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# Digital Marketing and Consumer Buying Behavior

A case study of Finnish Superstore

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## Thesis abstract <sup>1</sup>

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Digital marketing is essential in the retail sector, although research in this context is limited in Finland. Therefore, the study aims to investigate the role of digital marketing on customer behavior in Finnish retail superstores. The study considered a qualitative research strategy following constructivist philosophy. The primary data was gathered from the Finnish superstore using Microsoft Forms. Thematic analysis was applied to gather knowledge about digital marketing.

The empirical results showed that Finnish superstores employ a variety of digital platforms, including their mobile apps, social media such as Instagram and TikTok, and digital newspapers like Iltä-Sanomat and Iltalehti, to reach customers. When users open the app or visit these news sites, they are immediately exposed to targeted digital marketing content. However, digital marketing plays different roles across age groups: younger people prefer digital platforms, while older groups favor conventional media. To enhance brand recognition, the store offers personalized shopping experiences and encourages repeat businesses. Theoretically, the research study demonstrates that digital marketing and consumer purchasing behavior align with the core of the McKinsey 7S Framework theory.

According to the study, adaptability is essential for digital marketing, as businesses can gain by concentrating on effective channels. These realizations enable Finnish stores to match digital marketing initiatives with consumer behavior.

<sup>1</sup> Keywords: Consumer behaviour, digital marketing, SEO, social media

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter delivers an outline of the thesis. It first clarifies the study background to emphasize the significance of digital marketing for the business. Then, the research gaps are identified using previous literature, which is considered to develop the objectives and research questions. The scope of the study is presented in the following sections. The key concept and structure of the study plan are explained in the concluding part.

## 1.1 Background

To completely understand the relevance of this study, one must acknowledge the amazing rise of digital technology and its overall impact on daily life. The general usage of cell phones, the popularity of social media, and the simplicity of access to Internet information have revolutionised the way people locate, evaluate, and finally buy goods and services. Digital marketing is the subcategory of marketing whereby goods and services are advertised using digital channels. The plan is to let consumers in to have access to the products. To draw customers and promote the products, websites, apps, and social media channels are the marketing tools. Using strategies that distinguished it from traditional marketing trends, digital marketing became ever more popular with the emergence of the internet in 1990. Offering an online purchase experience, companies may reach customers living far apart. Combining traditional and digital marketing approaches, the businesses enhanced consumer outreach and promoted their brands (Kiani, 2023).

Driven by technical developments, the evolution of digital marketing has greatly broadened the geographic area of corporate activities. Companies can now interact with a worldwide client base via digital means, so international expansion not only makes sense but is also reasonably affordable (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). This improved accessibility has changed conventional business structures and helped companies to change more quickly to meet customer behaviour and market needs. Particularly in terms of improving connectivity and communication, the internet has been crucial in changing how individuals connect and how companies present their products (Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014). Rising as effective marketing tools, social media sites including Facebook, Instagram, and X (i.e., previously Twitter), let companies quickly distribute material and interact with different customer groups in real time (Kumar et al., 2016).

These platforms not only increase the visibility of goods and services but also help to build worldwide consumer communities, therefore underlining the transforming power of digital technologies on contemporary marketing techniques. Customer satisfaction also increases as digital marketing lowers waiting times and increases accessibility of goods and services. Through the easy buying of things and services from the ease of the customer's house, social media drastically improves client accessibility. Analysing market trends helps one to identify better pricing online and simplify the selection procedure (Kiani, 2023). Once understand the potential of the platform, companies have set up pages on social media to interact with consumers and offer information. Using comments from past consumers as a source of awareness helps consumers to assess seller qualities and product features. Development of digital experiences and encouragement of sales trends help one easily assess the calibre of the services (Durmaz, 2014). Changing their buying behaviour, consumers are finding inspiration in digital marketing. Transparency in the market helps businesses to split their target market and give customers relevant data.

By allowing massive information flow that can be shared with consumers, digital marketing has made globalisation feasible. Growing communication patterns, economic activity, and cultural fusion increase enterprises' reach. Understanding digital marketing's role in consumer behavior is essential for organizations seeking to stay competitive in an era where information overload is the standard. Sustaining business success requires a constant capacity to modify and customize marketing tactics to the tastes and driving forces of the digitally empowered consumer. Thus, the findings of the research would be beneficial for the companies. Businesses' reach has increased because of the evolution of digital marketing trends over time. According to Nguyen et al. (2018), it is now simpler for brands to connect with customers worldwide through product and service marketing. Customers now have more options to pick from when making decisions due to the shift in patterns, affecting their decision-making ability.

Customers can now interact with firms digitally, sharing their questions and concerns that impede their decision-making ability. Customers are engaging in an interactive environment thanks to digital marketing, which is altering their purchasing habits. Consumers have a variety of handy choices that provide them time to look into and learn more about the goods in several outlets. Companies have to target customers and make sure their buying choices satisfy them so they might come back for more business. This brand comparison thereby raises the benchmark for consumer satisfaction.

After doing a thorough investigation, consumers choose to buy from companies they know they can rely on. Companies have to assess brands and customise purchases to the attitudes of their customers, as knowledge and decisions abound on the market (Yamin, 2017). While brands still find it challenging, consumers today find it easier to build relationships. Little mistakes could damage their business and benefit their competitors. Online presence and customer relationship define whether a brand makes a successful sale, as well as the purchase choices of customers. Consumers decide whether to buy using the information brands publish online. Digital marketing changes business operations, thus companies are getting more competitive and applying more techniques to get consumers to buy. Analysing how much digital marketing shapes customer buying behaviour is among the most important goals for brands. The quality of client happiness affects brand perceptibility in the digital market, thereby affecting sales. Realising the value of digital marketing calls for investigation of consumer behaviour and satisfaction. They help businesses and brands design plans that attract customers and affect their choice of purchase to please consumers and keep them around for a longer period of time (De Mooij, 2019).

## **1.2 Research gaps**

There are a limited studies associated with digital marketing. For example, lack comprehensive research on Finland's distinct cultural traits and how they affect how customers behave when exposed to digital marketing tactics. It is unclear how Finnish cultural values, like the country's emphasis on sustainability or societal collectivism, affect how consumers react to digital marketing. Most of the research concentrates on immediate effects, not delving into the long-term implications of digital marketing on Finnish buyer behavior. There is a study deficit in evaluating the sustainability of digital marketing tactics and their influence on constantly changing consumer preferences and behaviors. Research ignores the connection between offline and online experiences in customer decision-making processes by classifying digital and traditional marketing channels separately. It might be worthwhile to investigate how various channels work together in the Finnish market to see how they complement one another. Keeping up with the dynamic nature of these media is challenging due to the quick expansion of digital platforms. Research overlooks new developments in digital marketing platforms, technology, and trends, as well as how they specifically affect the purchasing decisions of Finns. It is distinguished that there is a research gap on digital marketing in the Finnish context, such as in Finnish superstores (Nguyen Khanh, 2020).

Consequently, this study aims to explore the character of digital marketing on customer behaviour by carrying out a case study on Finnish superstores. In the contemporary digital marketing scenery, the connection between online interactions and brand loyalty has been the subject of considerable research. Here, we delve into the detailed aspects of how digital engagement contributes to building brand loyalty. Digital platforms enable brands to establish direct and personalized communication with their audience. Through email campaigns, social media interactions, and targeted messaging, brands can tailor their communication to individual preferences and behaviors. Engaging consumers with interactive content, such as surveys, contests, and challenges on social media, encourages active participation. Customers who enthusiastically join in brand-related activities are more likely to feel connected and loyal (Islam, Rahman, & Hollebeek, 2016).

Digital platforms allow users to share their involvement and thoughts about a brand. Content created by users, including reviews, references, and social media columns, serves as reliable authorization. Positive user-generated content contributes to building brand advocacy and loyalty. Digital marketing allows brands to offer exclusive deals, discounts, and promotions to their online audience. Creating a sense of exclusivity for digital consumers reinforces their loyalty, as they feel rewarded for their engagement. Brands can enhance customer service and responsiveness through digital channels. Prompt and helpful responses to customer queries or concerns conveyed through social media or online chat contribute to positive customer experiences and brand loyalty. Digital platforms enable the creation of online communities centered around a brand. Consumers who identify with the brand become part of a social identity. Belonging to such communities fosters a sense of loyalty and shared values. Finally, it is important to measure the role of digital promotion on user behavior. By examining the various ways that consumer decisions influence and are influenced by online marketing endeavors, this thesis pursues to offer a complete picture of the modern marketplace. The emphasis is on how digital marketing plays a title role in changing purchasers' decision-making methods (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

### **1.3 Research questions and objectives**

The research question offers a strong foundation for the study to produce a notable phenomenon that would help a company to realise the need for digital marketing in the sector.

Thus, given the goal of the research, the study tries to address the following issue: How does digital marketing fit customer behaviour? Hence, the study's goals are:

- To categorize the various digital marketing media used by the companies in Finland.
- To identify the role of digital marketing in customer buying behavior

Considering the ideas of digital marketing (7S), this paper theoretically addresses the research topic. Empirically, this study provides answers by means of interviews with Finnish grocery shop managers. Using an open-ended questionnaire, the interview helped one to better grasp the part digital marketing plays in customer behaviour.

#### **1.4 Scope of the study**

Digital marketing is essential in influencing the complex and dynamic phenomena generated by several conditions in customer behaviour. Consumer buying choices are shaped by a complex network of elements, including social media, internet ads, and main digital marketing platforms. Finland has had a notable digital revolution that influences consumer behaviour. To fit the changing market, one must first understand this change. Thus, the purpose of this investigation is to find how consumer behaviour is influenced by digital marketing. The study question thus is: How does digital marketing affect customer behaviour? Interviewing management and employees, the study gathers information from a case study of a superstore in Finland. Data were gathered by an open-ended interview.

Therefore, the study has taken into account qualitative research throughout. In some circumstances, the interviews are conducted using Microsoft Forms. The data collection was therefore finished in two weeks. The interview data were subjected to a thematic approach throughout the research. Among the several restrictions of the study are the danger of bias in self-reported data, the generalisability limited to the selected superstore and its customer base, and the influence of extraneous events not mentioned in the study. Focusing just on a superstore in Finland, the study presents a localized view of the stimulus of digital publicising on customer ordering behaviour. The industrial product under investigation is the range of commodities offered by the selected superstore, comprising groceries and associated consumer goods.

The extent of the study defines the parameters, goals, and area of inquiry on the impact of digital promotion on consumer acquisition behaviour in the framework of a Finnish superstore. It also specifies the range of the research activity.

## 1.5 Key concepts

The study explains the necessary keywords in Table 1.

Table 1. Key concept.

Term	Explanation
SEO	It means search engine optimization. It is one technology frequently used for listing and marketing a business website. Because of the size of the Internet, many businesses use it to reach their target markets around the globe (Goldfarb, 2014).
PPC	Under the pay-per-click (PPC) Online advertising model, companies pay a fee every time a user clicks their advertisement. Basically, it's a means of buying visitors to a website rather than working towards those views organically. PPC is used extensively on social media, search engines, and other websites. The most widely utilised type of PPC is search engine advertising, whereby businesses fight for ad placement in a search engine's sponsored links when someone searches for a keyword pertinent to their industry (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

## 1.6 Structure of the study

This study is set up to provide a thorough investigation of how digital marketing influences consumer behaviour. The opening part of this long thesis delves deeply into how digital marketing shapes consumer behaviour. Giving readers a whole grasp of the research is the main goal of this one. This first chapter describes the general framework for the study project and sets the stage for the subsequent chapters. By the time this introductory chapter ends, readers have solidified their position within the research journey.

They thoroughly comprehend the background of the research and the crucial role that digital marketing plays in consumer behaviour. Readers can recognize the research's present relevance because of its significance within the broader field of digital marketing. Furthermore, the primary objectives and the outline for the subsequent chapters are made evident in this introductory chapter. Readers have been prepared to examine the theoretical underpinnings that guide this research after reading the second chapter on the theoretical perspective. This chapter has uncovered the deep connection between digital marketing and its ideas and principles, which serve as a solid theoretical foundation for further research. After reading this chapter, readers are ready to delve deeper into the specifics of the research progression in the third chapter. The techniques and approaches for data collecting and analysis have been covered in this part so that readers may value the accuracy and depth of the empirical approach of this study. Chapter 4 presents a perceptive view of the business under analysis, stressing its background and the circumstance that user behaviour is much influenced by digital marketing. Readers of this chapter can get better, more useful applications of digital marketing in a particular company environment. The data-driven concepts and empirical outcomes in the fifth chapter show as the study develops. Using a discussion of the results of the sixth chapter, readers have been exposed to the pragmatic implications and function of digital marketing on customer behaviour. The seventh chapter marks the last one of this research project. The study comes to a thorough conclusion with a discussion of the theoretical, managerial, and policy consequences as well as their constraints.

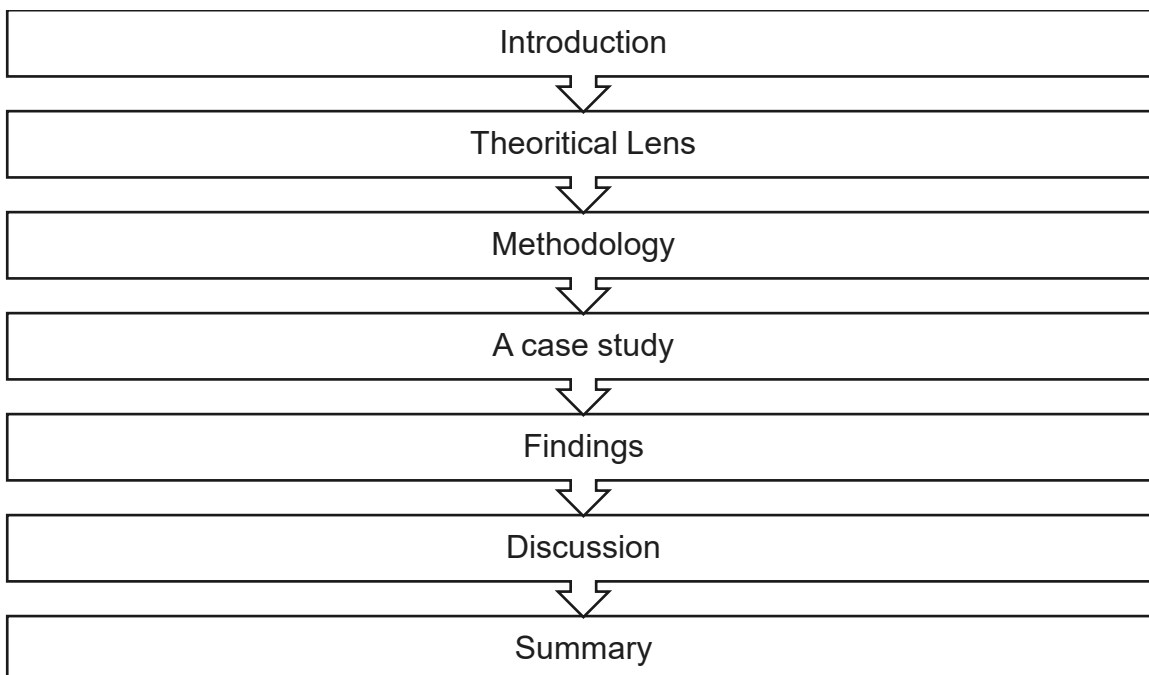


Figure 1. Study structure.

## 2 DIGITAL MARKETING: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter explains digital marketing theories, their components, consumer behavior, online engagement, and the function of digital marketing in consumer actions.

### 2.1 McKinsey 7S framework

Originally presented in the late 1970s, the McKinsey 7S model helped to shape ideas on organizational performance. Former McKinsey consultants Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman established the framework in the book *Search for Excellence* for how interconnected elements affect an organization's capacity for change. Even fifty years later, the model is a necessary strategic tool for comprehending digital marketing in companies (McKinsey & Company, 2008). The technique of creating successful organizational strategies using the tried-and-true 7S Framework is a compass that helps organizations navigate the constantly changing world of marketing, not just a set of tools (Ridge, 2023).

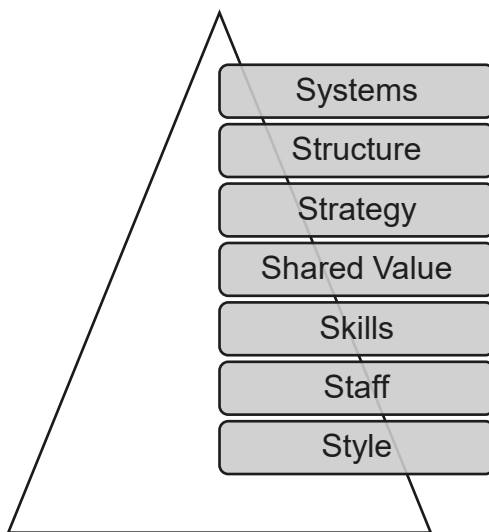


Figure 2. McKinsey's 7S framework (Ridge,2023).

Seven interrelated components that fall into the hard or soft element categories form the foundation of this system. Shared values, skills, staff, and style are soft aspects, whereas structure, strategy, and systems are complex fundamentals. Any company looking to create a strong marketing plan must comprehend and strike a balance between these components. Although every component has a distinct success rate, their combined efforts provide an unstoppable force. When they are in harmony, they guarantee that a company's strategy is logical and flexible enough to adjust to the market.

The 7S for digital marketing, according to Mandal and Nitin (2016), describes how a digital marketing strategy should be applied methodically. The 7S framework provides a systematic method for applying digital marketing strategy, encompassing seven crucial elements. The significance of systems as a fundamental component in implementing digital marketing strategies is outlined in the 7S context. The technological infrastructure and support systems required to launch and effectively administer marketing and advertising campaigns are called systems in digital marketing. This includes a range of instruments, systems, and technologies that make it easier to carry out digital marketing plans. When it comes to digital marketing, one of the most critical steps in ensuring marketing efforts are successful is assessing the technological infrastructure. This entails thoroughly evaluating the capabilities of numerous tools and systems necessary for a campaign.

According to Kaplan and Norton (2004), strategies outline and coordinate your broad digital marketing goals with your more general business goals, such as raising brand consciousness, improving sales, generating leads, and identifying and comprehending your target market's internet habits and inclinations. Select the right digital platforms, including social media, SEO, content marketing, and PPC, based on your target demographic and objectives. One crucial factor is considering content management systems (CMS). Digital content organization, editing, and publication rely heavily on these systems. A robust CMS improves the effectiveness of content development and delivery within a marketing campaign. The assessment also includes tools for customer relationship management, such as CRM.

CRM systems are important for dealing with contacts with both present and future clients, which promotes client happiness and retention. Knowing what CRM systems can do guarantees that customer data is used efficiently for focused marketing campaigns. CMS offers scalability and flexibility, enabling companies to introduce new features and effectively manage massive volumes of content. CMS includes well-known websites and applications like WordPress, Drupal, and Joomla. Selecting the best CMS requires determining the precise needs, website objectives, and available technological know-how. Furthermore, during this assessment, additional software relevant to the campaign's execution is also considered. These could consist of email marketing platforms and social media management tools for monitoring the effectiveness of campaigns.

## 2.2 Development and criticism of the McKinsey 7S framework

Since McKinsey's 7S context has undergone substantial modification, researchers and industry professionals have examined its suitability in the ever-changing ground of digital marketing. The ground of digital marketing is renowned for its ever-changing nature, and the 7S framework is no exception. Academics have acknowledged that flexibility is necessary, which has resulted in suggestions to modify the initial model. For example, a thorough analysis shows how the framework has changed to keep up with new developments in technology and trends while maintaining its applicability. This progression proves the framework's relevance in a constantly evolving digital landscape. New technologies are always emerging in digital marketing, and research efforts since then have concentrated on incorporating these ideas into the original 7S model.

This integration ensures that the 7S paradigm is still applicable and helpful in navigating the new difficulties that emerge in digital marketing. The creation of the 7S framework demonstrates how flexible and sensitive it is to the changing landscape of digital marketing. Incorporating novel ideas guarantees that the framework has persistently offered significant perspectives for marketers in managing the obstacles and possibilities posed by technological progress. The 7S framework is not without its detractors, but it provides an organized method for developing a digital marketing plan. Scholars and practitioners have recognized certain limitations and issues that warrant further examination (Ridge, 2023).

Critics contend that the 7S paradigm may oversimplify the complex and multidimensional dynamics of the digital marketing environment. This simplicity risks causing the framework to miss important subtleties and intricacies that define modern marketing tactics. Effective decision-making requires recognizing and addressing these differences in a world where marketing scenarios are becoming more complex. The idea that some of the components of the 7S framework structure and strategy are static is another criticism leveled at it. Opponents contend that these elements might fall short of capturing the necessary adaptability in digital contexts that are changing quickly. A framework that does not consider the dynamic nature of digital marketing, where flexibility is essential, may not be able to offer all-encompassing recommendations. Additionally, detractors point out that the client experience, a crucial component of modern digital marketing strategies, may not receive enough attention in the 7S framework.

In today's marketing environment, success requires a grasp of and a promise to the customer's journey and experience. Ignoring this could lead to a framework that does not sufficiently address the customer-centric focus required for successful digital marketing. Although the 7S paradigm provides a valuable viewpoint for digital marketing strategy, its continued relevance and efficacy in a quickly changing digital ecosystem depend on how well it responds to these concerns.

### **2.3 Understanding the various digital marketing media used in Finnish companies**

The reach of marketing grew as digital marketing allowed businesses to directly market a wide spectrum of consumers based on their interests, therefore empowering them. With Internet marketing, consumers are becoming aware that they can buy anywhere and whenever they want, so removing the need to physically visit businesses to review the features of the goods. Instant access to products made possible by digital marketing helps consumers to assess the features and compare their preferred prices (Aragoncillo & Orus, 2018). They also noted that the creative appeal of smartphones and internet users allows people to now interact with advertisers and assess product features that appeal to them. Using internet advertising to highlight their items and let consumers know they exist in the pertinent regions, marketers are maximizing the digital age. Because of the few boundaries separating them, consumers today believe that businesses are more flexible and changing. Digital marketers create fresh strategies to boost their client attraction and market reach. This helps a company to create new businesses and limits its physical borders. Companies use digital marketing to use pay-per-click, email marketing, social media, and search engine optimization. This helps a company to maintain ties with current clients and spread out to specific ones with products and services.

Content marketing is creating and distributing excellent, instructional, and interesting content for your target audience. Content marketing is essential for digital marketing and provides dynamic SEO results for the website. A well-established content marketing strategy streamlines reaching the quality content-sharing targets of the website and the tactic to attract the target market (Bleier & Eisenbeiss, 2015). Enticing leads that turn into consumers and can be different from predictable advertising patterns is the aim of both the marketing strategy and content marketing.

Through written content posted via newsletters, blogs, e-books, whitepapers, videos, and infographics, the prospective consumers create possible cost for the goods and facilities given (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020). The most well-known marketing tool influencing the actual meaning of digital marketing is a content marketing strategy. For the consumers, the content experience is interesting and educational, which helps the businesses rank fast on the search engines. Among the most vital varieties of digital marketing is social broadcasting marketing. Using Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram, it highlights your company, goods, or services on social media. Including social media marketing into a digital marketing plan will help you build a brand community, interact with your target market, and boost website traffic. The organization boosts client brand awareness and traffic on social media. Advertising the business and persuading customers to engage in online debates depend on this. By studying the local way of life, businesses can highlight their products and services on social media (Schumann et al., 2014).

Search engine optimization, or SEO, is a tool used routinely for promoting and marketing a company's website. The internet is large, and many companies use it to reach their target markets all around (Goldfarb, 2014). The SEO plan seeks to push a website's products and get it highly ranked on search engines. Research is the tool used in SEO, the marketing science, to raise the awareness of a brand among the targeted target market demographic and so make it more accessible (Kannan & Li, 2017). Websites must be mobile device-friendly, share excellent information, interact with users, and give inbound links top priority if they are to rank and show in search results. SEO helps companies to maximize the workings of their websites and guide consumers to them. SEO requires building channels that direct visitors to websites; hence, the strategy is not always obvious. The goal is to rank the websites such that they show up for searches by consumers. Although various search engines are accessible online, experts give Google high priority since users of them utilize it so often.

Under the pay-per-click (PPC) online advertising model, companies pay a fee every time a user clicks their advertisement. Basically, it's a means of buying visitors to a website rather than working towards those views organically. PPC is used extensively on search engines, social media, and other websites. The most widely utilized type of PPC is search engine advertising, whereby businesses fight for ad placement in a search engine's sponsored links when someone searches for a keyword pertinent to their industry (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

The algorithm helps one rank the ad as a priority and establish a relationship with the consumers depending on numerous parameters like the quality of the ad, landing page quality, keywords, and bid amount (Solomon et al., 2017). This improves the search engine results for the advertising, enabling consumer interaction with the brands. The strategy component of the McKinsey 7S model connects with the PPC marketing element. In digital marketing, a strategy is a company's approach and plan to meet its goals, including using PPC advertising. Important decisions falling within the purview of the strategy component of PPC marketing campaigns are choosing how to allocate resources, target the audience, and acquire a competitive edge (McKinsey & Company, 2008).

Creating a promotional message and emailing numerous possible clients is the simple and efficient way email marketing works. Implementing email marketing is challenging since the recipients of unwanted or prohibited communications in their inboxes object. The list of marketing-related items has to be polished and collected with the target audience so that the expected results follow. Sending content-based emails calls both customizing and personalizing. The email marketing plan must be profitable and efficient, as the most effective advertising weapon at hand is here. The email sent to prospects should reflect professionalism and integration of all digital marketing techniques with marketing automation. Email marketing makes a bigger audience easily reachable, as prospects are readily available. Including cell phone numbers, allowing people to send messages on their phones, helps one further narrow the list of possible customers. These social media notifications and communications assist businesses in awareness of and interaction with their products and services (Kiani, 2023).

YouTube marketing is a vital factor of digital marketing that influences the platform's massive audience reach and interactive capabilities to efficiently market goods, services, or content to a worldwide audience. This aspect of marketing includes a variety of tactics, such as content production, search engine optimization, advertising, audience interaction, use of analytics, and partnerships with influencers or collaborators. Creating exciting video content based on the tastes and interests of the target audience is the essence of YouTube marketing. Marketers produce content that informs, amuses, or resolves issues to build relationships with viewers. Using keywords wisely in titles, descriptions, and tags to optimize videos for search engines is a crucial component of YouTube marketing (HubSpot, 2022).

The most often used digital marketing techniques nowadays are affiliate and influencer marketing. Businesses have to focus on one market and offer their goods to customers. Here, the goal is to pay associates on sales and earn commissions on purchases. The revenue-sharing model is widely used in e-commerce market sectors where affiliates advertise products that create traffic to fit appropriate landing pages (Fierro et al., 2017). Customers can immediately adopt the recommendations of linked marketers, therefore generating new business for the goods and services. With some exceptions, influencer marketing and affiliate marketing are very similar. Those having a social media following are known as influencers. The items the influencers advocate help them get greater traction with consumers since they focus on a certain good or industry. Products of brands are more likely to be embraced by consumers when they are supported by influencers.

Customers can positively buy the goods because of the endorsement, which builds trust. In such instances, influencers charge a commission from the brands in exchange for giving customers access to promo codes. Influencer marketing generates noteworthy sales momentum because it enables buyers to purchase an item based on the suggestion of their chosen influencer. Within digital marketing, affiliate and influencer marketing are most closely associated with the skills component of the McKinsey 7S model (McKinsey & Company, 2008). The organization's and its personnel's capacities and competencies are called skills. The dynamics of these marketing channels, expertise in data analytics to gauge campaign efficacy, ability to negotiate partnership agreements, and familiarity with pertinent digital tools and platforms are all necessary for successful affiliate and influencer marketing campaigns in digital marketing.

The efficiency of affiliate and influencer marketing campaigns hinges on the organization's capacity to develop the abilities required of its marketing personnel, guaranteeing that they possess the know-how to handle these niche markets successfully. It entails keeping abreast of market developments, comprehending the subtleties of affiliate and influencer connections, and modifying tactics to fit the constantly changing terrain of digital marketing. Website marketing, publicizing, and attracting website visitors incorporates several methods and strategies. This includes numerous techniques, including search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, social media promotion, email marketing, paid advertising, and analytics to increase visibility, interaction, and conversions. Search engine optimization (SEO) is the method of maximizing the content and architecture of a website for search engines. This addresses on-page optimization, technical SEO, keyword research, and link building.

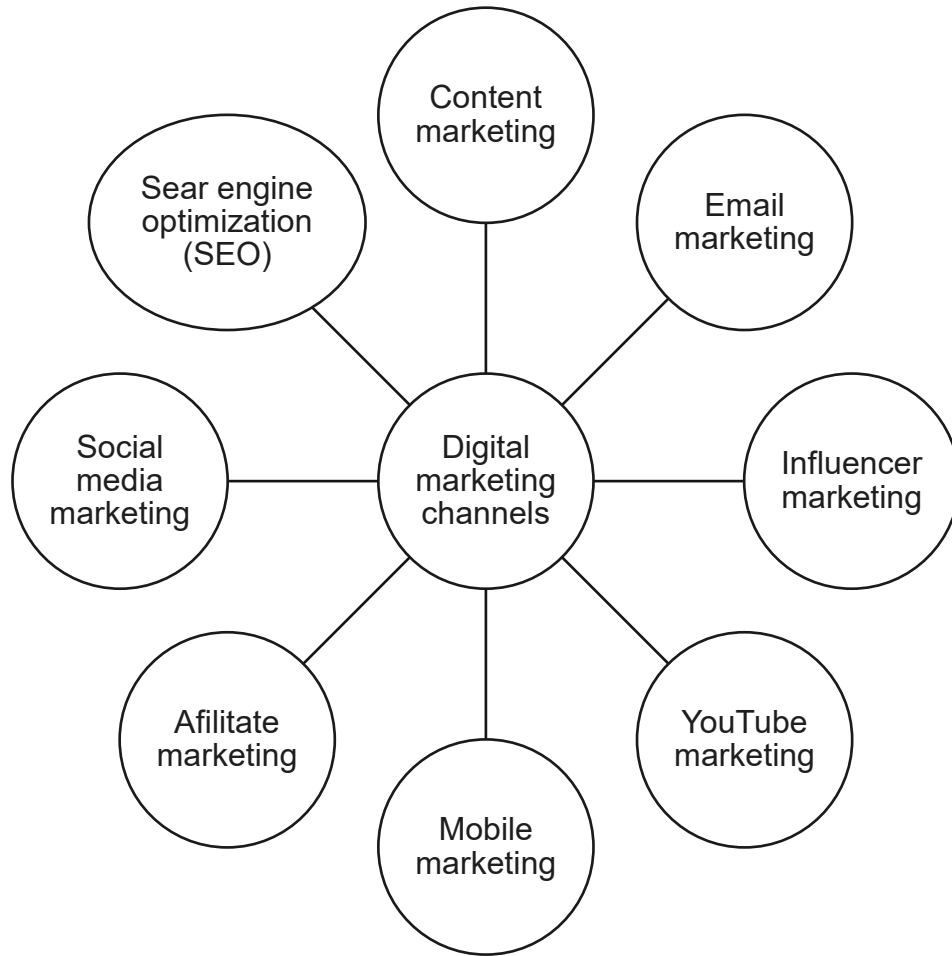


Figure 3. Digital marketing channel.

Creating useful, excellent material for the intended audience attracts readers and generates field authority. Content types include blogs, articles, films, infographics, and more. Utilizing social media sites to post information from websites, interact with followers, and increase traffic by using interesting postings and relevant advertising. Using email campaigns to send subscribers customized and targeted messages to generate leads, promote content, and increase traffic. Employ paid techniques to target demographics and increase website traffic immediately, such as Google Ads, social network ads, or display advertising. Web analytics software like Google Analytics can monitor user behavior, conversion rates, and website performance. It gained insights to optimize the strategy. An integrated strategy is used in online marketing to maximize website visibility, interact with users, and turn visitors into buyers. The McKinsey 7S model's shared values component closely relates to website marketing (McKinsey & Company, 2008). The fundamental beliefs and principles that bind the members of an organization together are referred to as shared values.

Other mechanisms of the 7S model, including structure, strategy, skills, systems, style, and staff, are influenced by and aligned with shared values. Regarding website marketing, the expected values would be the organization's general mission regarding its online presence and engagement, the customer-centric strategy, and the overarching marketing goals. From the above discussions, digital marketing networks can be presented in the following figure.

#### **2.4 Interpretation of the role of digital marketing in consumer buying behavior**

Globalisation is building momentum, and companies cannot ignore the requirement of marketing. People are creatively interacting and gathering thanks in part to digital developments. Human development is enhanced in our global village, where client information interchange is essential. People are smart and know what would be best for them. Thanks to developments in digital marketing, one hopes to reach poor socioeconomic groups and inform them about the ongoing changes. The link between customers and businesses fosters globalisation, which lets goods be sold in multiple marketplaces (Kircova & Esen, 2018). Social media helps companies promote more successfully and enables the development of marketing strategies, including a holistic approach. As consumers utilise the internet to investigate product attributes and make decisions on what to purchase, their buying patterns evolve with time. Consumers relate the most recent product characteristics and trends they learn about to market optimisation. Companies are especially focused on realising the importance of digital marketing trends and applying them to increase customer satisfaction (Delafrooz, 2014). The value, products, and values connected to a brand come from several connections that define its existence. The relationship developed with the company helps the brands to directly communicate with distant customers. This is why digital marketing outperforms trends in conventional marketing approaches.

The term online engagement describes how users engage with digital platforms, content, or online communities. It is necessary for many online activities, including social networking, e-commerce, and content marketing. Companies and organizations must understand and encourage online interaction to engage their audience meaningfully. A few examples of the various aspects of online interaction are likes, comments, shares, reviews, and other content created by users. According to a Nielsen Norman Group analysis from 2021, user engagement can directly affect a website's achievement since engaged users are more likely to become brand supporters and convert into consumers.

Table 2. Role of social media in digital marketing.

<b>Media</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Strategy</b>
Facebook	Live videos Photos and links Information	Advertising Marketing Relationships
YouTube	Videos Audios	Organic SEO Advertising
TikTok	Humor Entertainment Challenges	Series content Influencer marketing
Instagram	Photos Videos	Marketing Advertising Relationships
LinkedIn	Core Values Long-form content	Organic B2B International
Twitter	News Discussion Politics	Customer relationship Advertising
Messenger	Photos Videos Information	Marketing Advertising Relationships

Some factors influencing online engagement are the Caliber of the material, the user experience, and the development of a sense of community. Building a genuine relationship with the audience and providing intelligent and relevant material are the key elements affecting online engagement (Nielsen Norman Group, 2021). Social media's advent has changed the parameters of online interaction by giving companies a platform to speak with customers directly and receive prompt feedback. It is a vital and dynamic element of the digital environment that affects user behavior and the success of brands. Engagement-fostering strategies must be prioritized by businesses and organizations to communicate with their online audience effectively. Consumer behaviour is the process by which individuals decide how much of their time, money, and effort to commit to things connected to their needs. Engel et al. (1990) called it the decisions and actions people take while purchasing goods and services for personal use. Loudon and Bitta (1988) defined it thus: the physical activity and the process of making decisions consumers employ to access, purchase, utilise, or discard the designated goods and services. It's investigating, among other things, what consumers buy and how often they buy. It claims that consumers control the profit and sales of a company when they decide what to buy, so knowledge of consumer behaviour is absolutely important. They thus answer for the financial viability of a corporation.

### **3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology is explained in this chapter. It begins by outlining the research philosophy. Next, an example of the research design and methodology is provided. Then the research focuses on gathering and analyzing data.

#### **3.1 Philosophy, approach, strategy, design, and sampling**

When researching how digital marketing touches consumer buying behavior in a Finnish superstore, it is essential to specify the research philosophy that guides the methods and strategies employed. The research philosophy influences the techniques employed for data collection and analysis. The research theme, study objectives, and philosophical perspective influence the choice of methodology for the empirical investigation. This study, viewed from an ontological standpoint, focuses on consumer behavior related to digital marketing. Given the human element involved in customer behavior, epistemology should be considered while interpreting the problem. Furthermore, research theories like constructivism, subjectivism, and interpretivism suggest that humans are the primary source of scientific knowledge. Thus, the most effective method to produce knowledge for the purpose of this study is to interpret the company's current operations and customers' perspectives (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

This research considers the constructivist paradigm, according to which an inductive method and qualitative techniques are required to develop a theory to acquire scientific information. When collecting and analyzing data, business researchers typically consider either qualitative or quantitative approaches. The qualitative method is related to the inductive approach, and the objective of the research is to comprehend the problem (Eriksson & Koivalainen, 2008). Furthermore, the data-gathering technique of MS Forms is suitable for open-ended survey questionnaires. Following that, Microsoft Teams was used as the interview tool to acquire additional executive clarity. Finally, the findings of this research confirm the theory that, when analyzing consumer behavior via digital marketing, a qualitative approach is better than a quantitative one. Moreover, this study integrates the point of interpretation of the topic field by means of an inductive research method, a qualitative research tactic, and a case study strategy. Using this qualitative approach, the information acquired by qualitative research aligns. The research carried out makes use of both primary and secondary materials assembled from several sources. The study needs both primary and secondary data if it is to assess customer behavior.

This allows one to construct a technique grounded on the research of other researchers and validate it by evaluating the results of studies. The function of digital advertising on customer purchasing behavior has been evaluated using a qualitative research methodology. The non-probability testing approaches have been applied in the study, combining primary and secondary data. This paper investigates consumer buying behavior in relation to digital marketing. Strategies in digital marketing affect user buying behavior. The approach of research chosen is supported by the qualitative data. The qualitative data helps one to analyze the conclusions theoretically. With a single case design, case study research has produced qualitative data. Theoretically, the content offers a summary of the topic. The confirmatory role of research given by quantitative data balances the exploratory character of qualitative research (Zangirolami-Raimundo et al., 2018). Qualitative research builds the theory on the ground information.

### **3.2 Data collection and analysis techniques**

Expressed in words, qualitative research clarifies ideas, feelings, or relationships. This kind of research lets one compile comprehensive knowledge regarding poorly known subjects. Standard qualitative techniques consist of verbal descriptions of observations, open-ended interview questions, and literature reviews covering ideas and theories (Streefkerk, 2023). Using an open-ended questionnaire, interviews with the chosen grocery personnel and their patrons provided the research's primary data. A convenience sampling strategy was used in this data collection. Additionally, the responders' involvement was entirely voluntary. Researchers review the data to derive important insights following data collection. In qualitative research, grounded theory, content analysis, and theme analysis find great application. Combining open-ended interviews with a careful analysis of how digital marketing influences customer buying decisions, the study employed qualitative research strategy. The study looked at how consumers' buying behavior changed in response to digital marketing using the qualitative research technique. The study claims that a qualitative research strategy provides the chance to discuss the experiences, opinions, and ideas of the interviewees regarding the impact of digital marketing on purchasing behavior.

## 4 THE CASE STUDY OF MX SUPERSTORE

This chapter gives summaries of the MX superstore and discusses how digital marketing techniques affect consumer behaviour in the grocery retail industry in Finland. Furthermore, this chapter is how MX superstore acts as a model, exhibiting a deliberate and methodical strategy to digital marketing that reflects the interests of a wide range of demographics. This chapter seeks to identify the strategies and techniques that improve brand recognition, customise shopping experiences, and boost the frequency of purchases by examining MX Superstore's marketing efforts.

### 4.1 Case company: MX Superstore and its grocery items

Finland's MX superstore is a chain of hypermarkets. It has been established since 70's, the first MX superstore opened its doors in Finland. In the 1970s, it opened seven stores; by the 2020s, there were many large and medium-sized stores in Finland. The stores range from 7,347 square feet (7,000 m<sup>2</sup>) to 10,639 square feet (107,639 sq. ft). A retailer oversees the selling of groceries and other consumer items at every MX superstore. In addition to food items, MX Superstore offers apparel, leisure, sports, and household goods. Although MX Superstore, a wholly Finnish business, is Finland's largest superstore chain, it may not look like your typical grocery shop. However, it is a massive player in product and service quality. MX Superstore is exceptional in providing a broad range of products to meet the various wants of its clientele. The market takes pride in being a one-stop shop where people and families can buy anything from clothes to groceries to home repair equipment. This wide choice of products caters to all customer demographics, so anything from young folks to senior citizens can find what they need.

An extensive variety of grocery goods, such as fresh vegetables, dairy, meats, and packaged goods, are available at the MX superstore. Everyday necessities and specialized products are both thoughtfully chosen for the grocery section. Many foreign goods are available to customers that meet particular dietary requirements. This inclusiveness guarantees that all clients can discover appropriate products, irrespective of their dietary requirements or preferences. Another essential attraction for customers at the MX superstore is the apparel section. The market offers necessary apparel products that must be replaced regularly, such as caps, jeans, and socks.

Men's, women's, and children's sections make it simple for clients to browse and locate what they need in the apparel department. This company meets the fashion demands of various clientele by offering a large selection of sizes and designs. A wide range of technology and home maintenance products is available at the MX superstore. This covers appliances for the house, lighting options, and necessary tech items that help with housekeeping. MX superstore guarantees consumers can effectively manage their homes without visiting many stores by offering these products. MX superstore is renowned for its wide range of products, especially in the food department. A large variety of foreign goods is available in the market, so patrons can taste cuisines and ingredients from around the world. Customers with specific dietary requirements or those looking for genuine exotic flavours find this variety especially intriguing. The market stocks the goods of nearby small businesses, further helping them. This project boosts the local economy, creates a sense of community, and offers consumers distinctive products made locally. MX superstore supports local entrepreneurship and sustainability by carrying goods from nearby companies.

## **4.2 Market positioning**

MX superstore has made a name for itself by emphasizing cost, convenience, and variety. Its main USP is its capacity to act as a one-stop store for families and couples looking to care for all their home and personal needs in a single visit. This covers various goods, including electronics, groceries, apparel, and household necessities. MX superstore accommodates a range of client preferences by providing staff-assisted and self-service checkout choices, thereby improving the shopping experience. A critical component of MX superstore's market positioning is the breadth of its product offering. It excels at providing a wide range of foreign items and exceptional diet alternatives. This approach to inclusion appeals to a variety of clients with different alimentary needs and preferences. Additionally, the store's dedication to carrying products from small, local businesses and offering tester tables in the dairy section boosts customer happiness and trust because it enables customers to try products before they buy them. Pricing is another essential component of MX Superstore's market positioning. MX superstore draws in budget-conscious consumers with competitive prices that are frequently lower than rival merchants. MX superstore's affordability makes it desirable for consumers looking for good value when paired with premium goods.

The shop demonstrates its dedication to affordability without sacrificing quality by working to keep costs lower while increasing the selection of products it offers. The way that MX superstore has incorporated modern technologies has improved the experiences of both employees and customers. Using bank card payments at self-service checkouts expedite shopping, reducing waiting times and increasing productivity. Customers save time thanks to this technological adoption, which maximizes employee efficiency, making shopping more accessible and pleasurable. MX superstore uses clever advertising strategies to highlight new products and deals. Giant banners both inside and outside the businesses successfully draw attention to special offers, increasing awareness and drawing consumers. The Lielähti branch keeps its interior view darker from the outside. However, once visitors enter the store, they emphasize in-store promotions and marked discount sections to ensure they know current sales and new arrivals. At the MX superstore, the store's layout has been carefully considered to improve shopping convenience and ease of navigation. Accompanying skincare products upon arrival are well-planned departments for apparel, technology, and home goods that flow naturally to the fresh produce and superstore aisles.

Customers can access the main product categories with this user-friendly layout without browsing the entire store, which saves time and improves convenience. The loyalty program at the MX superstore is essential for building repeat business and consumer loyalty. The program gives an actual card with a branded image that delivers savings in the future through point accumulation and discounts. Modernizing the loyalty experience, the mobile app connection makes digital convenience possible by allowing users to tap their phone codes to receive discounts and points. MX superstore is dedicated to community involvement by carrying goods from nearby small enterprises and carefully considering consumer demands. This local focus fosters a sense of community loyalty and trust while also bolstering regional economies. Consumers like the chance to buy locally produced goods, strengthening the store's allure as a marketplace that values the neighborhood. The multifaceted approach that MX superstore takes to guaranteeing client happiness centers on offering a thorough shopping experience that caters to various customer needs. The company's strategy combines a wide range of products, affordable prices, cutting-edge technology, and services focused on the consumer's needs. This tactic builds consumer loyalty and trust by establishing a quick, easy, and enjoyable purchasing environment. With regard to offering a wide variety of products that meet different dietary needs and customer preferences, MX superstore excels (Nora, n.d.).

This covers goods from other countries, foods free of gluten and lactose, keto alternatives, and kosher or halal chicken. Customers with specific demands can locate products that meet their needs thanks to this diversity, which improves their purchasing experience. Additionally, MX Superstore's willingness to accommodate particular customer requests highlights its dedication to understanding their needs and modifying its product lineup accordingly. This responsiveness fosters long-term loyalty and trust and satisfies urgent client needs. MX superstore's pricing strategy aims to offer good value. The corporation makes sure that clients feel like they are receiving fantastic discounts on their purchases by providing pricing that is frequently less than that of rivals. This tactic is crucial to draw in budget-conscious families and price-conscious consumers. Because MX superstore offers low pricing across a wide range of product categories, it becomes a one-stop shop for all home necessities, saving customers the time and effort that would otherwise be required to visit many locations. Customers have found MX superstore's operations much more convenient thanks to the incorporation of contemporary technology.

Customers can select their preferred payment option at checkout when self-service and staffed checkouts are available, which reduces wait times and increases output. Tech-savvy clients who like a speedy and hassle-free shopping experience can use the self-service checkouts, which accept payments made with bank cards. This fusion of personalized service and technology makes it possible for the MX superstore to cater to various purchasing tastes, raising consumer satisfaction even further. The creative design of MX superstore locations makes for simple navigation and a pleasurable shopping experience. Skincare products and a clear view of the main store areas, including electronics and home goods, greet customers as soon as they walk in. Thanks to this thoughtful arrangement, customers can easily find and access different categories with no needless detours. Customers may easily navigate from the beauty area to discounted goods, apparel, fresh fruit, dairy, and frozen foods because of the clear and user-friendly layout. This well-considered structure improves the entire shopping experience and reduces shopping fatigue. MX superstore ensures staff members are always ready to help clients throughout the store, even though they do not station staffers at the front to greet them. With this strategy, assistance is always available without overwhelming patrons when they arrive. Employees are friendly and available to answer customer questions because they are actively involved in maintaining and replenishing the store.

This harmonious blend of non-intrusiveness and accessibility fosters a friendly atmosphere that upholds client liberty while offering essential assistance. A key component of MX superstore's customer satisfaction strategy is its loyalty program. Customers can take advantage of short-term and long-term benefits from the program's concrete rewards, including discounts and point accumulation. MX superstore serves conventional and tech-savvy customers by offering a smartphone app and a physical loyalty card. Easy point earning and redemption improve consumer engagement and promote returning business. Furthermore, the frequent promotions and discounts widely publicized in catalogs and in-store displays inform customers about chances for savings and increase their happiness and loyalty. The main goals of MX superstore's advertising strategy are to make offers and new goods visible and easy to understand. Attention-grabbing banners at the store entrances, both inside and outside, successfully highlight sales and new inventory. By letting customers take advantage of cost-saving options, this strategy improves their shopping experience by informing them about current deals and special offers. Customers who want a more streamlined and less commercialized shopping experience may find certain branches, like Lielähti, more appealing due to their cleaner, less cluttered visual look. This is because certain branches do not have window advertising.

## 5 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The study concentrated on how digital marketing effects shopper purchasing choices. According to the study, digital marketing is vital to consumers' buying behavior. Here, analyzing the data, the study presents answers regarding the different digital marketing platforms utilized by Finnish businesses as well as the influence of digital marketing on customer procuring decisions.

### 5.1 Responses on the various digital marketing media used in Finnish companies

The study results provided insight into how MX Superstore approaches digital marketing in the Finnish market. Even though the company uses a range of digital platforms, like its app, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, in addition to digital newspapers like *Ilta Sanomat* and *Iltaalehti*, it understands the lasting value of traditional paper marketing because older demographics are more common in their area. This realization emphasizes the importance of comprehending the target audience's demographic makeup and adjusting marketing tactics appropriately. Interestingly, older demographic segments rely primarily on traditional print media as their primary source of information, even as younger customers seem more open to digital marketing initiatives. This demographic gap emphasizes the necessity of a multi-channel marketing strategy, which guarantees that advertising messages efficiently reach a range of consumer demographics. MX Superstore hopes to draw in younger customers through digital platforms by highlighting exclusive deals and distinctive merchandise. This approach aligns with the tastes of tech-savvy people who search the internet for great offers and exciting material. Nevertheless, the business understands that, although it has invested in digital marketing campaigns, these initiatives only supplement its leading marketing platforms. The case company is considered H1.

The respondent claims that they use mobile apps, Instagram and TikTok, and digital newspapers like *Ilta-Sanomat* and *Iltaalehti*. Besides, many elderly locals still prefer conventional media such as newspapers, internet tools have not substantially altered consumer purchasing behaviors in their community. However, younger people are more responsible for digital marketing channels. (H1)

Digital ads in well-known newspapers, such as *Ilta-Sanomat* and *Ilta-lehti*, and paper-based marketing continue to provide better visibility and engagement, especially with larger audiences. This finding emphasizes how crucial it is to vary marketing tactics and combine traditional and digital media to increase effectiveness and reach. In general, the interview's results shed light on the intricate dynamics of consumer behavior in digital marketing, highlighting the necessity of strategically aligning with media consumption habits and demographic preferences. MX superstore aims to stay competitive in the changing consumer interaction landscape by optimizing its marketing efforts and recognizing and adjusting to these subtleties.

## **5.2 Findings on the role of digital marketing in consumer buying behavior**

The study revealed a complicated and significant impression of digital marketing on consumer purchase behaviour in the Finnish grocery retail sector. Using MX superstore, some significant insights on how digital marketing affects customer decision-making processes and purchase behaviour emerged through a theme analysis motivated by the McKinsey 7S Framework. Digital marketing techniques, especially those applied through social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, Facebook), search engine advertising, and corporate websites, have much enhanced consumer brand recognition. These platforms enabled MX superstore to routinely present to a sizable audience its brand message, values, and products, thereby building familiarity and trust.

MX Superstore knew how to get people coming back for more, using positive items, including customer segmentation and loyalty apps, to ensure they're giving offers that were exemplary marks for different types of shoppers. Sending out emails and showing the right online based on what each person likes, they nailed making shoppers feel special, and shopping felt almost tailored just for them. Customers appreciated getting heads about sales or chopping prices on things they buy a lot. Those little messages made a significant difference. By keeping in constant contact through newsletters and alerts on their phones, MX superstore ensured they were always on their customers' minds. This wasn't only random, it was centred on being entirely sure people felt connected and knowledgeable about what's new or on discount. This approach wasn't only throwing things at the wall to see what sticks. It kept people interested in visiting MX again, whether that was walking into the store or checking them out online, always knowing the latest deals or what new products just hit the shelves. The case company notes that.

Customers are encouraged to return to the business when they see the distinctiveness of the offerings, when information about special offers or specialty products is shared online. (H1)

The investigation revealed, among other things, the obvious differences in media consumption patterns among age groups. Younger consumers i.e., ages 18–35 were more open to digital marketing content supplied via social media platforms, smartphone apps, and online influencers. Convenience, interactivity, and real-time information were things these customers prized. Conversely, older age groups, that is, those 50 years of age and above, showed a persistent inclination for conventional media, including print newspapers and television, but interacted with emails and websites for campaigns. MX superstore used a mixed marketing approach, including both digital and traditional channels, to properly balance these tastes. Digital marketing not only brought awareness but also directed consumers across several phases of the purchasing process. The company provides the information below.

Social media is not their main marketing tool, even though it increases visibility. To reach a wider audience, digital ads on sites like *Ilta-Sanomat* and *Ilta-lehti*, and paper marketing work better. (H1)

From information search to alternative appraisal and final purchase, digital channels offered necessary materials (e.g., product reviews, price comparisons, usage advice) that enabled consumers to make wise judgements. Consumers were found to base their decisions on Google searches, online marketing, and social proof, that is, reviews and testimonials, rather than on where or what to buy. The results also underlined the need for a flexible and data-driven strategy for the success of digital marketing. MX superstore remained flexible in emergent trends like influencer partnerships or TikHub advertising, although it gave platforms with measurably low returns, like Facebook Ads and email marketing, top priority investment. Using this deliberate resource allocation, the business was able to maximize its influence without running out of funds. Two-way contact made possible by digital marketing lets MX Superstore establish interaction and community with its clients. Social media channels were applied for customer service, feedback gathering, brand storytelling, and promotion. This fostered emotional ties and a devoted consumer base more likely to interact and promote the brand. The survey revealed that consumer buying behaviors is greatly shaped by digital marketing in Finland, which is both crucial and dynamic. MX Superstore was able to impact consumers at several phases of the purchase process by properly using tailored content, knowing demographic preferences and keeping marketing strategy agile.

## 6 DISCUSSION ON THE FINDINGS

The influence of digital marketing on user purchasing behaviour is examined in this chapter from the perspective of Finland's MX superstore. The changes in purchase frequency, personalised shopping experiences, and brand recognition are highlighted by key findings. Younger clients prefer social media, while elderly customers choose conventional media; this highlights the significance of recognising varied demographic preferences. The discussion centres on how MX superstore emphasises its strategic flexibility and prudent money allocation while placing a high priority on tried-and-true digital platforms to ensure stability and efficacy in its marketing operations.

### 6.1 Understanding the various digital marketing media used in Finnish companies

Digital marketing media are all the digital channels and technologies companies use to interact with their customers, advertise their products, and affect consumer behaviour. Within Finland, businesses, especially in the retail and grocery sectors, have embraced a varied mix of digital marketing media catered to local customer behaviour, media consumption habits, and technology advances. For Finnish businesses, social media is still the pillar of digital marketing plans. Different client demographics are connected via platforms including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and increasingly TikTok. Given their great penetration rates in Finland, Facebook and Instagram were the main instruments MX superstore used to reach customers. Engaging middle-aged and elderly users of Facebook for news, community involvement, and updates was especially successful. MX superstore posted daily promos, store announcements, and customer thanks on Facebook. Younger audiences (i.e., 18–34 years old) found Instagram more enticing, hence it was used to highlight aesthetically pleasing product photographs, recipes, and influencer collaborations. Real-time connection, consumer feedback, and emotive branding, all of which social media allows, turned out to be invaluable in increasing customer involvement and fostering community trust. Among Finnish businesses, email marketing is still a mostly used and efficient tool. For weekly specials, customised discounts, loyalty program advantages, and event invites, MX superstore, for instance, sends email newsletters to customers. Higher open and click-through rates resulted from the ability to personalise email content depending on purchase history and preferences. Since email correspondence could be viewed at their convenience and was non-intrusive, consumers valued it.

Especially when the messages featured value-driven information like coupons and digital receipts, older consumers were more open to emails than to social network content. Superstores and retail chains, among other Finnish businesses, keep interactive websites serving not only as informational tools but also as digital stores. To go along with their websites, some corporations created mobile apps. Loyalty cards, point tracking, mobile-exclusive deals, and scanning tools for a rapid checkout were common components of these apps. Websites and mobile apps helped to create omnichannel marketing, therefore allowing flawless customer experiences both online and in-store.

Finnish businesses invest in Google Ads and enhance search engine exposure with SEO techniques to increase visitors to digital platforms. These strategies help companies show up in consumer searches for pertinent keywords like weekly offers, organic groceries, or a superstore near me. Regarding the MX superstore, localised search ads drew foot traffic from surrounding businesses. Particularly among new consumers who relied on Google to identify local shopping options, the store raised online exposure and conversion rates by implementing geo-targeting and keyword optimisation. Influencer marketing is still in development, but it has started to appeal especially to younger groups in Finland. To naturally promote products, Finnish companies work with local influencers, culinary bloggers, and makers of lifestyle content. MX Superstore periodically worked with micro-influencers to highlight new product lines or healthy eating initiatives. These influencers' dependability and relatability helped to build a good brand image and inspire followers' own trial purchases.

Common tools used to provide time-sensitive information, including flash deals, loyalty point updates, or seasonal promotions, were SMS alerts and push notifications sent via mobile apps. Especially for busy consumers who value quick and succinct information, this approach guaranteed great visibility and instant reaction. Customers in the research said that, especially on holidays or weekends, SMS alerts were helpful when limited-time sales were on offer. Still, there was also a focus on non-intrusiveness; users favoured opt-in systems and message frequency limits. Digital loyalty programs, where consumers accumulate points through purchases recorded via membership cards or mobile apps, are routinely used by Finnish stores. Often combined with email marketing, app notifications, and tailored coupon systems, these schemes. MX Superstore's customised discounts and incentives based on loyalty data helped to increase customer retention by loyalty schemes permitted more focused marketing plans and gave insightful analysis of consumer behaviour.

The study verified that Finnish businesses, especially in the retail sector, apply a multi-channel digital marketing strategy combining conventional and modern methods. Social networking platforms, email marketing, websites, mobile applications, search engine marketing, and digital loyalty programs rank highest among the most powerful digital media available. Target customer demographics, shopping behaviour, and channel efficacy guide the choice and application of these techniques. Using digital media not only to promote but also to establish trust, personalise experiences, and react dynamically to changing consumer needs, MX superstore shows a pragmatic and customer-centric strategy. The results of this study highlight the need for media channel variety and strategic integration in reaching effective digital marketing results in Finland.

## **6.2 Interpretation of the role of digital marketing in consumer buying behavior**

According to research results and conclusions retrieved from the study, customers' buying experiences are actively curated by digital marketing. Digital marketing experiences increase client loyalty because consumers prefer to shop from brands they have already used. Trends in digital marketing are helpful to brands because sometimes consumers make snap decisions that work in their favor (Chen & Lin, 2019). Target markets that are appropriately chosen and options that customers can choose from encourage consumers to buy more goods to find the best offer (Nguyen et al., 2018). Customers are less able to access traditional marketing strategies than they are to access digital marketing strategies. According to the study, digital marketing has a big impact on buyers' purchasing decisions. When purchasing online, customers can conduct extensive research to make well-informed decisions. Customers can evaluate the product's qualities while conveniently purchasing from their homes. Consumers have access to a variation of choices that assist them in making decisions that enhance their purchases.

Digital marketing gives the shopping experience a personalized touch and raises client satisfaction to a new level. Brands may maintain customer loyalty because consumers prefer to shop from well-known companies rather than try out new services. Via social media networks, a brand can stay in close contact with consumers and potential customers (Yamin, 2017). Customers are kept informed about the services and educated by the postings on the web. Examining the responses, the study finds that people know about contemporary progresses in digital marketing. People regularly search social media for information about products and services of firms (Richard & Chebat, 2016).

Maintaining customer relationships depends much on online promotions and influencer marketing. Actively publishing on social media aims to keep consumers involved and maximize their purchasing experiences (Grewal et al., 2018). Consumers like to stay engaged on the businesses' social media accounts and can recall the brands. Improved customer communication influences purchasing decisions and makes choosing from fewer options easier. Many choices and promotions perplex consumers, which influences their purchase behavior. The analysis of the survey shows how much consumers' purchase decisions are influenced by online marketing. Future research could look at the exact effect of social media marketing on purchasing decisions and evaluate the effects of email marketing on client buying decisions (De Mooij, 2019). Digital marketing is complex; hence, a study has to be done from several viewpoints, including a comparison between industrialized and developing countries. Rich countries are rather fond of digital marketing, whereas less developed countries show rather different patterns. Examining the topic from several sides will help one to get a worldwide assessment of the popularity of digital marketing.

## **7 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS**

This chapter is a summary and provides an overview of the results and makes recommendations for how superstores should include digital marketing into their overall plans in order to satisfy changing customer demands and stay ahead of the competition in the retail sector.

### **7.1 Summary of the study**

The study looked at how MX Company, a Finnish superstore, used its digital marketing strategies to affect customer purchase behavior. Several important conclusions came out of a conversation with a company official. First, the efficacy of MX company's digital marketing tools, which include digital newspapers such as *Ilta-Sanomat* and *Ilta*, as well as social networking platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, depends on the target demographic. While older groups enjoy conventional marketing channels like newspapers, younger people are more receptive to internet ads. Digital marketing is a supplementary tool for emphasizing unusual deals or unique products, even with this demographic gap, thereby reaching a larger audience. MX company's strategy revolves around adaptability and maintaining a strong local presence through partnerships with local events and venues. However, there are no immediate plans to implement emerging digital marketing platforms or trends, as the company prioritizes leveraging established channels. The study underscores the significance of comprehending consumer preferences and adapting marketing strategies accordingly. It also highlights the need for agility and flexibility in navigating the ever-evolving digital landscape. By balancing traditional and digital marketing approaches, the MX company strives to effectively engage with consumers and drive purchasing decisions in a competitive market environment.

### **7.2 Theoretical implications**

The findings from the interview with MX company offer several theoretical implications for recognizing customer behaviour and digital marketing in relation to retail operations. The finding that newer consumers are more sensitive to digital marketing while older consumers favour conventional media like newspapers emphasises the need for demographic segmentation in marketing plans. This emphasizes the necessity of marketers to customise their approaches, considering the media consumption habits of different age groups, recognizing that one-size-fits-all strategies may not be effective.

Despite the rise of digital platforms, the results suggest that digital marketing is a supplementary tool rather than a replacement for traditional marketing channels. This challenges the notion of a complete shift toward digital advertising and emphasizes the continued relevance of offline marketing methods, particularly in reaching specific demographic segments. MX Company's strategy of adapting to the latest trends and maintaining a local presence through partnerships with local events and venues highlights the significance of adaptability and community engagement in digital marketing. This underscores the value of building solid relationships with local communities to increase consumer loyalty and brand awareness.

The decision of MX company to prioritize established digital marketing channels over emerging platforms reflects a strategic approach to resource allocation. This suggests that organizations must carefully evaluate the probable benefits and risks of adopting new digital marketing trends, considering factors such as target audience preferences, cost-effectiveness, and alignment with overall business objectives. Overall, these theoretical implications contribute to understanding how digital marketing approaches intersect with consumer behaviour and organizational dynamics in the retail sector. Researchers can gain valuable insights into effective marketing practices in the digital age by examining the interplay between traditional and digital marketing channels and the importance of adaptability and strategic resource allocation.

### **7.3 Managerial implications**

The outcomes of the interview with MX company offer many management consequences for companies trying to maximise their digital marketing plans. Understanding the various tastes of many demographic groups is vital. Companies should do extensive market research to ascertain the media consumption patterns of their target audience and then modify their digital marketing initiatives. Knowing which platforms appeal most to their target market helps companies to better deploy resources. Although digital marketing has many benefits, conventional marketing channels still have importance, especially for targeting older customer groups. To guarantee complete coverage of their target demographic, businesses should use a mixed strategy combining digital and traditional marketing platforms. One should see digital marketing as a tool to complement rather than a stand-alone tactic. While it can effectively engage with younger consumers and highlight special offers, it should complement broader marketing efforts encompassing online and offline channels. The digital landscape constantly evolves, requiring businesses to remain agile and adaptable.

Regularly monitoring industry trends and consumer behavior enables companies to effectively pivot their digital marketing strategies and capitalize on emerging opportunities. Maintaining a strong local presence through partnerships with local events and venues can enhance brand visibility and community engagement. Businesses should explore opportunities to collaborate with local organizations to strengthen their ties with the community and expand their reach. When considering the adoption of new digital marketing platforms or trends, companies should prioritize strategic resource allocation. Before investing in new initiatives, evaluating the potential returns and aligning with business objectives is essential. Prioritizing stability and effectiveness over novelty can lead to more sustainable long-term outcomes. Overall, these managerial implications highlight the importance of a strategic and nuanced approach to digital marketing, considering the diverse needs and preferences of the target audience while remaining adaptable to changing market dynamics.

#### **7.4 Policy implications**

Policymakers should encourage businesses to adopt flexible marketing strategies that cater to diverse demographic preferences. Recognizing the varying receptivity to digital marketing among different age groups, policies can promote the development of targeted approaches that effectively reach younger and older consumers. To bridge the digital divide and ensure inclusivity in marketing efforts, policymakers could invest in digital literacy programs targeted at older populations. By empowering older individuals with the skills to navigate digital platforms, businesses like MX company can expand the audience and effectiveness of their activities for digital marketing. Policymakers should incentivize businesses to engage with local communities through partnerships with events and venues. By fostering local solid ties, businesses can cultivate brand loyalty and trust, contributing to the overall economic vitality of the community. Regulatory bodies could monitor emerging digital marketing platforms and trends to ensure consumer protection and fair competition. While MX company currently prioritizes established channels, policymakers should stay vigilant to potential shifts in consumer behaviour and market dynamics that may necessitate adjustments to regulatory frameworks. Policymakers should create an environment conducive to innovation in digital marketing while balancing consumer privacy and data protection concerns. By fostering an ecosystem that encourages experimentation and creativity, businesses like MX Company can explore new avenues for engaging with consumers while adhering to ethical standards and regulatory requirements.

Government agencies could guide resource allocation in digital marketing, emphasizing the importance of balancing investments in established and emerging channels. This guidance can help businesses like MX Company make informed decisions about where to allocate their marketing budgets for maximum impact and return on investment.

## **7.5 Limitations and suggestions for future research**

Consequently, the results can offer a partial knowledge of the intricate processes guiding market purchase decisions. The research is conducted at a specific time and may not capture the dynamic nature of digital marketing trends and consumer behavior over time. Market conditions, consumer preferences, and technological advancements constantly evolve, potentially rendering the findings outdated or less relevant. Additionally, the absence of long-term data or follow-up studies limits the researcher's ability to assess the sustainability or effectiveness of MX Company's digital marketing strategies over time. The findings rely on self-reported data provided by the interviewee, which could be influenced by social desirability bias or recollection bias. The respondent's responses may be influenced by their desire to favorably present the company's digital marketing efforts or may inadvertently omit essential details or challenges the organization faces. The research does not incorporate perspectives or insights from external sources such as industry experts, competitors, or consumers outside MX Company's target audience. Therefore, the findings may lack external validity and not fully capture the broader context or dynamics shaping digital marketing strategies and buyer behavior in the marketplace.

Upcoming research needs to conduct a more detailed examination of demographic preferences and behaviors regarding digital marketing. Explore how age, income level, and geographical location influence consumer responses to marketing channels and messages. We need to compare the effectiveness of digital marketing initiatives versus traditional marketing channels, particularly among diverse demographic groups. Investigate whether certain products or promotions perform better in digital versus traditional media environments. The results rely on MX company's experiences and viewpoints in Finland. Consequently, especially those running in diverse geographical areas or market segments, the insights might not be generally relevant to all businesses or sectors.

Furthermore, restricting the generalizability of the results are the demographic traits of MX Company's target audience, namely the percentage of younger rather than older consumers. The study depends on revelations from one interview with an MX Company official. The respondents' impressions or interpretations of the company's digital marketing efforts and how they affect consumer behavior could be naturally biased. Furthermore, the opinions voiced by the responder could not entirely reflect the points of view of every participant engaged in the marketing activities of the organization, including marketing managers, consumers, or outside consultants. With reference to MX Company, the study mostly concentrates on digital marketing projects and their impact on consumer buying behavior. Although this limited approach has yielded insightful analysis, other elements impacting consumer behavior, such as product quality, pricing, and competition strategies, have not been well investigated.

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Investigate whether certain products or promotions perform better in digital versus traditional media environments. The study also suggests conducting longitudinal studies to track changes in consumer behavior over time in response to growing digital marketing trends. This could involve analyzing purchase patterns, brand loyalty, and engagement metrics before and after implementing digital marketing initiatives. Further, it discovers the potential effect of emerging digital marketing platforms and trends on consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. Investigate how augmented reality like AR, virtual reality, i.e., VR, and influencer marketing affect consumer engagement and brand perception.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1. Interview Questionnaire**

**Appendix 1. Interview Questionnaire**

- Please tell me what digital marketing tools or social media your company uses to promote its goods and services.
- Have you observed any changes in consumer buying behavior due to using digital tools or channels for digital marketing?
- If yes, could you give examples of how these digital marketing initiatives affect consumers' purchasing decisions?
- How do you assess the performance of your digital marketing initiatives using these social media platforms?
- How do you modify your digital marketing tactics to consider changing consumer behavior?
- Does your organization intend to implement any recently emerging digital marketing platforms or trends soon? If yes, please explain.