

EMERGING FACTORS AFFECTING MARKETING: CONTEMPORARY TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

Purpose- This study examines the emerging factors that are transforming the marketing landscape and analyzes the contemporary trends and challenges that influence strategic decision-making and organizational performance. It aims to identify the key drivers shaping modern marketing practices and evaluate their implications for businesses operating in dynamic and competitive markets.

Methodology- The study adopts a comprehensive literature-based approach by synthesizing insights from recent scholarly publications on marketing. It focuses on major themes including digital transformation, consumer behavior, sustainability, and data governance. To systematically assess the impact of identified trends, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis was conducted, enabling the evaluation of both opportunities and challenges associated with emerging marketing factors.

Findings- The study identifies five major categories of emerging factors influencing contemporary marketing practices: 1. Technological advancements such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data analytics, machine learning, automation, chatbots, and omnichannel digital marketing are transforming customer engagement and strategic decision-making. 2. Social media and influencer marketing are enhancing customer engagement, brand awareness, user-generated content, and consumer loyalty. 3. The expansion of e-commerce and digital platforms, supported by online marketplaces, digital payment systems, and advanced logistics networks, is reshaping the customer journey. 4. Evolving consumer preferences increasingly emphasize personalization, convenience, value, ethical consumption, and sustainability. 5. Data privacy, cybersecurity, and consumer trust concerns continue to present significant challenges for marketers. The study reveals that technological innovation and digital connectivity create substantial opportunities for customer engagement, operational efficiency, and competitive advantage. However, challenges related to ethical concerns, privacy risks, regulatory compliance, sustainability expectations, and market competition remain significant.

Conclusion- The study concludes that emerging technologies and digital innovations offer considerable potential for improving marketing effectiveness and business performance. However, organizations must balance technological advancement with customer-centric, ethical, and sustainable marketing practices. Long-term marketing success will depend on strategic flexibility, strong digital capabilities, responsible data management, sustainability integration, and the ability to respond proactively to changing consumer expectations and market conditions. The study contributes to the understanding of contemporary marketing dynamics and provides practical insights for academics, marketers, and policymakers.

Keywords: Emerging marketing trends, digital transformation, artificial intelligence (AI), social media marketing, e-commerce

JEL Codes: M31, M15, O33, D12, L81, Q56

1. INTRODUCTION

The evolution of marketing management reflects a progressive shift from accumulative marketing in the early 1900s, through differential and reactive approaches, toward proactive and digital marketing in the contemporary era. The historical progression demonstrates the gradual structuring of marketing functions that reflect increasing organizational sophistication and growing customer awareness. The digital marketing era from 2010 onwards underscores technology-driven transformation and real-time engagement strategies shaping modern competitive environments worldwide, requiring continuous adaptation, data-driven decision-making, and integrated strategic approaches to meet evolving consumer expectations effectively in today's worldwide contexts (Sak et al., 2025). Rapid technological advancement has accelerated marketing innovation through AI-powered machine learning (ML), chatbots, and voice assistants, which enhance customer segmentation, real-time targeting, campaign optimization, and personalized interactions across digital channels. These technologies improve customer satisfaction, purchasing decisions, and post-sale engagement. Together, sustainability and AI-driven innovation are redefining contemporary marketing strategies, creating both opportunities and challenges for organizations worldwide (Haleem et al., 2022).

Overall, the marketing landscape is rapidly evolving due to technological advancements, globalization, and changing consumer expectations. Traditional marketing methods, including print media, television, and direct sales, have gradually shifted toward digital, customer-centric strategies that emphasize personalized experiences and meaningful engagement. Emerging technologies such as AI, social media, mobile

platforms, and data analytics have transformed communication, targeting, automation, and decision-making processes. Digital transformation has also redefined how consumers interact with brands, creating both opportunities and challenges for organizations. Understanding these emerging trends and their implications is essential for developing competitive marketing strategies. This study examines contemporary factors, challenges, and strategic responses shaping modern marketing practices.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a structured methodological framework to synthesize evidence on key drivers shaping modern marketing transformation. A protocol was developed in advance, outlining inclusion and exclusion criteria, data sources, search strategy, and analytical procedures to ensure transparency, reproducibility, and methodological rigor. A comprehensive literature search was conducted across Google Scholar, Scopus, Springer, Taylor & Francis, Wiley, MDPI, and ScienceDirect using keywords such as emerging marketing trends, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, social media marketing, and e-commerce. After removing duplicates, titles and abstracts were screened, followed by full-text eligibility assessment. Data extraction was performed on the selected studies, which were then thematically analyzed and synthesized into a coherent study presenting current trends, challenges, and future perspectives.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review section covers key topics, including recent developments in marketing, social media and influencer marketing, e-commerce and digital platforms, and green marketing. It also addresses digitalization's influence on consumer behavior and ethical marketing systems, offering a comprehensive overview of emerging marketing dynamics.

3.1. Recent Developments and Contemporary Drivers in Marketing

Modern developments and influential marketing include data-driven customer-centric technologies, technological advancements, marketing performance, AI, big data-driven digital marketing, and omnichannel transformation in digital ecosystems.

3.1.1. Data-Driven Customer-Centric Technologies

Contemporary marketing is increasingly driven by product innovation, dynamic pricing, diversified targeting, and technological adaptation to enhance competitiveness and customer responsiveness. Marketing has evolved from traditional, product-centered approaches toward digital, customer-centric strategies emphasizing personalized experiences and long-term engagement. Customer-centric technologies enhance engagement, communication, and relationship management, improving customer-based profitability, supporting new product development, and strengthening trust through relationship-based marketing that empowers consumers and fosters long-term organizational performance and competitive advantage. Consumer behavior remains influenced by price, quality, and necessity, while sustainability, social influence, and digital technologies are emerging determinants of purchasing decisions. Technologies such as AI, big data analytics, and the Internet of Things (IoT) enable personalization, operational efficiency, and customer journey optimization, supporting relationship-based and value-driven marketing. These developments highlight the strategic importance of data-driven technologies and real-time analytics in achieving competitive advantage within rapidly digitalizing markets (Zulfikar et al., 2025).

3.1.2. Technological Advancements and Marketing Performance

Digital platforms continue to expand, enabling businesses to engage consumers through diverse channels while automation enhances productivity, responsiveness, and campaign efficiency. Advanced analytics, AI, the IoT, and customer experience management improve customer insights, operational resilience, and data-driven decision-making, supporting sustainable business performance. Online reviews and digital platforms increasingly shape brand reputation and consumer trust, making strategic integration, leadership commitment, and technological literacy essential. Furthermore, e-commerce firms demonstrate greater effectiveness in leveraging personalization, social media, and analytics than traditional businesses, highlighting the importance of digital adaptability for achieving competitive advantage and stronger customer engagement (Ahmad, 2025).

3.1.3. Digital Marketing Through AI and Big Data

Technological innovation has become a defining force in contemporary marketing, transforming consumer engagement, value creation, and competitive strategies. Kumar et al. (2024) emphasized that advances in information and communication technologies require organizations to adopt digital fluency, data-driven personalization, AI, and social media integration while safeguarding consumer privacy to strengthen trust and loyalty. The transition from traditional marketing to technology-enabled, behavior-driven approaches also demands continuous investment in workforce training and analytical capabilities. AI is transforming contemporary marketing by enabling personalized recommendations, predictive analytics, and intelligent automation that enhance customer experiences and organizational performance. Technologies such as ML, natural language processing, chatbots, and virtual assistants improve customer segmentation, real-time engagement, campaign optimization, and service responsiveness while supporting data-driven decision-making. These capabilities increase efficiency, scalability, return on investment, and customer satisfaction through targeted content delivery. Big data enables data-driven decision-making by uncovering consumer insights, identifying market trends, optimizing real-time targeting, enhancing campaign effectiveness, and improving strategic responsiveness to evolving market conditions. Organizations must prioritize transparency, fairness, and accountability to maintain consumer trust while leveraging AI for sustainable competitive advantage and customer-centric marketing innovation (Islam et al., 2024). An effective AI integration roadmap begins with an initial assessment of organizational readiness, followed by data preparation and appropriate technology selection. Pilot implementation enables performance evaluation before full-scale integration across marketing functions. Continuous optimization through monitoring, feedback, and model refinement ensures sustained efficiency,

improved decision-making, enhanced customer experiences, and long-term competitive advantage in dynamic marketing environments (Islam et al., 2024).

3.1.4. Omnichannel Marketing Transformation in Digital Ecosystems

Omnichannel marketing integrates online and offline touchpoints to create seamless, consistent, and personalized customer experiences that enhance satisfaction and brand loyalty. Technologies such as customer data platforms, customer relationship management systems, marketing automation, AI, and ML enable real-time data integration, behavioral tracking, predictive analytics, and adaptive engagement across channels. However, successful implementation requires robust data governance, interoperable technologies, unified customer profiles, advanced attribution models, and ethical data practices to strengthen trust, optimize marketing performance, and sustain competitive advantage in digital markets (Darvidou, 2024).

3.2. Social Media & Influencer Marketing

Online influencer marketing has become a powerful driver of digital brand growth by strengthening consumer engagement, electronic word-of-mouth, and brand loyalty. Digital content marketing, supported by influencer-generated content, enhances brand credibility, emotional connections, and customer trust while expanding market reach. Effective commission structures and incentive alignment improve platform–influencer collaboration and profitability. For small and medium enterprises (SME), the strategic integration of digital marketing, social media, and influencer partnerships significantly increases brand awareness and competitiveness, explaining a substantial proportion of brand visibility. These findings underscore the importance of coordinated digital engagement strategies for achieving sustainable marketing performance and long-term customer relationships (Ramdani and Fietroh, 2025). Increasing smartphone penetration enhances constant connectivity, enabling mobile apps, push notifications, and location-based marketing to deliver personalized, real-time consumer engagement and improved marketing effectiveness.

3.3. E-commerce & Digital Platforms

Digital marketing plays a crucial role in shaping consumer trust, purchase intention, and engagement across e-commerce platforms, while hybrid digital-traditional strategies enhance consistency, personalization, and overall customer experience. Cross-border e-commerce networks further improve firm performance through strategic positioning, knowledge transfer, and global market access. Integrated marketing and logistics systems increase operational efficiency and strengthen adaptive competitiveness within dynamic digital ecosystems. In addition, SME adoption of e-commerce platforms drives distribution transformation, expands global reach, and improves ecosystem-based performance. Collectively, these developments highlight the importance of combining technological innovation, strategic integration, and customer-centric approaches to achieve sustainable growth and competitiveness in evolving digital markets (Ibrahim and Zeebaree, 2025).

3.4. Sustainability and Digital Green Marketing

Recent trend analysis demonstrates a substantial transformation in marketing research themes over time. Following 2010, there has been a marked exponential rise in research on green marketing, circular economy, sustainable innovation, and ethics-driven consumption, reflecting increasing environmental awareness and regulatory influence. Among these themes, green marketing and circular economy show the strongest growth, underscoring their central role in current academic discourse. This progression highlights a clear shift from conventional marketing approaches toward sustainability-integrated frameworks that prioritize responsible consumption, corporate accountability, and innovation-led environmental solutions. Overall, these patterns indicate rapidly accelerating interest in sustainability-driven transformations within contemporary marketing research worldwide (White et al., 2025). AI is increasingly reshaping global marketing through advanced tools such as ML and predictive analytics, enabling firms to enhance sustainability and competitiveness. Baruno and Indrasari (2025) proposed that AI-driven green marketing improves supply chain efficiency, minimizes resource wastage, and supports personalized eco-marketing strategies that strengthen consumer engagement and loyalty.

3.5. Influence of Digitalization on Consumer Behavior

Consumers are increasingly empowered through easy access to digital information, making them more informed and selective in their purchasing decisions. Growing demand for convenience has elevated expectations for seamless, fast, and accessible brand experiences across platforms. Data-driven strategies supported by analytics, social media, and influencer ecosystems enhance customer retention, loyalty, and long-term satisfaction through personalization and engagement. However, continuous improvement and feedback integration remain essential to sustain competitiveness. Brand loyalty is strengthened through trust, ethical transparency, and meaningful engagement, although authenticity is critical in influencer-driven communication. Overall, digital transformation reshapes consumer behavior, requiring brands to adopt adaptive, customer-centric, and ethically grounded marketing strategies (Haris, 2025).

3.6. Transparency, Trust, and Ethical Marketing Systems

Consumer trust levels vary significantly across regions, with North America exhibiting the highest trust (74%), followed by Europe (67%) and Asia-Pacific (58%), reflecting increasing uncertainty and declining trust in global digital markets. These regional disparities highlight key challenges in contemporary marketing, including privacy concerns, credibility gaps, inconsistent regulatory frameworks, and rising consumer skepticism toward digital platforms. Ali et al. (2025) emphasized that transparency, accountability, and ethical marketing practices significantly enhance brand credibility, engagement, and long-term customer loyalty. Their findings further indicate that cultural and regional differences strongly influence trust formation, necessitating localized ethical strategies, strengthening cybersecurity frameworks, and adaptive governance frameworks. Overall, sustainable success in digital marketing depends on integrating ethical governance, robust data protection, and transparent communication to build enduring consumer trust in increasingly competitive and interconnected global markets.

4. SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis was conducted to systematically evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with emerging marketing trends, enabling a structured assessment of their strategic impact and market implications.

Study & Year	Major Findings	Strength	Weakness	Threats	Opportunities
Kiani & Nazari, 2026	Integration of marketing strategies with emerging technologies improves customer acquisition, engagement, and retention	Enhance satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty; personalized communication strengthens customer relationships	Technology-specific effects need additional insights	Rapid tech obsolescence or privacy concerns may reduce satisfaction	Use AI, immersive tech, and personalization to improve customer experience and retention
Ahmed et al., 2025	AI-driven personalization improves relevance, timeliness, and individualization of consumer interactions, enhancing engagement and loyalty	Demonstrates a strong link between AI personalization and consumer satisfaction; boosts experiential value	Limited cross-cultural evidence; potential privacy and trust concerns	Algorithmic failures or unethical AI practices can reduce satisfaction	Implement ethical, explainable AI and personalization to elevate consumer experience and satisfaction
White et al., 2025	Sustainability marketing promotes responsible consumption	Can enhance satisfaction via eco-friendly practices	Limited evidence on measurable consumer outcomes	Failure can lead to disengagement or skepticism	Use systemic and consumer-oriented sustainability strategies

5. FINDINGS

The findings critically evaluate implications, identify barriers, and explore the future outlook of emerging factors affecting marketing.

5.1. Implications

The implications of contemporary marketing transformation are extensive for organizations, policymakers, and broader digital ecosystems, requiring strategic alignment of innovation, AI, data analytics, and ethical governance to enhance competitiveness, customer engagement, and sustainable value creation. Organizations must embed digital transformation across all functions by integrating AI, big data, omnichannel systems, influencer marketing, e-commerce platforms, and sustainability initiatives to deliver seamless, personalized, and customer-centric experiences. Policymakers must establish robust regulatory frameworks that promote transparency, digital infrastructure development, data protection, and responsible innovation across global markets. Firms also need to address regional disparities in consumer trust by adopting culturally and behaviorally adaptive strategies aligned with diverse regulatory environments. Small and medium enterprises can leverage scalable digital tools, mobile technologies, and global platform access to enhance competitiveness in rapidly digitalizing markets. Moreover, integrating green marketing and sustainability practices requires organizations to balance profitability with environmental responsibility. Collectively, these implications emphasize the necessity of a coordinated, ethical, and innovation-driven framework to ensure long-term competitiveness, consumer trust, and sustainable growth in evolving global marketing ecosystems.

5.2. Identified Research Gap and Key Challenges

Contemporary global marketing faces multifaceted challenges stemming from cultural, economic, technological, and regulatory complexities. International expansion requires a deep understanding of diverse consumer behaviors, languages, values, and purchasing patterns. Economic instability, inflation, and market saturation intensify pricing pressures and limit differentiation, while global competition demands continuous innovation and stronger value propositions. Rapid technological change, information overload, and fragmented digital ecosystems hinder attention capture and accurate performance measurement. Additionally, evolving regulations require constant compliance, transparency, and ethical communication, with consumer trust increasingly dependent on accountability and consistency. Limited studies examine ethical AI deployment, omnichannel interoperability, and long-term consumer behavioral shifts across cultures. Gaps also persist in understanding influencer credibility, circular economy scalability, and measurable outcomes of sustainability initiatives. Longitudinal and cross-cultural studies remain insufficient, particularly in linking trust, privacy, and loyalty formation under AI-driven ecosystems.

5.3. Future Outlook

The prospects of marketing indicate a profound transformation toward intelligent, automated, and sustainability-driven ecosystems. AI-powered marketing systems will increasingly integrate data, automation, and personalization to enable real-time, predictive, and context-aware decision-making at a global scale. Enhanced automation will streamline campaign execution, reduce operational costs, and improve efficiency across complex marketing workflows. Customer experiences will evolve toward seamless, interactive, and immersive engagement, supported by real-time analytics and omnichannel integration that strengthens brand relationships and loyalty. Emerging technologies such as Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, IoT, and blockchain will redefine engagement by enabling immersive, secure, and highly personalized consumer interactions, while improving transparency and transactional trust. At the same time, green and sustainable marketing will gain strategic importance, driven by rising environmental awareness, regulatory pressure, and ethical consumption patterns. Future marketing

systems will also prioritize ethical AI, privacy-preserving analytics, and explainable algorithms to strengthen consumer trust and regulatory compliance. Integration of influencer ecosystems, mobile connectivity, and global e-commerce platforms will further expand market reach and enable hyper-personalized, location-based engagement. Collectively, these developments point toward adaptive, resilient, and ethically grounded marketing models that balance technological innovation with long-term societal and environmental responsibility.

6. CONCLUSION

Contemporary marketing is undergoing a fundamental transformation driven by technological innovation, data-driven intelligence, and evolving consumer expectations. The shift from traditional approaches toward digital, personalized, and customer-centric strategies highlights the growing importance of delivering meaningful, convenient, and value-oriented brand experiences. This study explored the advanced technologies, such as AI, analytics, and omnichannel systems, which have significantly enhanced marketing efficiency, engagement, and global reach, while also enabling more precise decision-making and adaptive strategy development. However, this transformation also introduces critical challenges related to data privacy, ethical governance, system complexity, and consumer trust, which must be carefully managed to ensure sustainable progress. In response, organizations are increasingly required to adopt agile, innovative, and ethically grounded approaches that integrate continuous learning and strategic adaptation. Furthermore, sustainability and responsible marketing practices are becoming central to long-term competitiveness, reinforcing the need to balance innovation with accountability. Overall, the future of marketing lies in harmonizing technology, ethics, and customer-centricity to build resilient, transparent, and sustainable digital ecosystems that align with rapidly changing global market dynamics and consumer expectations.

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