

A Comparative Study of Traditional and Digital Marketing in the Education Sector (With Reference to Nagpur City Colleges)

Mr. Pratik Arun Bansod¹, Ms. Rutuja Bhandarwar², Mr. PremRaj Nighot³, Ms. Vaishnavi Ramesh Burrewar⁴, Ms. Divyani Sanjay Chopde⁵, Dr Kalyani Bante⁶

^{1,2,3,4,5}Student, ⁶Assistant Professor

Department of Business Administration, Jhulelal Institute of Technology, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India

Abstract

Marketing practices in the education sector have changed substantially with the growth of digital communication. Colleges traditionally use newspapers, brochures, banners, hoardings, educational fairs and personal communication, while digital marketing uses institutional websites, social media, search engines, online advertising, email and video content. This study comparatively examines traditional and digital marketing in the education sector with reference to Nagpur City colleges. The study adopts a quantitative, descriptive and comparative research design. Primary data are proposed to be collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale from students/prospective students associated with selected colleges in Nagpur City. The study examines reach, awareness, accessibility, engagement, information availability, credibility and influence on college-selection decisions. Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis and an appropriate comparative inferential test are proposed for analysis. The tables and figures in this manuscript are formatted for journal presentation; numerical placeholders must be replaced with actual questionnaire results before empirical submission.

Keywords- *Traditional Marketing; Digital Marketing; Education Sector; Student Engagement; College Marketing; Nagpur City*

1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing in higher education has moved from predominantly physical and mass-media communication towards an integrated environment in which traditional and digital channels operate simultaneously. Newspapers, brochures, banners, prospectuses, educational fairs and personal counselling remain relevant for local visibility and direct interaction. At the same time, websites, social media, search engines, online advertising, email and video platforms allow institutions to provide information quickly and interactively.

Students increasingly compare programmes, fees, infrastructure, placements, institutional reputation and admission information through multiple sources before making an educational decision. Colleges therefore need evidence on which channels create awareness, encourage engagement and influence information-search and selection behaviour. Nagpur City provides an appropriate setting for such a comparison.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **Constantinides and Zinck Stagno (2012)** examined the role of social media in higher education marketing and found that digital platforms

enable interaction, engagement, one-to-one communication and user-generated content. The study highlighted the growing influence of social media on students' study and university selection decisions.

- **Rutter, Roper and Lettice (2016)** investigated social media interaction, university branding and student recruitment. Their findings indicated that social media engagement and brand-related activities can contribute to university recruitment by strengthening institutional visibility and brand presence.
- **Cingillioğlu, Gal and Prokhorov (2024)** reviewed 43 studies on social media marketing for student recruitment. The review concluded that social media has become an important strategic tool for higher education institutions to develop institutional brands, improve competitiveness and support student recruitment.
- **Pawar (2024)** conducted a systematic literature review of 51 studies on social media in higher education marketing. The study identified five major applications: student engagement, university branding, enrolment decision-making, relationship management and strategic marketing.
- **Tran et al. (2026)** examined how university social media content influences student acquisition. Based

on extensive analysis of university social media communication, the study found that content reflecting interaction quality can positively influence student acquisition, particularly when communication creates an engaging experience.

- **Haris et al. (2025)** examined the integration of traditional and digital marketing communication strategies for new student recruitment. The study emphasized combining conventional approaches such as brochures, educational exhibitions and print media with digital tools such as websites, email and social media to strengthen recruitment efforts.

3. RESEARCH GAP

Although marketing literature has extensively discussed digital transformation, location-specific evidence on the comparative effectiveness of traditional and digital marketing in higher education remains valuable. This study addresses that gap by focusing on colleges in Nagpur City and comparing student perceptions of traditional and digital marketing.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the traditional and digital marketing practices adopted by colleges in Nagpur City.
2. To compare the perceived effectiveness of traditional and digital marketing channels in the education sector.
3. To examine the influence of traditional and digital marketing on students' awareness and information-search behaviour.
4. To identify the marketing channels preferred by students while seeking information about colleges and academic programmes.
5. To provide suggestions for improving marketing effectiveness among colleges in Nagpur City.

5. HYPOTHESIS

H1: There is a significant difference between the effectiveness of traditional and digital marketing in the education sector.

H0: There is no significant difference between the effectiveness of traditional and digital marketing in the education sector.

6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Traditional Marketing Effectiveness → Student Awareness, Engagement and Information Search

Digital Marketing Effectiveness → Student Awareness, Engagement and Information Search

Key comparison dimensions: reach, awareness, accessibility, engagement, information availability, credibility, perceived cost-effectiveness and influence on college-selection decisions.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Element	Specification
Research design	Quantitative, descriptive and comparative
Study setting	Selected colleges in Nagpur City
Population	Students/prospective students exposed to college marketing
Primary instrument	Structured questionnaire
Measurement	Five-point Likert scale
Comparison	Traditional marketing vs digital marketing
Analysis	Frequency, percentage, mean, SD, Cronbach's alpha and comparative inferential test

8. VARIABLES AND MEASUREMENT

Construct	Indicative dimensions
Traditional Marketing	Newspapers, brochures, banners/hoardings, educational fairs, personal communication
Digital Marketing	Social media, college website, search engines, email, online advertisements, videos
Marketing Effectiveness	Reach, awareness, accessibility, information quality, credibility, engagement
Student Response	Information search, enquiry, preference and college-selection influence

9. DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

TABLE 1. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	To be calculated	To be calculated
Gender	Female	To be calculated	To be calculated
Age	Below 18	To be calculated	To be calculated
Age	18–21	To be calculated	To be calculated
Age	22–25	To be calculated	To be calculated
Age	Above 25	To be calculated	To be calculated
Education	Undergraduate	To be calculated	To be calculated
Education	Postgraduate	To be calculated	To be calculated

10. RELIABILITY AND DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

TABLE 2. RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Traditional Marketing	To be calculated	To be calculated	To be determined
Digital Marketing	To be calculated	To be calculated	To be determined
Overall Scale	To be calculated	To be calculated	To be determined

TABLE 3. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Construct	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Traditional Marketing Effectiveness	To be calculated	To be calculated	To be calculated
Digital Marketing Effectiveness	To be calculated	To be calculated	To be calculated

11. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING

TABLE 4. COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL MARKETING

Marketing Type	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	Test Statistic	p-value
Traditional Marketing	To be calculated	To be calculated	To be calculated	To be calculated	To be calculated
Digital Marketing	To be calculated	To be calculated	To be calculated	To be calculated	To be calculated

If the same respondents evaluate both approaches, a paired-samples t-test is appropriate. Decision rule: $p < 0.05$ indicates a statistically significant difference; $p \geq 0.05$ indicates that a statistically significant difference is not established.

TABLE 5. HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Hypothesis	Test	p-value	Decision
H1: Significant difference between traditional and digital marketing effectiveness.	Paired t-test / appropriate comparative test	To be calculated	To be determined
H0: No significant difference.	Paired t-test / appropriate comparative test	To be calculated	To be determined

12. GRAPHICAL PRESENTATION

The following figures are publication-style layouts. They do not invent empirical survey results; they indicate where the actual calculated values should be inserted.

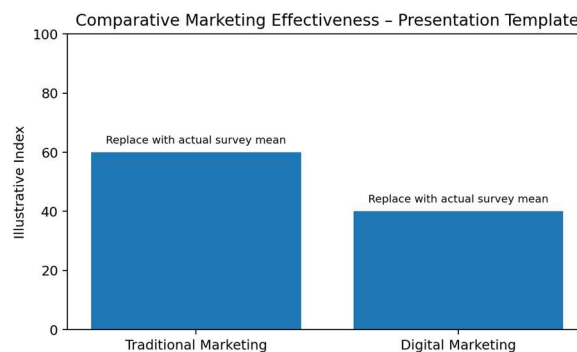


Figure 1. Comparative Marketing Effectiveness – Data Presentation Template

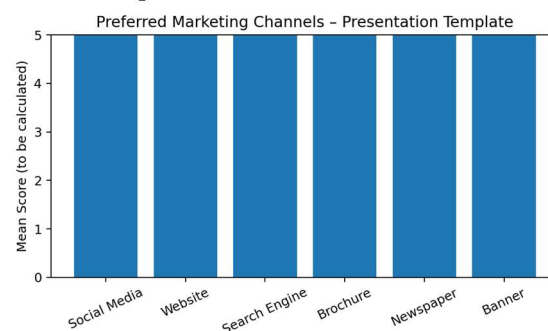


Figure 2. Preferred Marketing Channels – Data Presentation Template

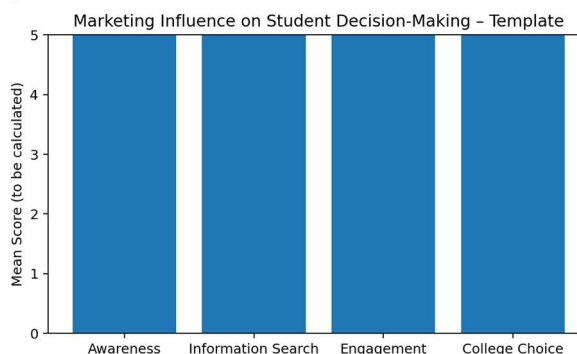


Figure 3. Marketing Influence on Student Decision-Making – Data Presentation Template

13. DISCUSSION

The discussion should interpret the observed mean scores, reliability results and comparative inferential test in relation to prior research. If digital marketing obtains a significantly higher score, the discussion should consider accessibility, interactivity, speed and information availability. If traditional marketing performs better on particular dimensions, local visibility, physical presence and personal communication may explain the result. If no significant difference is observed, the findings may indicate complementary roles. Final interpretation must follow the actual statistical output.

14. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

- Maintain an updated and informative institutional website.
- Use social media, video and search platforms for student-oriented communication.
- Retain traditional channels that demonstrate strong local reach or personal interaction.
- Integrate traditional and digital campaigns rather than treating them as mutually exclusive.
- Monitor enquiries, engagement and conversion indicators to evaluate marketing performance.
- Ensure promotional content is accurate, consistent and credible.

15. LIMITATIONS

- The study is geographically restricted to Nagpur City.
- Findings depend on respondents' perceptions.
- Sampling limitations may affect generalizability.
- Digital platform usage and student preferences can change rapidly.
- Final inferential conclusions depend on the actual completed questionnaire dataset.

16. CONCLUSION

The education sector increasingly requires a balanced understanding of traditional and digital marketing. Traditional channels continue to provide local visibility and direct communication, while digital channels offer accessibility, speed, interactivity and measurable engagement. This study provides a structured framework for comparing the two approaches among colleges in Nagpur City. The final empirical conclusion should be based on actual respondent data and appropriate statistical testing of the stated hypothesis.

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