

# *Digital Marketing Strategies: Representative Forms and Their Impact on Consumer*

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**Abstract.** As digital marketing becomes more complex, the influence of social media marketing and personalized marketing have to be studied more systematically. In this paper, we investigate different ways in which these two marketing types impact consumer psychology and how these affect other consumer groups through an integrated analysis of recent literature. We find that social media, based on functional and entertainment content, affects both brain and emotional systems of consumers by mixing functional and entertain content. Personalized marketing makes decisions more efficient, raises privacy concerns, and may make customers feel less independent. Further, we show that these impacts differ as they age. Younger consumers can be easier influenced by social and entertainment-based content, while older ones are more likely to risk cognitive risks and may need more careful decisions. Based on these results, we conclude that digital marketing has to evolve into a more differentiated, considerate, and inclusive approach; we suggest that marketers find stratified strategies that tailor themselves to different platforms and consumer groups while maintaining transparency and giving users more control over their information, thus promoting sustainable relationships between commercial effectiveness and consumer trust.

**Keywords:** Digital Marketing, Consumer Psychology, Age Differences, Privacy Concerns & Autonomy

## 1. Introduction

Internet users in China are over 1.123 billion (40.7% of their total, 99.4% of all users from mobile phones are worldwide [1]). This vast digital community changes business communities and shapes consumer decisions. Against this background, digital marketing, such as social media and personalization, become the primary channels for businesses to engage customers. Digital marketing is not only driving sales, but can significantly influence psychological dimensions, such a cognition, emotion, and decision. However, although these efforts are widely used, existing studies and practices are usually incomplete, not capturing the full complexity of the psychological processes involved. They focus on technical execution or immediate outcomes, rather than systematically observing consumers' emotions. The differences in age and region (such as between urban and rural) are neglected, even though rural users constitute 28.7 percent of the online community. However few studies combine the success of algorithmic recommendations with their psychological costs, e.g., privacy intrusion or reduced autonomy. This may be a mistake to exploit ethical risks in seeking

marketing efficiency, thereby destroying good trust with users. Thus, further questions about how digital marketing shapes consumer psychology are of theoretical and practical significance. We aim at understanding how social media or personalized marketing influences psychological outcomes, in particular, variation among user groups. By reviewing and analyzing literature, we compare how different digital marketing strategies affect cognition, emotions, social perception, and privacy. Our goal is to propose more comprehensive and holistic thinking which helps businesses in design responsible and effective marketing in the digital world.

## 2. Core strategy

Digital marketing has become one of the main areas of enterprises wishing to expand in around the world, using data analysis and social interaction to create brand reputation. Through social media positioning and online advertising, firms such as Gree Electric Appliances can increase brand awareness and better contact consumers [2]. Learning from Gree, digital marketing also plays an important role globally. What will be shown will be how such social media, content and personalized suggestions strongly influence consumers' psychological decision-making, from emotion identification to social comparison to understanding a great connection between brands and users.

### 2.1. Representative forms of digital marketing

Over recent decades, digital marketing has evolved into diverse forms. These forms are not merely technological tools but also important vehicles for transmitting value and establishing communication with consumers. Among these forms, social media marketing, content marketing, and personalized recommendations are currently the most representative.

Social media marketing has proven to be a successful way of marketing and expanding brand sales. Social media creates a new momentum for development in other industries. Agricultural product marketing: due to the rapid and easy development of social media platforms, agricultural product promotion has emerged as an effective and diversified avenue and has motivated brand marketing [3]. Taking agriculture products as an example, traditional sales are limited by geography and channels, which makes branding difficult. Social platforms, based on their large numbers of users, online interactions, and different content formats, provide agricultural products an effective channel from which they can directly reach consumers. Brands can express the value of product information, maintain a brand image with warm and trust by creating user-defined accounts, performing live-stream shopping, and initiating topic interaction, which transforms traditional agriculture product marketing for marketing. Content marketing conveys brand ideas through valuable and helpful content which subtly affects users' perception and emotions. In this digital world, high quality content is an effective way of promoting brands to stand out, stand out from information noise, and attract users. On social e-commerce platforms, content creation can increase users' perceived value by supporting interesting scenarios, promoting real world knowledge, stimulating interactive interaction, and fulfilling community preferences [4]. These four strategies form a total cycle from attracting attention to becoming more and more comfortable with users' psychological identification and brand loyalty. They promote a flexible balance between user value perception and brand communication goal, and improve quality of content, making it a long-term emotional bond and social asset for brands and users.

Personalized recommendation is a direct consequence of artificial intelligence for marketing through big data analysis and behavior modeling. In the era of artificial intelligent, personalized

marketing can serve enterprises with benefits and problems that still need planning to help enterprises take advantage of market opportunities in the era with artificial intelligence [5]. When users interact with electronic products based on information such as their past behavior, interest preferences and social contacts, artificial intelligence can accurately predict and push products or content users might be interested in providing an ad-hoc marketing coverage effect of "thousands of people, thousands of faces, thousands of languages, and thousands of voices". In fact, this highly personalized service significantly improves information retrieval and product screening efficiency while satisfying consumers' psychological need for respect and self-worth recognition by carefully recommending users' experiences based on the user data.

## 2.2. Consumer psychology and decision-making

The effectiveness of digital marketing forms ultimately stems from their accurate insight into and effective intervention in consumers' deep psychological motivations and decision-making processes. The decision-making behavior of modern consumers is a complex process integrating internal motivation, cognition, emotional experience, and social influence factors.

With socio-economic development, consumers' need hierarchy has shifted from basic material needs to the pursuit of emotional and spiritual levels. As the economy and society develop rapidly, people's consumption demands are also continuously evolving. The exchange relationship dominated by economic interests is no longer at the consumers' attention: they are becoming more interested in whether a brand can provide emotional support, social identification and increasingly value social responsibilities that a brand takes and the value concepts it can convey [6]. The psychology relationship between a brand and a consumer is based on trust, resonance and expectation consistency. When a brand fulfills these customers' needs by moving stories, public welfare, or value output, positive emotional resonance is generated, for instance, belonging and pride. However, if a brand violates this contract, for example false advertisements or value controversies, the consumer emotions like disappointment or anger will be negative and the trust relationship between the brand and the customer will suffer from the loss of their trust. On the cognitive level, digital marketing continuously affects the consumers consumer's brand cognitive structure and knowledge system based on rich content and interactive forms. Professional knowledge popularized in content marketing helps consumers to understand the product and make decision-making decisions. User content and word-of-mouth reviews on social media help consumers to comprehend and assess a brand. Social factors influence the consumer decision-making process. People's behavior and cognition are strongly affected by others and by the social environment. In e-commerce, consumers' purchase decisions are not made alone, but always in a co-presence with others, continuously being influenced by other users, and always in direct or indirect fashion from others [7]. Most prominently, they have a significant influence of 'others' presence' on online shopping. The perceived presence could be explicit e.g., other users' purchase records, products reviews, or even social-stream rooms. However, a social influence can be implicit e. g., group identification pressure triggered by shares on social, or a recommendation from Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs). These social cues provide external evidence and reduce consumers' perceived risk in information asymmetry situations. Social identification processes (e.g. others are buying it, i.e., it's a good choice) or conformity psychology, such that they ultimately drive purchases.

Purchase decisions are the result of the combined action of all psychological factors: starting from need recognition, going through information evaluation, and finally, facilitated by emotion and social influence. Digital marketing precisely intervenes in this process—personalized

recommendations stimulate needs, content marketing provides justification, and social media marketing pushes decisions at critical moments through community identification.

### **3. The impact of social media marketing on consumer psychology: a comparison based on age differences**

Social media content-based marketing as a part of a digital marketing strategy has different effect on consumers' psychology across age groups, decisions and behavior patterns. This chapter will explore the psychology of social media content types using existing studies and compare the specific manifestations and difficulties of youth and middle/young consumers.

#### **3.1. The dual-path impact of social media content strategy on consumer psychology**

Social media content is not a single whole; however, its internal content and content profoundly influence the humans' mind and emotions. Social media content can usually be classified into functional content and entertainment content. Functional content conveys practical information, such as product details and usage instructions, to increase the knowledge and understanding of the brand. Entertainment content gives consumers memories and feelings of the experience with the brand through interesting videos and creative pictures [8]. Social media content may be classified within functional content or entertainment content that influences consumers in different psychological settings. Functional contents such as specifications of products, clear user tutorials and objective performance comparisons, mainly represent the humanistic level of the consumers. This type of content can reduce the search cost and the perceived risks with structured and verifiable information, and directly affect consumers' knowledge of the brands and professional trust of the company, which then becomes crucial for rational decisions. Entertainment contents such like creative short videos, brand fun interactions, and resonant storytelling, mainly represents the humanin level of consumers. Such content can activate the users' emotions, such for example pleasure, surprise and resonance, which would provide a comfortable and immersive interactive process to make emotional ties and brand memories beyond product functionality in the humanist's mind. By provoking emotions and creating resonance, entertainment content cannot bypass rational defenses and become brand loyal. Hence successful social media marketing often involves emotional aspects in communication from functional content to entertainment content for improved communication.

#### **3.2. Age-stratified psychological impact and decision comparison: youth vs. middle-aged/elderly**

For the youth group, social media is not only an information channel but also an important space for self-expression and identity construction. As an emerging form of media consumption, live-stream shopping has attracted a large number of youth consumers. who are digital natives, with its entertaining sales methods, authentic scene presentation, and strong sense of presence. It not only satisfies young people's psychological need for novelty but also provides them with an immersive participation experience through gamified content design. This format facilitates consumption decisions while also helping young consumers establish connections with the external world through interaction [9]. The live-stream format, with its high entertainment value, scene authenticity, and strong sense of presence, precisely aligns with the psychological needs of young consumers for novel experiences and immersive participation. Gamified design makes shopping both entertaining and social, fitting the explanation of "emotional benefits" in social exchange theory. In this process,

young consumers not only fulfill material needs but also gain satisfaction in social connection, identity belonging, and emotional resonance within the "viewing-interaction-purchase" loop. Their decision-making process is more susceptible to emotional drives from opinion leaders (KOLs), community word-of-mouth, and the immediate interactive atmosphere, exhibiting characteristics of stronger impulsivity and social conformity.

Middle-aged and elderly consumers face information misguidance, online fraud, and privacy risks in marketing. On one hand, they gain information convenience and emotional comfort through social media. On the other hand, their relative deficiency in digital technology operation skills makes them more vulnerable to risks. In digital life, Due to the lack of digital technology skills, elderly people are more susceptible to online risks and face security threats such as false advertising, consumer fraud, and credit traps. In addition, excessive reliance on online shopping and digital services may also reduce their opportunities for offline social interaction and physical activity, which is detrimental to their physical and mental health and social connections in the long run [10]. This highlights several key challenges faced by elderly users. Firstly, there is a cognitive dilemma - they may find it more difficult to discern the authenticity of information and may not understand the logic behind algorithmic recommendations, making them more susceptible to falling into consumer traps and even suffering from online fraud due to false advertising or misleading content. Secondly, there are potential social, psychological, and health risks. Overreliance on online transactions and social interactions may lead to reduced social interaction and physical activity in the offline environment of the real world, exacerbating social isolation and loneliness, and having negative impacts on physical and mental health. Therefore, middle-aged and elderly consumers are more cautious when making decisions and have a higher demand for trust. They usually tend to rely more on strong trust endorsements such as recommendations from family and friends or official certifications. They have a longer decision-making cycle and are more sensitive to transaction security and privacy protection.

### **3.3. Research limitations and practical implications: directions for improvement to meet diverse psychological needs**

There is no doubt that current social media marketing campaigns and platform design can not meet the psychological needs of all users, especially middle and older users. As a surprise, most marketing models focus on young users, therefore, better on inclusive design of older users is necessary for future research purposes. Therefore, future improvement efforts should focus on inclusive designs and differentiated strategies: First, to make platform and marketing content more transparent, and features like voice assistance and enlarged text for older users can be added, for example, better guidance for functional operation, convenient one-click customer service, prominent "advertisement" labels for ads, anti-fraud instructions and simplified payment processes for elderly users. Second, in content strategy, marketing targeting middle and elderly groups can emphasize trust and value resonance more. Authentic and plain style of storytelling, using endorsements from authoritative institutions like hospitals, senior associations, or trustworthy acquaintances (e.g., children, leaders) and emphasizing product practicality, safety, and health attributes can better match the psychological requirements of middle and old users. Sustainable consumption concepts may be encouraged among young people through rational consumption topics or public welfare activities.

## 4. The dual impact of personalized marketing on consumer psychology

### 4.1. Main methods and their psychological utility: shaping efficiency and fit

Phonetic marketing should analyze customers' information in the following three ways to obtain a consistent coverage: personalized product recommendation, in which users' past behavior is analyzed via collaborative filtering or content matching algorithms, and displays products they might like. personalized content recommendation (often on news and social media) in which the users' reading information and interaction habits are personalized. personalized discounts and messages, for example, providing discounts to a specific user or reminders when their prices of products drop in their carts. From the psychology perspective of consumers, these methods can effectively meet people's specific needs. (1) They improve their decision efficiency. Specialized filtering can save many times and cost on searching and comparing, reduce cognitive burden and decision fatigue due to selection. (2) Personalized recommendations can improve their perceived sense of what they want to hear. When user's pushed content matches users' interest or potential requirements, consumers will be surprised and delighted, thus increasing their willingness to buy and have a good impression of the brand, and thus increase their trust in the platform's service and professionalism. This sense of fit not only satisfies consumers' desires of convenience, but partially satisfy their emotional value for demands for attention and attention. The systematic optimization has to be done to optimize algorithm fairness, data security and interaction with humans [11]. Therefore, people should not rely on the computational power of algorithms. Systematic optimization has been performed at several levels such as fairness in algorithm design, standardization of data management and user-friendly interaction.

### 4.2. Negative impacts and psychological risks: privacy concerns and erosion of autonomy

Although personalized marketing brings many conveniences, long-term excessive reliance on data tracking may weaken users' trust and even trigger sustained psychological resistance, mainly manifested as increased concerns about privacy issues and reduced perception of their own autonomy.

One of the most common psychological reactions is extreme concern about privacy breaches. Personalized services are built upon continuous and extensive data collection, including browsing history, geographic location, and social relationships. In the field of marketing, through efficient data analysis and algorithm optimization, artificial intelligence technology can accurately predict consumer needs, thereby significantly improving marketing efficiency and customer experience. However, this accuracy and efficiency often rely on extensive collection and deep analysis of user data, which also brings potential risks such as privacy breaches and data abuse [12]. This process comes with a huge risk of data abuse or leakage. This risk awareness has brought sustained insecurity to consumers, thereby reducing their trust in the platform and affecting their willingness to use the platform again. They are unsure to what extent their personal information will be shared, analyzed, or even used for malicious purposes such as price discrimination or fraud. This feeling of losing control over data directly weakens consumers' basic trust in digital platforms.

Another more subtle psychological impact is the "anticipated discomfort" and the weakening of autonomy. When recommendation algorithms become too precise and can even predict user intentions that have not yet been clearly expressed, some consumers may feel that they are not making free choices, but are being subtly guided or even manipulated. This experience is similar to a milder form of 'psychological coercion', which may trigger feelings of disgust and resistance. Long

term exposure to highly homogenized "information cocoons" may inadvertently narrow users' horizons, reduce opportunities to explore new interests, and fundamentally limit individual cognitive autonomy. From the perspective of social psychology, if personalized strategies are used to amplify anxiety or exploit cognitive biases, such as excessive marketing to specific groups, this may trigger broader social ethical issues. Therefore, while pursuing marketing efficiency, enterprises should establish data transparency mechanisms and user informed consent systems to balance commercial interests and psychological safety, prioritizing the transparency of data use and user control.

## 5. Discussion and recommendations

### 5.1. Discussion

Overall, this research is more fundamental: Modern digital marketing (social media, personalized marketing, etc.) are essentially a one-way information release. They can be interpreted as a natural psychological-behavioral system, which can, by either functional information and entertainment, or accurate information matching, obtained by algorithms, successfully drive consumers' emotions (e.g. pleasure, trust, or feeling a sense of belonging), and can also subtly respond to the consumers' real-world needs for decision efficiency and social identification. When this process directly affects the psychological level, traditional decisions (e.g., gathering and comparison) are much simpler or reshaped, and hence thus substantially promote consumption conversion. This system still faces algorithmic bias, privacy risk, and psychological dependency; however, this system is not always positive. We can clearly see that it has a mixed effect across populations. For young users with access to digital rules who want experience and connection, it can be convenient and fun, but for older and older populations with relatively weaker digital skills and higher risk perception, it may pose a cognitive burden or even pose threats to safety and health. More importantly, the data collection and analysis technologies that drive this system have hidden potential dangers (a lack of transparency and vague responsibility definition, for example) and therefore rely on the user trust. Users' deep concerns regarding privacy leakage and "discomfort" of feeling their personal choices are being subtly manipulated by the algorithms casts huge shadow on the back of this efficient system, indicating that, while pursuing commercial success, digital marketing still faces serious ethical and trust challenges.

### 5.2. Recommendations

Based on the above discussion, if businesses and platforms want to address this problem and drive digital marketing into a healthy, more sustainable future, then these recommendations should be addressed by practitioners and platform designers. 1) For a high-level application strategy, this approach should be scaled according to the age, background, and digital literacy differences. This approach cannot simply stick to a "one-size-fits-all" marketing approach. In particular, a strategy should consider at least two aspects: 1) Platform and content type dimension; social and social (e.g., emotional connections and community interaction); e-commerce (e-commerce), trust building and decision support. 2) User group dimension; age and digital culture factors cause psychological and behavioral differences, and has to be addressed, addressed and explored. For example, for middle-age and elderly users, interfaces should be minimal, clarity and high contrast in order to reduce cognitive load and increase usage trust. Marketing messages should emphasize authoritative endorsements and real-world utility and make human-assisted channels accessible to users to alleviate their technological anxiety and risk perception. 3) The business should shift from "covert

tracking" to "transparent collaboration" by user authorization, and information disclosure systems. Tracking users' behavior, in short term, is unnecessary and uncooperative, so it creates unnecessary trust in the long run. One way to improve communication is to have frank transparent communications. Platforms should clearly notify users in clear and understandable terms what kinds of purposes their data will be used for (e.g., "recommend articles of your reading interests") and provide intuitive and convenient privacy control panels in product design that users can easily manage their user permissions. This "phasing request" approach that returns choice and control to users (but may have impact on the broad nature of the collection in the short term) could effectively transform users' "privacy concerns" from the unknown to "trust authorization" based on informed consent, laying the foundation for long-term, stable customer relations.

## 6. Conclusion

This paper focuses on how digital marketing, social media marketing, personalized marketing, is a "psychological-behavioral" intervention for modern consumers. By integrating and analyzing previous research, we made the following main conclusions: First, digital marketing has a dual-path effect and multi-level effect. Social media marketing helps modern consumers' rational cognition and emotional impact in parallel with functional/eventful content; personalized marketing facilitates decision efficiency and personalized experience, but it inevitably leads to users' anxiety on privacy security and discomfort from perceived disinterest in self-determination. Second, this psychological effect shows substantial group heterogeneity. It is clear that the psychological mechanisms, risk perceptions and core demand of young consumers and elderly consumers in the digital world are different, i.e., any marketing strategy should abandon "one-size-fits-all". Based on the above conclusions, our practical recommendations rely on "balance" and "inclusion." At business practice level, enterprises should implement differentiated and stratified strategies, and move to a 'transparency' data collaboration model based on user informed consent. At scientific level, future research needs to pay more attention to the psychological experience of digitally disadvantaged groups and develop long-term tracking studies to evaluate the long-run impact of marketing strategies on consumer's experience. The significance of this work lies in the fact that it unifies and deepens the theoretical understanding of the psychological mechanism of digital marketing; it not only complements current research on insufficient attention to group differences and negative effects, but also lays the groundwork to lead a responsible digital business ecosystem in practice. Our emphasis is that towards future commercial efficiency, consumers' psychological safety, self-preservation, and trust can only be achieved by placing consumers at their level. This is a significant contribution of this research for society as well as industry.

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