in the course of it (Poradova, 2020).

Benefiting from digital materials is inevitable due to simple access to the internet, more active usage, and time savings. To attract customers, it is crucial for companies and others who create digital content to provide truthful, accurate, and trustworthy information. Developing the proper brand perception in digital spaces will

provide a long-term competitive advantage. One of the fundamental ideas that underpin marketing is persuasion (Yazgan Pektas & Hassan, 2020).

Digital marketing has become more important in the age of digitization as a component of the marketing strategy used by businesses of all sizes and types. Given that content marketing is a must for digital marketing, the effectiveness of a company's online communications relies heavily on the quality of its content marketing. To adjust their content and choose the best method of promotion in this situation, digital marketers must analyse their target audience in addition to pushing high-quality content marketing (Baltes, 2015).

Most clients are always tuned in and linked to the digital world since they may access the internet via their PCs, laptops, and mobile phones. Online content consumption is increasingly becoming a habit for individuals. According to a poll, 48% of Facebook users between the ages of 18 and 34 said that the first thing they do when they get up is go on to their social networking site. Additionally, some viewers favour other platforms, including print media, television, radio, billboards, and many others. This audience is available around-the-clock and expects to be entertained. To satisfy consumers' interest, businesses are significantly invested in providing the most recent information on a variety of marketing platforms (Kee & Yazdanifard, 2015).

Content marketing is not the same as advertising; it focuses more on narrative than bluster. To put it another way, a company will promote itself if it wants to convince everyone that it is a rock star, but it must have excellent content to demonstrate this (Solomon, 2013). The business must promote the brand, sway the consumer's purchase intention, and build brand equity. From the consumer's perspective, content marketing's ability to evoke unique cognitions and emotions in the consumer and ultimately have an impact on the enterprise's brand equity is crucial (Zhu, 2019).

Research Methodology:

The undertaken qualitative study is deductive. Using convenience sampling, 131 respondents were surveyed through branded fashion apparel stores in Coimbatore. A structured questionnaire tool was used for this purpose. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, descriptive analysis, ANOVA, and independent sample t-test were used for analysing the primary data.

Results and Interpretations:

The primary data collected was investigated using statistical tools and the results are presented below as tables. The inferences are also presented.

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Demographic Profile	Variables	No. of Respondents	Percent	Total Respondents (in No.s)
Gender	Male	65	49.6	131
	Female	66	50.4	
Education	School level	26	19.8	131
	HSC	38	29.0	

	Graduation	30	22.9	
	Post-Graduation	24	18.3	
	PhD	13	9.9	
Occupation	Student	24	18.3	131
	Business	26	19.8	
	Salaried Employee	31	23.7	
	Homemaker	34	26.0	
	Unemployed	16	12.2	
Marital Status	Married	58	44.3	131
	Single	56	42.7	
	Divorced/Widowed	17	13.0	
Family Size	Single	54	41.2	131
	Nuclear	61	46.6	
	Joint	16	12.2	
Household monthly income	< Rs.20000	42	32.1	131
	Rs.21000 to Rs.50000	36	27.5	
	Rs.51000 to Rs.1 Lakh	35	26.7	
	> Rs.1 Lakh	18	13.7	

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION:

The data in table 1 discusses the demographic profile of the respondents. 49.6 percent of the respondents are male and 50.4 percent of the respondents are female. Concerning the education level of the respondents, 19.8 percent have a school level of education, 29 percent have completed HSC, 22.9 percent have graduated, 18.3 percent have a post-graduation and 9.9 percent have a Ph.D. Regarding occupation, 18.3 percent are students, 19.8 percent are involved in business, 31 percent are salaried employees, 34 percent are homemakers and 16 percent are unemployed. Considering the marital status, 42.7 percent are single, 13 percent are divorced/widowed and 44.3 percent are married. Based on family size, 41.2 percent are living alone, 46.6 percent belong to nuclear families and 12.2 percent belong to joint. Considering the household income, 32.1 percent of households have an income of < Rs.20,000, 27.5 percent of the respondent households earn Rs.21000 to Rs.50000, 26.7 percent earn Rs.51000 to Rs.1 Lakh, 13.7 percent earn in the range of > Rs.1 Lakh.

It could be observed that the number of female respondents is slightly higher than male respondents. Every respondent surveyed has at least a minimum of school-level education and hence is capable of understanding content marketing. Most of the respondents surveyed were homemakers or salaried employees. Most of the respondents are married. Most belong to nuclear families. Most respondents belong to households earning Rs.21000 to Rs.50000.

Table 2: Time spent Online per day

Time spent online per day	No. of Respondents	Percent
< 2 hours	26	19.8
2 to 4 hours	31	23.7
4 to 6 hours	35	26.7
> 6 hours	39	29.8
Total	131	100.0

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION:

According to table 2, 19.8 percent of the respondents spend < 2 hours online, 23.7 percent spend 2 to 4 hours, 26.7 percent spend 4 to 6 hours and 29.8 percent spend >6 hours. It must be noted that most (29.8%) spend more than 6 hours online making them more exposed to content marketing.

Table 3: Perception towards content design

Contents	No. of Respondents	Percent
Valuable	31	23.7
Relevant	23	17.6
Consistent	37	28.2
Attractive	40	30.5
Total	131	100.0

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION:

Table 3 discusses the perception of customers on content design. 23.7 percent mentioned that content must be valuable, 17.6 percent wanted the content to be relevant, 28.2 percent expect content to be consistent and 30.5 percent want it to be attractive. It could be concluded that most (30.5%) of the respondents want the content to be attractive.

Table 4: Content Marketing

Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Content marketing will work only on a clearly defined audience	131	2.73	1.37
Content marketing can be used even by small businesses	131	2.92	1.36
Content marketing is more relevant to the consumer than traditional marketing	131	3.15	1.41
Content marketing is used in social media marketing	131	3.15	1.39
Content marketing is used in Search engine optimization	131	2.94	1.43
Content marketing is good for PR	131	3.15	1.39
Mean = 3.00 , S.D= 1.39, N= 131			

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION:

Table 4 describes the perception of customers on content marketing. The opinion “Content marketing is more relevant to the consumer than traditional marketing”, “Content marketing is used in social media marketing” and “Content marketing is good for PR” have received the highest mean value of 3.15 followed by the opinion “Content marketing is used in Search engine optimization” with a mean score of 2.94. The opinion “Content marketing can be used even by small businesses” received a mean of 2.92 and the opinion “Content marketing will work only on a clearly defined audience” received the least mean of 2.73.

The opinion “Content marketing is more relevant to the consumer than traditional marketing”, “Content marketing is used in social media marketing” and “Content marketing is good for PR” have a mean score above the average value of 3.00 and hence represents the opinion of most of the respondents. It could be concluded that Content marketing used in social media needs to be relevant and is good for public relations.

Table 5: Impact on consumer purchase intention

Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Relevant content increases the chances that the audience view/read the advert fully	131	2.82	1.42
Consumers are attracted to a fashion apparel product when the marketing content is attractive	131	3.11	1.41
Content marketing is consistent and hence improves consumer trust in a fashion brand which improves purchase intention	131	3.01	1.43
Content marketing improves the chances of the viewer to consumer conversion	131	3.06	1.32
The consistent and high quality of content marketing creates new leads	131	2.77	1.37
Content marketing increases consumer loyalty leading to sustained purchase intent and creates long-term customers	131	2.89	1.41
Trendy content marketing attracts new customers toward a fashion brand	131	2.86	1.39
The originality of content will lead to better purchase intent conversions	131	2.92	1.37
The visibility of the fashion apparel business increases with valuable content marketing	131	2.98	1.40
Quality content makes the customers believe in the market superiority of the brand and increases purchase intention	131	2.76	1.38
Mean = 2.92, S. D= 1.39, N= 131			

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION:

Table 5 describes the impact of content marketing on consumer purchase intention. The opinion “Consumers are attracted to a fashion apparel product when the marketing content is attractive” has received the highest mean score of 3.11 followed by the opinion “Content marketing improves the chances of the viewer to consumer conversion” with a mean score of 3.06 and “Content marketing is consistent and hence improves consumer trust towards a fashion brand which improves purchase intention” with a mean of 3.01. The opinion “The visibility of the fashion apparel business increases with valuable content marketing” received the fourth

highest mean of 2.98 followed by “The originality of content will lead to better purchase intent conversions” with a mean of 2.92.

The above opinions received a mean higher than the average of 2.92 indicating that they represent the most popular opinion of the consumers. Nevertheless, the standard deviation is larger than 1 indicating that the opinions are not closely related.

Table 6: ANOVA ANALYSIS

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant association between the demographical factors and the Impact of content marketing on consumer purchase intention

ANOVA							
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remarks
Education	Between Groups	18.317	20	.916	.537	.944	Not Significant
	Within Groups	187.469	110	1.704			
	Total	205.786	130				
Occupation	Between Groups	27.381	20	1.369	.784	.728	Not Significant
	Within Groups	192.131	110	1.747			
	Total	219.511	130				
Marital Status	Between Groups	17.770	20	.889	2.241	.004	Significant
	Within Groups	43.619	110	.397			
	Total	61.389	130				
Family Size	Between Groups	8.390	20	.419	.912	.573	Not Significant
	Within Groups	50.587	110	.460			
	Total	58.977	130				
Household monthly income	Between Groups	37.029	20	1.851	1.929	.017	Significant
	Within Groups	105.551	110	.960			
	Total	142.580	130				

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION:

The above table 6 indicates that the p-value between the demographic variables and Impact of content marketing on consumer purchase intention such as education (p-value = 0.944), Occupation (p-value = 0.718), family size (p-value = 0.573), are greater than 0.05, at the 5% level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted for these variables. It concludes that there is no significant association between education, occupation, family size, and the impact of content marketing on consumer purchase intention.

On the contrary, marital status (p-value = 0.004), and household monthly income (p-value = 0.017) have a value less than 0.05. hence the null hypotheses are rejected for these variables. It is concluded that there is a significant association between marital status, household monthly income, and the impact of content marketing.

It could be inferred that marital status indicates the responsibilities and duties of an individual and household monthly income indicate the financial limitations that will have an impact on the consumer purchase intention.

Table 7: Independent Samples T-Test

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant mean score difference between the Gender and impact on the consumer purchase intention.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
Male	65	29.7385	4.65456	1.356	0.177	Not Significant
Female	66	28.6212	4.77095			

From above table 7, the p-value of the variable gender is found to be greater than 0.05 at a 5% level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted and inferred that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of genders and the impact on the consumer purchase intention. The way content is perceived depends on other external factors and is not affected by the gender of the respondent.

Discussion of the results:

The results from the analysis reveal that most of the respondent's earnings are in the middle earning range or lower which has a significant impact on the consumer purchase intention. Most consumers spend more than 6 hours (Almost one-fourth of a day) online making them more exposed to content marketing. Though content design in content marketing is expected to be valuable, relevant, consistent, and attractive, more importance is given to the attractiveness of the content. It could be inferred that the content design must be capable of attracting the viewers to read it if the other variables need to be met. Hence attractiveness takes precedence. Content marketing used in social media needs to be relevant and is good for public relations if used appropriately.

The attractiveness of content marketing makes consumers get attracted to the product. Similarly, content marketing has the power to convert a buying intention into actual purchase. Consistency in content, while marketing is important as a lack of consistency, will affect brand value and consumer loyalty. As most marketing happens online nowadays, content marketing improves the chances of a product getting viewed through its attractive, relevant, and consistent content. Among the demographic variables, marital status and household income have a significant impact on consumer purchase intention through content marketing.

Conclusion:

The undertaken study investigated the impact of content marketing on consumer purchase intentions towards fashion apparel. Based on the analysis of the primary data, it could be concluded that attractive, relevant, and consistent content used in content marketing improves the allure of the marketed product or brand. Also, content marketing is efficient in converting purchase intention into actual purchases. As social media marketing is becoming more popular, the importance of using quality content is also increasing multifold. The originality of the content improves the prospects of purchase intent further. It could be said that content marketing plays a very

vital role in today's digital marketing scenario. Marketers must concentrate on creating attractive, original, and relevant content to improve consumer perceptions of fashion apparel products.

Co-Author Contribution

The corresponding author conducted the research with the assistance of the second author and finished the work via interactions with the second author following the agreement. The second author also contributed to the publication's structure, fine-tuned the research, and assessed the manuscript for any conflicts of interest.

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