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Marketing Strategies for the Digital World: A Case Study of Malayalam News Channels in Kerala#

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Abstract

Traditional marketing strategies cannot satisfy the ever-growing demand of today's consumers, and it necessitates the importance of the digital world. The fast-growing digital technologies and consumer inclination towards social media platforms enhanced the relevance and urgency of digital marketing strategy implementation across the sectors, especially the media industry. The study aims to understand the major digital marketing strategies adopted by leading news channels in Kerala and how those institutions monitor their effectiveness. This study also intended to explore the challenges and opportunities of news channels in the digital world. The studies on digital marketing in the media industry, especially on news channels in Kerala, are missing, and that is the intention behind this paper. The study is qualitative, and a case study approach is used to understand the topic. A purposive sampling method was used to select the cases and the respondents. Direct observation and semi-structured interviews are the primary data collection methods. Secondary data was collected from related journals, books, newspapers, and the Internet. Thematic analysis is done manually and with the software Atlas ti'. The study analysed that digital presence is essential for news channels to widen their reach to all customer groups, withstand market competition sustainably, and generate income. News channels' online platforms concentrate on B2B and B2C markets through client and user management. Platform and audience preference-based digital tactics are inevitable in attaining the dominant market position. The channels have a presence on both Google and Meta platforms, and a shift towards Instagram is gradually happening on social media platforms. Channels apply various digital marketing metrics to measure the success of digital content. Understanding the market pulse and executing simultaneous marketing strategies for both B2B and B2C markets ensure the development of digital news channels on digital platforms in Kerala.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Measurement Tool, News Channel, Reader Acquisition, Social Media Platforms, User Engagement

1. Introduction

A significant transformation has occurred in society and the market space due to the developments in information technology. The widespread embracing of digitalisation drove this evolution. The traditional or legacy media formats are insufficient to meet today's consumers' fluctuating and quick demands. These circumstances necessitate the internet era's intervention and the digital world's adoption for easy and fast networking and knowledge gaining. This evolution significantly changed multiple sectors, resulting in the digitalisation of the telecommunication, entertainment and media industries. Marketers must understand the pivotal transitions happening around the globe to grab all the opportunities and retain customers with the brand. The fast-growing digital technologies and consumer inclination towards social media platforms enhanced

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the relevance and urgency of digital marketing strategy implementation across the sectors, especially the news media industry, anchored on knowledge enhancement and connecting the world. The widespread usage of digital technologies and online social networks have been the significant milestones that promoted the rapid development of digital marketing, innovating how marketers engage with consumers (Petrescu *et al.*, 2020). Digital marketing underwent a tremendous revolution, and everyone focuses on the application of social media rather than its definition (Fertik & Thomson, 2010).

Adopting social media tools and using the internet helps organizations improve their reputation (Arpan, 2005). According to Kelleher & Miller (2006), social media supports companies in connecting with people, sharing information about policies, products, and services, providing immediate responses, and building relationships between organisations and their stakeholders. Digital world strategies equip the organisation to face the market competition effectively (Bala & Verma, 2018). Since many customers prefer the digital environment due to its quick access and availability, media industry players should also be present where the crowd is. Remediation is a process through which legacy media interact and ultimately integrate with new media. Hence, the programs or messages in the legacy media are uploaded and reproduced online. This process enhanced the growth of the new interactive online world by offering excessive digital content to the consumer, which was facilitated through mobile and desktop devices and social media platforms (Bolter & Grusin, 1999). In this changed scenario, exploring the various digital marketing tactics among news channels and their relevance, opportunities, and challenges is inevitable. The study's objectives are to identify the digital platforms prevalent among online news media in Kerala, understand the digital marketing strategies adopted by leading news channels in Kerala, and explore online news channels' monitoring mechanisms and opportunities.

2. Literature Review

Digital marketing is the application of data, ICT-based technology, social network platforms, media and devices to encompass the marketing scope in virtual and physical spaces to enhance customer engagement (Krishen *et al.*, 2021). Digital marketing is fundamentally a set of approaches, strategies, and tools to promote services and products online: emails, blogs, social networks, websites, mobile, and SEO. (Almaazmi *et al.*, 2020). Digital marketing activities include notices on websites, emailing or mass mailings, search marketing, the usage of social networking platforms, and blog marketing (Alshurideh *et al.*, 2019; Kurdi *et al.*, 2021).

According to Salhab (2024), the internet created broader, more targeted consumer outreach opportunities and recognized faster dialogue helped foster real-time interaction. Internet marketing is a necessary strategy for businesses of all types and sizes. The growing significance of digital marketing in consumer acquisition and brand promotion greatly influences business (Kumar & Muneer, 2024). A service or product with an appropriate digital marketing strategy or tool can generate a positive customer experience (Alshurideh, 2022; Edelman, 2010). Digital marketing strategies have gradually replaced monotonous traditional marketing. Business strategies without considering the relevance of the Internet would face difficulties in surviving and succeeding in the competitive market space because the entire global market is subjected to changes as per the digital world's requirements (Bala &Verma, 2018). People's increased usage of smart display devices due to technological advancements accelerated the popularity of digital marketing strategies (Benartzi & Lehrer, 2015).

Since consumers are skilled in modern technologies and accessibility in multiple media, marketers want to achieve cross-media synergies (Sheehan & Doherty, 2001). Cross-media or multichannel synergies indicate that the combined effect of several media activities in multiple channels is greater than the sum of individual media efforts in value creation. The combination of television and the internet is considered the most popular fit in the synergy creation (Yamin, 2018; Schultz *et al.*, 2012). Furthermore, marketers initiated the attempt to integrate online and offline media, adopting an omnichannel approach for complete media convergence (Paredes *et al.*, 2023), and the consumers respond better to integrated marketing campaigns, with social media taking a leading role in online advertising campaigns (Kotler *et al.*,

2023; Yamin, 2018; Kumar, 2017). Content is the main ingredient in getting the best results in a digital marketing campaign. Content marketing focuses on creating and delivering varied, high-quality digital content such as blogs, e-books, studies, forums, websites, webinars, videos or materials for social networks (Balteș, 2015).

There are different platforms in the digital space, and companies use various digital marketing tactics based on sector specification, customer segmentations and preferences. Email marketing is an effective strategy due to significantly lower costs, possibilities for increased content personalization and value creation compared to classic direct marketing (Mullen & Daniels, 2009). Search engine optimization supports a particular web page to be seen before other pages in an Internet search, and search engines regularly update their algorithms, which facilitates the visibility of relevant results and the content quality on the web page (Khan & Siddiqui, 2013). Social media marketing aims to promote goods/services and content on social media platforms, targeting a broader consumer base than traditional marketing (Neira *et al.*, 2022). What makes social media different is that it facilitates businesses to reach their target audience directly and provides a channel where dialogue can flow both ways (Moedeen *et al.*, 2023). According to Alexandra and Szakal (2023), social media marketing aims to increase website traffic through the content posted on social media pages. To be successful on social networks, the digital team must understand the audience in depth, taking into account which platforms the target group spends their time on, what types of content they prefer and the latest trends on social networks.

The growing volume of digital content delivered through electronic devices shortens attention spans and shifts from text-based to visually oriented experiences (Li & Xie, 2019; Liu *et al.*, 2020). Adding visual design elements to textual content enriches the content. It provides the best results and more value for the targeted audience (Wedel & Pieters, 2008; Pavel, 2014). Compared to text, people are more inclined to watch online videos, the most popular type of content on the internet. High-quality video facilitates a better web browsing experience for advertisers to interact with their audience quickly (Chandrasekar, 2018).

Compared to traditional media, digital media enjoys many privileges. The most prominent attributes of digital media are interactivity and speed, along with the advantages of enriched multimedia and personalized content. The concept of 'buying media' in traditional advertising has shifted to 'buying audiences' in the digital space, which ensures a more targeted approach (Lee & Cho, 2020). Radio took 38 years to reach a 50 million audience, television 13 years, but American online service provider AOL just two and a half years (Bunting & Lipski, 2001). Consumers started to view social media as more trustworthy than legacy media, such as TV and radio (Foux, 2006). Regarding original content production, traditional media still retain the lion's share, but their digital counterparts exhibit a much faster penetration (Budzinski *et al.*, 2021).

Increasing media outlets and commercialisation create and incentivise competition among journalists (Boczkowski, 2010; Redden & Witschge, 2010). The changing media landscape shifted from a 'trustee model' (Schudson, 2003) towards a 'market model', where the audience's preferences will be catered to first (Hamilton, 2004; McManus, 2009). The requirements of a fast-paced, customer-driven, competitive media industry can be effectively met by online news outlets that need a steady supply of fresh and reliable content to compete in the 24/7 news cycle (Welbers *et al.*, 2015). According to Brants and Praag (2006), the public's desires decide the content that has to be selected and provided by the media, which is especially true for online news sites. Online audience metrics affect the news selection choices of journalists (Anderson, 2011; Welbers *et al.*, 2015).

Previous literature mainly focused on a single or a few digital platforms, which are highly relevant to the study context. However, a comprehensive study focusing on all the current available practices for B2B and B2C markets in the digital space is missing. Some studies only concentrated on the quantitative dimensions and also the recipient perceptions regarding digital marketing strategies. However, a qualitative study that explores the procedures, difficulties, and events in the process and the experiences and opinions of the people involved in the strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation is absent. Many studies have been

conducted to analyse digital marketing techniques in various sectors. There are no studies on digital marketing strategies in the media industry, especially regarding news channels in Kerala. All these factors necessitate the requirement of a research article that provides an in-depth analysis of the digital marketing strategies of online Malayalam news channels.

3. Background of the Study

The Internet has become the most potent instrument in business operations, and companies adopt customized techniques to gain the upper hand in the digital space and to improve the reputation of their existing brand identity (Yannopoulos, 2011). Around 5.52 billion people have access to the Internet, of which 95% are active social media users (Kumar, 2025). According to a report published by IAMAI (Mobile Association of India) and Kantar Research, internet users are predicted to reach 900 million by 2025 in India, increasing at a CAGR of 45% until 2025. The exponentially growing number of social media users forced companies to develop new and dynamic strategies to access and engage with customers. Consumers have easy, direct, and affordable access to digital content, whether e-born or digitalised traditional media content. The easy accessibility to fast and cheap Internet, rising incomes, and growth in consumer durables purchases have enhanced the country's Media and Entertainment industry's development. India's entertainment and media industry is on the verge of reaching US$ 73.6 billion by 2027. According to the Media Partners Asia Pacific Video and Broadband Industry 2024 report, the projected revenue in the Digital Media market in India is nearing US$ 10.07 billion by 2025. All these circumstances necessitate the relevance of implementing digital marketing strategies in the media industry, especially among news channels. So, the study exploring the marketing tactics in the digital space of Malayalam news channels is appropriate in the present scenario.

4. Methodology

The study is qualitative, and a case study approach is used to understand the topic. The researcher used a purposive sampling method to select the cases (Malayalam online news channels in Kerala) and the respondents across the cases. Direct observation and semi-structured interviews with top management people, digital marketing heads, and team members for the digital section are the primary data collection methods. The average duration of the interviews was around 1 hour. Secondary data was collected from related journals, books, newspapers, and the Internet. The study followed an iterative approach whereby data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously. Data analysis was done manually and with the software 'Atlas ti'. After initial coding, preliminary themes were ascertained. Initial themes were grouped under major themes through 'focused coding'. Finally, the emergent patterns and significant themes were conceptually explained.

5. Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Profile of Cases

All the cases selected for the study have their website and presence on major social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and X-platform. Case 1 and case 2 have a strong print and visual media base before entering the digital world. Case 1 is the leading newspaper, and Case 2 is the second. Case 3 and case 4 are not in the print media, but they are the top players in the television media. Case 3 is the first-ever satellite television channel in the Malayalam language. Case 3 is in the first position, and Case 1 is in the second position on all major social media platforms. Case 4 is in the top position regarding live streams on social media platforms, especially on YouTube. Each channel has specific internal sub-teams for managing various platforms in the digital world, and channels have not yet outsourced any of their activities.

5.2 Evolution to Digital Media

Digital marketing is an inevitable marketing strategy for all the news channels in Kerala. The news channels have a strong presence on various digital platforms, even though its entry happened after 2000. Channels like Manorama News, Mathrubhumi News, and Kerala Kaumudi started their journey from print to visual media and the digital world. Asianet News, 24 News, Kairali News, Janam TV, Media One TV, News18 Kerala and Reporter entered the digital world through television (visual media). However, channels like 'The Cue' and

'The Fourth' have only an online presence. The digital head of one of the selected cases beautifully explains the current scenario. "*Legacy online news channels were competing with each other in the pre-COVID period. However, post-COVID-19, the scenarios have changed. Now, legacy publishers are competing with recently evolved digital-only news channels. The space has been opened, and the competition is higher than the previous period*" (Mr Murali, Digital Head, Case 3). The business head of Case 1, Mr. Navaneeth, pointed out the increasing acceptance of online news channels. "*Viewers have become more comfortable consuming news on Facebook, YouTube and even OTT platforms. Cable and DTH are becoming more expensive, and mobile data is becoming increasingly cheap and accessible* (Mr Navaneeth, Case 1).

5.3 Content is King

Creating innovative content is inevitable to withstand the competition. Content quality and uniqueness are the ultimate reasons behind the reach and virality across different digital platforms. Content quality is the driving force for brand collaboration and product endorsement. The digital marketing team ensures the required modification of content based on market trends and patterns.

Content will be moulded or repurposed based on the online platform. The digital team makes that customisation as per the platform's specifications. The content's size, delivery type, presentation, frequency, format, duration, colour theme, and text placement can be modified based on the audience type. Online news channels follow the legacy style of writing in their e-papers. Serious news will be posted on social media in a lighter tone. YouTube is like a search engine, facilitating in-depth information about an incident. People who would like to consume both soft and hard stories prefer YouTube. Facebook also provides detailed information but is inclined towards emotional, viral and curious content.

News channels use long-shelf content on YouTube. The stories with the highest possibility of a second accidental view will be published on YouTube. The social media manager, Mr Nakul from Case 3, said, *"A story on an incident, protest, strike, or accident may not go beyond the day in YouTube, and its reach will be minimal. But the news with entertainment content has a long shelf life".*

The pace of the content for youth on Instagram will be quick, and it may not be in-depth, but it aims to provide basic information. Instagram mainly focus on news cards of 4 or 5 words. It is like a capsule. The Instagram page also has shorts and reels. News cards are predominant on the X-platform, and cards and links are the primary content type in Threads. Facebook has both videos and news cards. Video content is highly promoted on meta platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

The news feed aired on the television is posted in digital space, too. However, the size of the story will be refurbished as per the digital space's requirement. The stories in the television news are divided into separate short stories or content, and they are posted in the digital space. Assistant manager Ajith from the digital marketing team of Case 4 said, "*We upload the content on the website and in all the social media platforms simultaneously. Around 95% of content on YouTube channels in online news is the same as that on television news channels. The digital content has to be short and crisp. So, 5-minute or 10-minute stories can be viewed as 1- or 2-minute small stories in digital platforms".* Karthika, digital sales head of Case 2, commented, *"On digital platforms, you will not find serious viewers. People will not watch for more than 3-4 minutes, but if the television program is good, they watch for 30 minutes and even an hour".*

5.4 Digital Marketing Practices

Channels handle both B2B and B2C digital marketing practices simultaneously, but the primary concentration is on B2B due to its financial benefits. Digital advertising and digital sales are the two main functionalities under the large umbrella called digital marketing, where the former focuses on B2B while the latter considers B2C. A news channel has two types of audience: readers or users and advertisers or clients.

5.4.1 B2B Segment

The customers of the B2B market are known as advertisers or clients. Advertisers are classified into national brands and regional brands. An agency-based

approach works for national brands. So, the digital sales team on the news channel meets the agency that has a tie-up with the national brand. In regional marketing, the sales team directly meets the client (regional brand).

News channels provide space for various brands' online advertisements on a payment basis. Such advertisement monetisation is based on clicks or impressions. Besides providing space on the website, the online news channels also give other brands paid stories on social media platforms. This practice comes under digital sales, space selling, or digital media solutions. Digital sales head Midhun from case 4 explained one of the practices they are following as part of digital sales: "*For making an advertisement of clients, a team of creators from the channels visits the other company's outlets, conducts chat shows of the founders of the company, visualise the products in the company and make it as a package of 2.5 minutes to 5 minutes content. It is a major revenue source for online news channels in the digital space. Because of its monetary benefits, we prefer this*". Mr Tijo, Client manager of the digital team from case 1, shared his experience. He said, "*Last year, for a Malabar Gold (regional brand) advertisement, the sales team met the top management people. However, for the national brand Nissan, the digital sales team met an agency that has a collaboration with Nissan. All sorts of communication focus on what we bring to the table for them. We used to convey the channel's USPs and the audience bucket features like audience age group*".

5.4.1.1 Digital Marketing Tools in B2B

In the regional market, news channels focus on mass campaigns and conduct outdoor campaigns like hoardings and social media campaigns to convey the presence of the channel. The main channel for regional advertising is social media. However, for the national brand's advertisements, the channel's digital sales team conducts LinkedIn marketing, trade campaigns, and email marketing to contact the relevant agency or media buyers of the national advertisers (brands). Trade campaigns include advertisements in digital marketing magazines like Impact and Exchange for Media. Karthika, digital sales head of Case 2, explained the need for various mediums to reach advertisers. She said, "*Since the channels are familiar to the audience of Kerala, the only purpose of regional advertising is to reignite. It is like a reminder marketing or a sustenance campaign. However, national brands may not be aware of the visibility of Malayalam news channels, so a rigorous and systematic approach is required. National brands' acquisition is mostly professional networking, whereas regional marketing is a mass campaign*". Cross-selling has not yet been implemented in the digital space of Malayalam news channels. So, the user cannot see an advertisement of another news channel in any Malayalam news channel.

5.4.2 B2C Segment

The customers of the B2C market are known as readers or users. Newspaper readers are the primary users of the website, while television audiences are the major users of YouTube. Various digital marketing tools are used in the B2C segment of online Malayalam news channels. Email marketing is not an effective tool for reader acquisition. Mr Murali, digital head of Case 3, explained its logic. "*When the digital team knows the user's email ID, it is understood that he/she is already a subscribed user. Email communication is not required for the acquisition".*

News channels provide promotional ads for their programs on Google and Meta platforms. The advertisements provided by Meta (Facebook) and Google (YouTube) in channels' programs are also a source of revenue for the channels. Social media and the concerned news channels will share the revenue from such advertisements.

5.4.2.1 Users - The Customers

User acquisition includes the acquisition of a new user and the activation of a dormant user. Dormant users are aware of the channels' online presence, but they do not use them. The 'Mo Engage' platform supports the digital team in identifying various customer segments. Users are classified into anonymous users and subscribed users based on the identity reveal and loyal users and fly-in users based on the frequency of interactions. Mr Tijo, client manager of the digital team from case 1, explained the differences. He said, "*To be a loyal user, the customer must visit the channel's website at least 3 times a week. The digital team will push that audience to download the application so that the user*

will get regular updates or notifications. Such users can be engaged more by the digital team. Fly-in users accidentally visit the page from a referral source like a WhatsApp or Facebook link. They visit the page, read it and leave". Assistant manager Ajith from the digital marketing team of Case 4 said, *"The reader acquisition team tries to reconnect occasional users to the content more frequently. If we find that you are more frequently on Instagram or a Kindle user, the team shows ads and creative content on those platforms. So, you come back and see our website. It gives a message that you left something behind on our website to be on read"*.

The digital team analyses and segregates the users who originated from Google aggregators or referred to social media platforms into different buckets. There is another bucket where the user purposefully types a particular news channel in the web browser and comes to the concerned channel's site. Meanwhile, an organic user searches a Malayalam news channel or a particular new story and comes to the concerned online news channel.

Online news channels also have another category called premium users or paid users. Premium users are channel subscribers. The user has to be a paid user to access particular articles. Premium users are now available on three ecosystems: mobile web, mobile app and desktop web. Desktop users will get frequent notifications on premium conversion campaigns. Mr Murali, digital head of case 3, said, *"The main agenda behind all the campaigns is to convert regular users to premium users, convert fly-in (casual) users to regular users, regular (habitual) users to premium users. This is how the digital team's funnelling goes on."*

Subscribers are engaged through frequent notifications from the digital team of online news channels. Case 3 manages it with the support of a third-party platform called 'izooto'. Through this platform, case 3 channels send push notifications to website subscribers, and around 15 push notifications are sent to subscribers daily. The notification subscription for case 3 is payment-based. The digital teams of all the news channels send random newsletters on upcoming events, major news, and exclusive interviews to the subscribers weekly or monthly.

5.4.2.2 Digital Marketing Tools in B2C

(i) Website Management

All the selected cases have a well-maintained website that incorporates all types of content like text, images, video and audio. However, the websites mainly focus on text-oriented content. All selected cases' websites work on the Video on Demand platform and provide an edited newspaper version. People belonging to the age group 20 to 40 consume the website mainly. News channels' e-papers practices 'article lock-in'. Articles will be behind a login wall, where the user has to make the payment to view or read it. The Content Creator from Case 2, Mr Nishad, shared his insights regarding this: *"5 years back, all the Malayalam news e-papers were free of cost, i.e., free downloads. But now everybody has gone behind the paywall. So, now the subscribed users will only get the e-paper"*.

(ii) Search Engine Optimisation

SEO is mainly applicable to websites and YouTube. Keywords of news articles can be highlighted, and they can be tagged in search engines or on YouTube. The ultimate aim of SEO is to provide the best experience to the users. Malayalam online news channels are conscious of the relevance of SEO. It is evident in the digital team's responses to the cases. *"Digital team applies certain keywords to maintain the channel name in the first position in every search engine. When a user searches for Malayalam news channels, our channel's name should be at the top of the list on YouTube or any search engine. Since SEO focuses on the best experience for the user, the channel's suggestion list may fluctuate based on the traffic and the probability of the best user experience or satisfaction as per Google algorithm"* (Nishad, Content Creator, Case 2).

(iii) Mobile Apps

All the selected cases have an exclusive Mobile App. News channels' websites and social media platforms urge users or readers to download the mobile application and sign up. Mobile App users' campaigns are primarily installs driven. Such campaigns aim to increase the number of customers who download, install and use those apps. App users are mobile-first users. So, the reader acquisition team plans to convert the customer who browses the page through mobile-to-

mobile app users through app-first campaigns. Mobile users will get updates on the mobile app and premium conversion campaigns simultaneously.

(iv) Social Media Platforms

All the online news channels have a presence on YouTube, Facebook, X-platform, and Instagram, and the news channels give their social media platform links to their websites. Target customers are segregated based on the social media platforms' analytics. The 18 to 30-year-old age group is more on Instagram. Major content consumers on YouTube belong to an age group above 25 or 30; on Facebook, people above 35 are major content consumers.

Compared to Meta, Google platforms are more intention-based. A specific search for the content is required on YouTube. However, in Meta, it is not required for the digital team. Instead, they can push the ads or posts randomly to the user. Facebook is an open forum where the user has multiple options like chatting, content reading, and open discussions. On Facebook, the content will come to the audience in its timeline. Users may get updates on Facebook when they use the platform for other purposes, such as chatting. Promotional activities' reach is easy on meta platforms like Google platforms. However, the number of views and watch duration are significant on YouTube because it demands extra effort from the user.

Regarding social media platforms, customer preferences constantly fluctuate. One of the respondents expressed this. *"Nowadays, customers are more inclined to use Instagram than Facebook. Genze's audience prefers Instagram at the top. However, in terms of reach and visibility, Facebook still outperforms all other social media platforms of Malayalam online news channels"* (Midun, Digital sales head, Case 4).

Table 1 provides details of the user volume across social media platforms of major Malayalam online news channels. Asianet News is in the top position on almost all social media platforms.

5.5 Measuring Parameters

Like BAARC for television channels' ranking, Comscore decides the ranking of news media channels' websites. It is based on the monthly user visits to the website. Online news channels rely on Google Analytics due to its widespread acceptance. Insights from the meta platforms and YouTube can also be used for measurement. Engagement in meta platforms can be retrieved from the meta dashboard. The number of live audiences at a specific time or duration can also be a measurement tool for a YouTube channel. The user status, like the number, and volume of comments, likes, and shares on social media platforms, is visible and understandable to the ordinary person. The digital team analyses the age group of users by analysing the type of news they read or the sections on the page where the user interacted more, the type of comments they posted, and the type of language used in the comments. Based on this, the digital team practice contextual targeting.

When a person downloads and signs the mobile application, the sales team calls it one download or install. Installs happen during the acquisition stage. There are two ways through which the digital team can analyse the user interaction with the website. First is the login prompt, where a person logs in, and the digital team identifies it with the help of a login ID. If a person is not logged in, the digital team can still identify the person's entry through an anonymous browser ID. So, there are subscribed users and anonymous users. The number of times an anonymous user uses the page after clearing the browser history, each time he/she will be considered a different user. So, the digital team considers it as multiple users. To a greater extent, the Google algorithm will handle such overlapping and redundancy by linking it with the machine ID. However, there are still possibilities for duplication.

The standard measurement tools for monetisation are Cost Per Mile (CPM), Cost Per Click (CPC), Cost Per Action (CPA), and cost per acquisition. Google and Meta platforms work on a CPM basis. The number of times the user sees a digital advertisement or content on a page is known as impressions, and its unit is CPM. One thousand views are considered as one unit. The monetary value of clicks is more significant than impressions. Many people may see the advertisement, but only the potential customer clicks it, which may lead to action and acquisition.

Table 1. Major Malayalam online news channels on social media platforms

	YouTube subscribers	Facebook followers	Instagram followers	X followers	Other social media platforms
Asianet News	10.5M Videos - 340K	6.4 M	2.1 M Posts - 73,295	754.9K Posts - 259.9 K	Linked in - 22 K Threads - 267 K
Manorama News	9.85M Videos - 497K	5.6 M	1.4 M Posts - 36,726	575.7K Posts - 292.4 K	Threads - 200 K Linked in - 6 K WhatsApp 471K followers.
24 News	6.79M Videos - 251K	4.3 M	1.8 M Posts - 30,217	215.3K Posts - 147.4 K	Linked in - 2 K telegram 9639 subscri.
Mathrubhumi News	5.44M Videos - 241K	2.8 M	556 K Posts - 25,432	171.7K Posts - 459 K	Telegram - 3034 subscri Threads- 68.6K follow
News18 Kerala	3.82M Videos - 202K	2.3 M	337 K Posts - 8715	75.7K Posts - 154.4 K	
Reporter Live	3.02M Videos - 134K	3.3 M	781 K Posts-70,842	100.6K Posts- 138.8 K	WhatsApp 55K follow
Kairali News	1.39M Videos - 184K	825 K	167 K Posts- 21,488	56K Posts- 138.5 K	Linked in 211 followers
Janam TV	1.33M Videos - 174K	1.6 M	121 K Posts-18,593	47.4K Posts-122.5 K	WhatsApp

Source: Various Social media Platforms

5.6 Digital World's Future in News Channels

On the publishing side, especially for the vernacular language, Malayalam, AI is ineffective. However, AI is practical in content translation, video creation, and graphics. Online news channels are in content creation so that they can embrace AI. Comprehensive competitor analysis of Western media trends can be done with AI tools like Brad and Gemini. The Content Creator from Case 2, Mr. Nishad, explained the intervention of AI tools in multiple areas. He said, *"Earlier journalists or editors needed the support of the SEO team. Now, it is not required. Instead, the editor can put the story in any AI tool, and the AI tools can generate SEO tags automatically. Earlier, to roll out a video, the digital team were supposed to approach the video editor. Now, the tools are available, and the digital team can create videos in minutes. The only thing we have to do is to put the script in the AI tool"*. Artificial Search Optimisation (ASO) is the ranking of SEO with AI support, which aims to enhance the website and YouTube traffic. Manual effort and time consumption for identifying keywords for SEO can be reduced with the support of AI.

Content volume is drastically reduced due to customers' busy schedules and changing preferences. People need information with a single click or glance. The online space (website) encourages around 200 to 500-word articles, while Instagram does not need long reads but news cards. When a website provides a 200-word article, the short application provides 60 words of content, and the glance provides 60 letters of news content. It is challenging for the news creator.

News channels can evolve from single influencers, and it does not need well-established publishing houses. Free access to the digital world encourages influencers to deliver informative or entertaining content through their digital platforms, and it enhances the need for quality to withstand the competition.

6. Findings

The study analysed that digital presence is essential for news channels to widen their reach to all customer groups, withstand market competition sustainably, and generate income. Even though the entry into the digital space is late, all the leading Malayalam news channels have a strong presence and visibility among potential customers. So, the news channels have to concentrate on both legacy media and new or digital media and wisely use the contents of legacy media in a digital world that substantiates the remediation theory of media. Content is the core factor for user acquisition, engagement, and brand collaborations, and the content format varies

across news channels and online platforms. Audience and platform-based content formulation is essential, and it is important in addressing the versatile requirements of beneficiaries. Since the visual element has the upper hand over the textual messages among the users in terms of reach and acceptance, digital platforms are oriented towards visual content and communicate the information as short videos and reels.

Unlike past research, exploring the specific marketing tactics for B2B and B2C markets of news channels is the key aspect of this research. Online news channels have exclusive digital marketing strategies for B2B and B2C markets, and they apply different tools in digital marketing; however, a few are so relevant and have a crucial impact on customers. Email marketing, LinkedIn marketing, and trade campaigns are effective in B2B, while social media marketing and SEO are crucial in B2C markets. This research identified the major customer segments of B2B and B2C markets: advertisers and users, respectively. Advertisers are approached directly or through an agency based on their business area. Acquiring a new user and activating a dormant user is the prime focus of user management in the B2C market. Users are classified based on identity revealing and frequency of interaction, and all online news channels aim to increase the number of premium users. Due to the increased use and spread of mobile phones and accessible network data, the news channels' digital teams observe a shift towards mobile users. So, all the news channels take deliberate actions to enhance mobile application downloads. However, online news channels promote their websites through all electronic devices. Collaborating with third-party platforms in digital marketing, especially in user management, is widely accepted among online news channels.

Social media platforms are vital in digital marketing since they facilitate two-way communication and real-time engagement through chatting and open discussions. Among the meta platforms, Facebook has wider acceptance; for the Google platforms, it is with YouTube for Malayalam online news channels. However, a shift towards Instagram is gradually happening. Users' demographic factors, especially gender and age, are relevant to social media consumption patterns. Youth have more affinity towards Instagram, while middle-aged people prefer Facebook.

Digital platforms should also be subjected to evaluation and measurement. Comscore ranking provides the acceptance and position of online news channels among customers. Cost per Mille, cost per click, cost per action, impression, and engagement rate are the digital marketing metrics used to analyse the success of digital content. All the digital marketing strategies of online news channels target to enhance user engagement and try to influence the fly-in user to become loyal and spend more time in the digital space. Since the global market constantly changes, each industry must embrace the trends and advancements. Drastic reductions in content size, the intervention of artificial intelligence tools, the entry of influencers, and exclusive online news channels will change the current scenario of online news channels' digital space.

7. Conclusion

Digital marketing strategies focus on how businesses and brands use the power of the Internet and information technology for better customer engagement in different customer segments to achieve overall marketing objectives. Any marketing strategy without considering the enhanced role of digital space will not survive and succeed. Identifying and establishing appropriate digital marketing strategies are necessary for managing the versatile requirements of different digital platforms of Malayalam news channels. Simultaneous digital marketing strategies for both B2B and B2C markets ensure the development of digital news channels on digital platforms in Kerala. Each news and media industry content competes for customers' attention, engagement, and conversion. Hence, the sector's features demand high-quality and speedy content delivery, which necessitates the relevance of the digital world.

The outcomes of this study enlighten the digital media team by providing crucial insights into the current trends and opportunities in digital marketing. The study is significant to the channels' owners and top management in making decisions related to digital space management that equip the organization to be sustainable. Since the pattern and format of news have changed due to the

influence of artificial intelligence tools and the drastic reduction in content size, systematic training on the same will benefit the employees involved in the news development and execution of digital channels. It is also beneficial for users and clients to understand the transitions that are happening in the adoption of various digital platforms. Even though the study provides an in-depth exploration of digital marketing strategies in B2B and B2C markets, it mainly focuses on the providers' angle rather than the recipients' dimension. This study can be extended by incorporating both the digital media team and the users or clients with the support of qualitative and quantitative dimensions.

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