

Influence of Digital Marketing Strategies on Customer Purchase Intention in the Indian Automotive Sector: A Case Study of Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.

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ABSTRACT:

Digital marketing has completely revolutionized the Indian automotive sector by shaping how customers look for information, assess alternatives and make vehicle choices. The present study aims to analyze the impact of digital marketing strategies on customer purchase intention especially in Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. In the study, descriptive and analytical research design were used, with primary data collected in forms of a structured questionnaire on which 270 respondents were involved. The statistical techniques employed are descriptive analysis, correlation and regression analysis which were done with SPSS Software. The results indicate that social media is the most preferred by the customers, and Website Usability has the highest mean score among the digital marketing strategies selected. The regression analysis revealed that there is a significant relationship between digital marketing strategies and the intention to purchase the products and services of a company ($R = 0.612$; $R^2 = 0.374$; $F = 22.393$, $p < 0.001$). The coefficient results revealed that Video Marketing, Online Advertising and Digital Word-of-Mouth were the most influential factors. Based on the findings, it is concluded that the effective digital marketing strategies can positively impact on the consumers' purchase intention, and it can be observed that Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. can gain opportunities to excel in customer relationship and stay competitive in the Indian automotive market.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Customer Engagement, Automotive Sector, Content Marketing and Social Media Marketing

1. Introduction

Digital marketing has become a game-changing strategy which has revolutionized the world of traditional marketing, relying on digital communication platforms and internet-based technology for engaging with customers. Thanks to the evolution of digital platforms like websites,

social media, mobile apps and search engines, organizations can now effectively and interactively advertise their products and services. Digital marketing is different from conventional marketing, in that it is a two-way street, allows for personal marketing, and enables the quick interaction with customers. As digital technology

becomes increasingly vital to business strategies in a number of industries, including the automotive industry, it has become an indispensable tool for them (Kotler et al., 2021).

In today's era, consumers have come to rely on the Internet as a key source for information, comparing features, reading reviews, and making buying decisions, significantly changing the way the automotive industry markets its products. Car manufacturers are using digital marketing techniques like social media campaigns, email marketing, online ads and virtual experiences to improve brand awareness and shape consumer choices. These methods enable companies to build better customer connections, develop a more effective brand positioning and build competitive strengths in the fast-changing automotive sector. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019)

1.1. Growth of Digital Technologies in the Indian Automotive Sector

The Indian automotive industry witnessed the use of digital technologies in unprecedented proportions since the evolution of the internet, smart phones and when consumers started to look more digital. Automakers are leveraging digital channels in their marketing and sales processes, from virtual car demos to AI-driven recommendations to virtual showrooms and digital customer service systems. The use of such technologies, such as big data analysis, social media communication and others, has enabled businesses to understand customer needs and provide them with more personalized experiences. It has brought improved business customer interaction and a marketing opportunity for car manufacturers to improve their market image (KPMG, 2023).

1.2. Changing Consumer Behaviour in the Digital Era

The digital age has significantly transformed consumer behaviour and, in the automotive world, consumers are more likely to seek information, comparison and make a purchase decision online. Today, thanks to the all-pervasiveness of smartphones, social media, online reviews, and company websites,

consumers have new tools and more information available to help them make decisions based upon first-hand information and peer recommendations. Now the customer expects the ability to communicate with the business in a customised way, having a seamless online process and transparency in product information before visiting dealerships. It has encouraged automakers to adopt it as a tool for customer-centric, digital marketing strategies aimed at higher engagement, trust and influencing consumer purchasing along the entire journey (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

1.3. Digital Marketing Strategies in the Automotive Sector

Digital Marketing has revolutionized the automotive industry and enabled car manufacturers to connect with customers via various online platforms. The Internet, smart phones and social media have revolutionized consumer information gathering habits, how they compare brands and how they evaluate product features before buying a vehicle. As the automotive industry is seeing it, search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, content marketing, email marketing, video marketing, and online advertising are becoming more and more popular ways to engage customers and enhance the visibility of the brand. These techniques allow customers to get easy access to product information, check out virtual cars and get tailor-made promotional resources, while also allowing businesses to touch a larger demographics at a more appealing price than the normal advertising campaigns.

Indian automotive companies like Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Motors and Maruti Suzuki have already adopted digital marketing in their marketing campaigns by leveraging social media initiatives, virtual product launches, customer relationship management (CRM) and data-driven marketing. These digital efforts boost brand recognition, enhance customer engagement, and help businesses reach consumers with tailored communications. Boboev et al. (2021) state that digital marketing is crucial to the modern automotive industry, as it helps to better engage

customers, makes marketing more effective, and boosts the bond between the automotive brand and the customer.

1.4. Content Marketing and Online Brand Communication

In the automotive sector, content marketing has proven to be an effective digital marketing tool, as companies leverage informative blogs, videos, social media posts, and customer reviews to effectively convey product features and technological advancements. Automotive brands use high-quality content to educate consumers, build awareness and establish trust in the brand, which ultimately affects their decision to buy products or make a move (Muharram & Azmy, 2024).

Automotive brands can keep customers engaged through digital channels and social media with online brand communication. Communication strategies have a positive impact on the engagement with customers, the brand image and relationship building with consumers. Use of consistent and customer-oriented online communication is becoming a key factor of the success of marketing in the competitive automotive industry (Hrysiuk, 2025).

1.5. Customer Purchase Intention and Consumer Decision-Making

Customer purchase intention is the probability or readiness of the customers to buy a certain product or service as a result of their perceptions, attitudes, preferences and past experiences. Today's digital world has created a more complex customer buying process, with customers actively researching products and services online and via social media platforms, websites and customer reviews before finally making the purchase. Digital interactions have a strong impact on consumers' knowledge, trust and perception of the product, which further influences their intention to buy and buying behavior. Riaz et al. (2021) noted that social networking sites are an important factor that influences consumer purchase intentions, as they help in sharing information, interacting with others, and building trust within the digital communities. In the same way, the lifestyle factors, perception of

consumers, product quality are identified as important factors that affect the purchase intention and finally the purchase decision (Amri & Prihandono, 2019). Moreover, the decision-making process of a customer consists of multiple steps, such as problem recognition, information search, consideration of alternatives, and selection of a product or service for purchase, in which digital marketing is important as it provides relevant information and customized experience to customers, which leads them to make informed decisions (Kotler et al., 2021).

1.6. Digital Transformation of the Indian Automotive Industry

The Indian automotive sector has experienced a stunning transformation towards digitization driven by technological advancements, internet penetration, and evolving customer needs. Leading automotive companies are incorporating new technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), big data analytics, cloud computing, the Internet of Things (IoT), and automation into their manufacturing workflows, supply chain, and customer relationship management (CRM) operations to improve their processes, efficiency, and customer management. The customer journey has been streamlined with digital innovations like virtual showrooms, online vehicle booking platforms, mobile apps, and AI-powered chatbots, offering easy access to product details and tailored customer support. Furthermore, digital marketing platforms allow auto manufacturers to target particular buyer segments, examine their customer behaviors, and create personalized marketing messages. The data driven approach is also found to be helpful for inventory management, demand forecasting and after sales services. This has also enabled the automotive companies in India to be more competitive, efficient and to deliver their customers with better experiences to handle the changing digital business landscape (Khan et al., 2021).

2. Literature Review

According to Mehta and Rastogi (2017), the automotive sector has undergone a

transformation with digitalisation providing new opportunities and challenges to companies in their efforts to develop and implement effective marketing strategies. Gupta and Vidyarthi (2022) also shed light on how the adoption of digital technology has altered the way people interact with the Indian automotive industry as well as marketing strategies. Likewise, Rao, 2017, states that with their high competition, automakers must use sophisticated digital methods to stay competitive. To maximize the utility of digital technologies in the case of Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., communication with the customer, customer experience and competitiveness will be improved, while the ability to continuously innovate in digital technologies will become imperative for the survival of the business.

Grieger and Ludwig (2019) stress the importance of digital marketing in terms of helping automotive companies understand the evolution of customer needs and preferences and therefore adopt a customer-centric business model. Efremov and Pruthi (2023) describe modern digital platforms as an environment for organizations to interact with customers in an interactive and data-driven way. Moreover, Ahmadi et al. (2023) state that a powerful digital marketing can reinforce brand equity by enhancing customer perceptions and trust. Personalized and customer-centric digital approaches can help improve the relationship between M&M and its customers and help the brand perform better. Thus, it is essential to continuously innovate with digital marketing to align with the changing expectations of consumers and stay competitive.

For digital marketing to be effective, there is a need for new ideas and strategies to make the most of customers' experience and engagement across all digital channels, as noted by Ryan (2016). According to Sceulovs and Lorencs (2017), companies should continually track the success of their digital marketing efforts and adjust their campaigns to attain their business goals. Data analytics is crucial for measuring marketing performance and making informed decisions, as noted by Sokolova and Titova

(2019). Similarly, Olazo (2022) highlights that firms with good tech competency have greater capacity to deal with implementation hurdles and sustain their growth over time. Thus, ongoing assessment and adjustment of digital strategies need to be carried out so that organizations can remain competitive in the ever-changing technological landscape.

According to Srivastava et al. (2025), digital customer engagement has become crucial in the quest to foster long-term customer relationships by enabling tailored and engaging communication between corporations and customers. Rosado-Pinto and Loureiro (2020) suggest the need for a multi-channel approach towards digital marketing to be integrated correctly in order to ensure that customers have a single and seamless brand experience. In a similar fashion, Yuan et al. (2020) established that consumers' engagement with online brand communities positively influences their trust, loyalty, and resilience against the brand. The aforementioned studies highlight the fact that digital marketing is about more than just promotion; it's a strategy for creating positive and productive customer relationships. Hence, businesses like Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. can make use of successful digital marketing strategies to boost up their brand equity, increasing their customer loyalty, build competition in the market and also develop their businesses in a sustainable way.

Bala and S. Verma, (2018), digital marketing is a strong strategic tool which can be used to communicate with and to shape consumers' behavior through various online platforms. Today's digital formats, such as live video streaming, offer interactive product experiences that can shape customers' purchase intent and therefore should be emphasized, according to Zhang et al. (2020). Furthermore, the study conducted by Ansari et al. (2019) and Habib et al. (2022) demonstrates that active and positive engagement with social media posts and interactions plays a key role in building brand awareness and improving relationships with consumers. Lăzăroiu et al. (2020) state that trust in the Internet and the decreased sense of online

risks are significant factors to consider when examining consumer purchasing decisions. Therefore, effective digital marketing strategies can enhance customer engagement and give automotive brands a competitive edge.

3. Problem Statement

In the age of digital technologies, the way India markets its vehicles has undergone a dramatic transformation. Social media, company websites, online ads, and online reviews are all important tools for consumers to use when considering purchasing a vehicle. While automotive companies have numerous digital marketing strategies, few studies discussed the effect of these strategies on purchase intention of their customers. Hence, this study aims to examine the effect of the digital marketing strategies used by Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. on the perceptions, preferences and purchase intention of the customers in the Indian automotive industry.

4. Significance of the Study

This study can be useful in developing the understanding of the relationship between Digital Marketing Strategies and purchase intention of customers in the automotive industry of India. The outcomes will help Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. gauge the effectiveness of their digital marketing strategies and improve their customer engagement. The study's findings also support the existing academic research by providing empirical evidence on the behaviour of customers in the online environment. Furthermore, the results of this study will help automotive manufacturers develop effective marketing strategies that will lead to better brand recognition and customer satisfaction.

5. Objectives of the study

To assess the impact of digital marketing strategies on customer purchase intention in the Indian automotive sector, with special reference to Mahindra & Mahindra.

6. Methodology

This study employs the systematic method of research as it covers the effect of digital marketing strategies on customer purchase

intention to be studied in the auto industry of India. The research is developed regarding research design, questionnaire, method of data collection, sampling technique and statistical analysis method. Data gathered is primary data from the respondents and appropriate analytical tools are applied to interpret the data. The methodology ensures reliability and validity of the study and helpful knowledge regarding purchasing behaviour of consumers.

6.1. Rationale of the Study

Today, digital technology has entered everyone's daily lives and changed the way consumers are looking for the information they need, and how they are purchasing vehicles. One of the digital marketing strategies implemented by Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. for attracting and engaging customers include Social Media Marketing, Search Engine Optimisation, Online Advertising and Content Marketing. However the effectiveness of these strategies in relation to purchase intention needs to be investigated further. Therefore, this research paper aims at reviewing their impact and proposing some recommendations to improve the Digital Marketing strategies in the Indian automobile sector.

6.2. Research Design

This study used a descriptive and analytical approach to analyze the impact of digital marketing strategies on customer purchase intention in the automobile industry in India. The descriptive approach is used to understand the perceptions and attitudes of customers about the digital marketing activities and the analytical approach is used to examine the relationship between the digital marketing strategies and purchase intention.

The study adopted quantitative research method and primary data was collected using structured questionnaires from the respondents who are knowledgeable about Mahindra & Mahindra digital platforms. To achieve the research objectives, the collected data were analyzed by percentage analysis, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis.

6.3. Questionnaire Design

The primary data were obtained by using a structured questionnaire which was used to study the effect of digital marketing strategies on purchase intention among customers. The questionnaire contained demographic questions, questions about the research variables measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Online Advertising, Website Usability, Video Marketing, SEO Effectiveness, Retargeting Strategy, Digital Word-of-Mouth and Online Promotions were the independent variables, and Customer Purchase Intention was the dependent variable. The statements assessed customers' perceptions and purchasing intentions towards Mahindra & Mahindra vehicles.

6.4. Data Collection

The study used primary data collected from a structured questionnaire which was sent to the existing and prospective customers of automobiles, who are aware of the Mahindra & Mahindra digital marketing operations. The survey was done both online and offline, to gather responses about the effectiveness of digital marketing methods and how they affect purchase intention. Finally, 270 valid responses have been analysed from various groups, giving a complete picture of customer perceptions and the impact of digital marketing channels on their decisions to purchase vehicles in the Indian automotive market.

6.5. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The criteria of inclusion and exclusion were designed to help select the appropriate respondents and to keep the data reliable. The study was conducted amongst the audience of 18 years or above interested in the automotive industry and aware of Mahindra & Mahindra's digital marketing platforms, online advertisements, website and promotional activities. The age group below 18 years and those who did not know about Mahindra & Mahindra's digital initiatives were not included in the final analysis due to incomplete and inconsistent responses.

6.6. Statistical Tools and Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using the appropriate statistical tools to meet the objectives of the research. The demographic information and opinions of the respondents were summarised using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. To analyse the relationship between digital marketing strategy variables (Online Advertising, Website Usability, Video Marketing, SEO Effectiveness, Retargeting Strategy, Digital Word-of-Mouth, Online Promotions) and Customer Purchase Intention, inferential statistical methods like correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were used. The data analysis was done by SPSS program to ensure the accuracy of data analysis, reliability and validity of the research results that are obtained.

7. Results

Table-1: Demography

Parameter	Variable	Frequenc y	Percen t	Parameter	Variable	Frequenc y	Percen t
Gender	Male	203	75.2	Marital Status	Single	36	13.3
	Female	67	24.8		Married	234	86.7
	Total	270	100		Total	270	100
Occupatio n	Student	22	8.1	Qualificatio n	Undergraduat e	68	25.2

	Salaried Employee	115	42.6		Postgraduate	146	54.1
	Business	83	30.7		Doctorate	17	6.3
	Others	50	18.5		Others	39	14.4
	Total	270	100		Total	270	100
Age	18-25 year	14	5.2	Digital Platform Use	Social media	198	73.3
	26-35 year	44	16.3		Search Engines	38	14.1
	36-45 year	128	47.4		Company Websites	19	7
	46-55 year	65	24.1		Others	15	5.6
	Above 56 years	19	7		Total	270	100
	Total	270	100				

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. “The gender distribution shows that 75.2% of respondents were male and 24.8% were female. Regarding marital status, 86.7% were married, while 13.3% were single. In terms of occupation, 42.6% were salaried employees, 30.7% were engaged in business, 18.5% belonged to other occupations, and 8.1% were students. Educational qualification data indicate that 54.1% were postgraduates, 25.2% were undergraduates, 14.4% belonged to other qualification categories, and 6.3% held doctoral degrees. The age profile reveals that 47.4% of respondents were between 36–45 years, 24.1% were aged 46–55 years, 16.3% were between 26–35 years, 7.0% were above 56 years, and 5.2% were between 18–25 years”. Regarding digital platform usage, 73.3% preferred social media, 14.1% used search engines, 7.0% relied on company websites, and 5.6% used other platforms. Overall, the respondents were predominantly middle-aged, married, postgraduate individuals with a strong preference for social media platforms.

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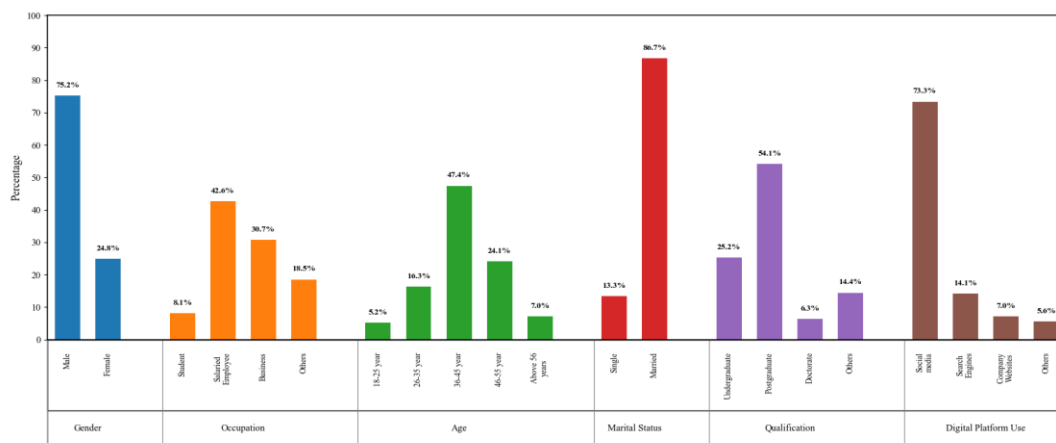


Figure 1: Demography

Table-2 : One-Sample

Parameter	t	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Purchase Intention	38.642	3.15	1.339	.081	2.99	3.31
Online Advertising	37.963	3.18	1.377	.084	3.02	3.35
Website Usability	37.263	3.24	1.429	.087	3.07	3.41
Video Marketing	38.919	3.16	1.332	.081	3.00	3.32
SEO Effectiveness	38.262	3.17	1.360	.083	3.00	3.33
Retargeting Strategy	37.154	3.07	1.356	.083	2.90	3.23
Digital Word-of-Mouth	40.041	3.16	1.296	.079	3.00	3.31
Online Promotions	36.271	3.06	1.388	.084	2.90	3.23

Table 2 presents the one-sample statistics for customer purchase intention and the selected digital marketing strategies. Website Usability recorded the highest mean score of 3.24 (SD = 1.429, SE = 0.087; $t = 37.263$; 95% CI = 3.07–3.41), indicating that an effective and user-friendly website has the strongest influence on customers' purchase decisions. Online Advertising reported a mean score of 3.18 (SD = 1.377, SE = 0.084; $t = 37.963$; CI = 3.02–3.35), followed by SEO Effectiveness with a mean of

3.17 (SD = 1.360, SE = 0.083; $t = 38.262$; CI = 3.00–3.33). Video Marketing and Digital Word-of-Mouth both recorded a mean score of 3.16 with significant t-values, demonstrating their positive contribution toward influencing customer purchase intention. Overall, the positive mean scores, high t-statistics, and narrow confidence intervals indicate that these digital marketing strategies have a considerable impact on enhancing customer purchase intention in the Indian automotive sector.

Table-3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.612	.374	.358	1.073

a. Predictors: (Constant), Online Promotions, Online Advertising, SEO Effectiveness, Video Marketing, Retargeting Strategy, Website Usability, Digital Word-of-Mouth

Table-4: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	180.455	7	25.779	22.393	.000
Residual	301.619	262	1.151		
Total	482.074	269			

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Online Promotions, Online Advertising, SEO Effectiveness, Video Marketing, Retargeting Strategy, Website Usability, Digital Word-of-Mouth

Tables 3 and 4 present the regression analysis results for the influence of digital marketing strategies on customer purchase intention. Based on the model summary, there is a moderate positive relationship between digital marketing strategies and customer purchase intention with an R value of 0.612. The R Square value of 0.374 and Adjusted R Square value of 0.358 indicate

that the selected digital marketing variables account for 37.4% of the variation in customer purchase intention. The ANOVA results reveal that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 22.393$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, digital marketing strategies significantly influence customer purchase intention in the Indian automotive sector.

Table-5: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	.504	.254		1.987	.048
Online Advertising	.160	.054	.164	2.931	.004
Website Usability	.126	.054	.135	2.317	.021
Video Marketing	.354	.058	.353	6.109	.000
SEO Effectiveness	.116	.057	.118	2.039	.042
Retargeting Strategy	.131	.057	.133	2.292	.023
Digital Word-of-Mouth	.161	.061	.156	2.633	.009
Online Promotions	.114	.052	.118	2.193	.029

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Table 5 presents the regression coefficients for examining the influence of digital marketing strategies on customer purchase intention in the Indian automotive sector. The constant term was statistically significant ($B = 0.504$, $t = 1.987$, $p = 0.048$). Among the digital marketing variables, Video Marketing showed the strongest positive and significant influence on customer purchase intention ($B = 0.354$, $\beta = 0.353$, $t = 6.109$, $p = 0.000$). Online Advertising also had a positive and significant effect ($B = 0.160$, $\beta = 0.164$, $t = 2.931$, $p = 0.004$), followed by Digital Word-of-Mouth ($B = 0.161$, $\beta = 0.156$, $t = 2.633$, $p = 0.009$). Furthermore, Website Usability ($B = 0.126$, $\beta = 0.135$, $t = 2.317$, $p = 0.021$), Retargeting Strategy ($B = 0.131$, $\beta = 0.133$, $t = 2.292$, $p = 0.023$), SEO Effectiveness ($B = 0.116$, $\beta = 0.118$, $t = 2.039$, $p = 0.042$), and Online Promotions ($B = 0.114$, $\beta = 0.118$, $t = 2.193$, $p = 0.029$) were also found to have positive and statistically significant effects on customer purchase intention. Overall, the

findings indicate that all selected digital marketing strategies significantly contribute to enhancing customer purchase intention, with Video Marketing being the most influential strategy among the examined variables.

8. Conclusion

The present study focused on the effect of Digital Marketing Strategies on customer buying intentions in the Automotive industry of India with a special focus on Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. The results show that digital marketing is important to influence customers' decision when buying a car. The demographic analysis showed that the majority of the respondents were male (75.2%), married (86.7%), salary earning (42.6%), postgraduate (54.1%) and age group 36-45 years (47.4%). Social media was the most preferred digital platform, with 73.3% of respondents using this medium to get automobile-related information. Descriptive statistics revealed

positive perception with highest mean score (3.24) for Website Usability which means that this is a very important factor in influencing customer purchase intention.

The regression analysis revealed a significant relationship between the digital marketing strategies with the customer purchase intention. The model summary produced the R value of 0.612 and R^2 value of 0.374, which represents the percentage of the variation in the customer purchase intention that is explained by the selected digital marketing variables. The ANOVA results also showed that the regression model was statistically significant ($F = 22.393$, $p = 0.000$). The coefficient analysis revealed that Video Marketing ($\beta = 0.353$, $p = 0.000$) had the strongest positive impact on customer purchase intention, followed by Online Advertising ($\beta = 0.164$, $p = 0.004$), Digital Word-of-Mouth ($\beta = 0.156$, $p = 0.009$), Website Usability ($\beta = 0.135$, $p = 0.021$), Retargeting Strategy ($\beta = 0.133$, $p =$

0.023), SEO Effectiveness ($\beta = 0.118$, $p = 0.042$), and Online Promotions ($\beta = 0.118$, $p = 0.029$).

The study findings indicate that digital marketing strategies have a positive impact on the purchase intention of the customers in the automobile industry of India. The top three strategies that had the most impact on consumers' purchase decisions were Video Marketing, Online Advertising, and Digital Word-of-Mouth. Hence, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. should emphasize on creating more engaging video content, optimizing online advertising strategies, expanding digital customer reviews, and ensuring ample website experiences to boost customer interest and stay competitive in the ever-changing digital automotive landscape. Overall, the study highlights the crucial role of digital marketing in influencing consumer behavior and supporting sustainable growth in the Indian automotive sector.

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