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Dissertation

***The impact of Digital Marketing
on customers perceptions related
case study analysis of ZARA***

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Introduction

Digital marketing is not only mainly for covering wide area for product for reach out to more customers, but it is also more important to the customers to contact directly to the company and the customer get the feedback or response and they purchase the best product what they liked most from that company. With the time passed the technology and usage of the internet services shift of traditional marketing strategy to digital marketing strategies. Now a days the usage of digital marketing increasing as customer gets the variety of products without any kind of boundaries from entire world. Digital marketing strategy built up on the best product and the services that totally provided by internet and any digital medium/channel like Laptop, Mobile phones. These kinds of digital medium fulfil the requirements of the customers when they are sitting at home and getting the best product and service from any worldwide company. To grow up any business to became worldwide the digital marketing is one of the best way to grow up their company as they use the upgraded digital tools which makes marketing level high and business get the profit and more customer ratio from the worldwide.

Fast fashion brands with “fast, fashion, affordable” three magic weapons to seize the market opportunities, opened up by the global consumer popular emerging clothing market. In the view of this case study takes ZARA, a typical representative of fast fashion brand, as an example, analysis ZARA’s 4C marketing strategy, SWOT analysis of ZARA, ZARA’s value chain and summarize the reason of ZARA’s success.

ZARA was founded in 1975 by Amancio Ortega, founder of the Spanish INDITEX group. As of October 31, 2019, ZARA is the first number clothing brand in Spain and the top three in the worldwide. The design of ZARA always keeps up with latest trending style and the price is also affordable compared to the any other fashionable brands. Zara has 123 stores in more than 50 cities in 21 provinces. On 5th September, 2012, Zara officially started online sales.

ZARA Internationalization

The first oversea ZARA store was set up in Porto, Portugal in 1988, marketing the first step of the company’s overseas expansion strategy. It established the first shop in New York, USA in 1989, and successfully went into the American market to obtain to major apparel makes with demanding fashion requirements, which enabled ZARA’s vogue concept to be further promoted worldwide. In year 19992, the first Greek store was opened, and the group started to set foot in some distant markets in Europe. After then on May 23, 2001, INDITEX Group that holds ZARA went public. In 2004, INDITEX opened the group’s 2000th store in Hong Kong, China. The group’s sales stores have spread across 56 countries in Europe, America, Asia and Africa. In

2006, the group opened a store in mainland China. In 2019, ZARA ranked 29 in the top 100 global brands.

Rationale of the study

Now a days, we all know about that how the digital tools making very important role of our lives. As per current situation everyone has the internet connection that provides the all king the latest and upgraded information about any thing you can search it on google or any other online platform. In second any person get the correct information from that online platforms. Same as purchase any thing is much easier because it goes through just One Click and you get your product at your home in working 5 – 6 days. These kind of wide range networks are becoming the bridge between customers and companies. That network connectivity connects the customers to purchase the product at their convenient time.

Digital marketing is a direct marketing to their customers via interactive tools like email, social networks, online influencers, and online advertisement. Digital marketing strategy always updated to their customers to purchasing the latest product from their company and reach out the highest customers ration in marketing. With the usage of the advertising and campaigns companies more encourage with their customers day by day. That helps them growing up their business perfectly. Digital marketing strategy helps to growing business as well as the fulfil the customers requirement in short term period.

Aim

The aim of this research project is to investigate on the impact of Digital Marketing Strategy on consumer perceptions by considering ZARA as important research area.

Research Objectives

- To analyse the various Digital Marketing Strategies utilized by ZARA
- To identify and analyse the current Digital Marketing Strategies implemented by ZARA
- To determine the impact of ZARA's Digital Marketing Strategies on consumer perception

Research Questions

- Which are various marketing strategies utilized by ZARA?
- What are the current Marketing Strategies of ZARA?
- What is the impact of ZARA's Digital Marketing strategies on consumer perception?

Benefits of digitalization

- Digitalization play an important role in today's competitive world as it involves exploring business models using digital technologies which help in reduction of cost and expending business globally. There are various benefits of digitalization which are-
- It builds good image of enterprise as technologies are key for competitiveness.
- Reduce wear and tear of product as they are not handled frequently.
- It saves time and reduces cost which will be beneficial for both customers and sellers.
- It ensures quality of product and reduces fraudulent activities as there is transparency.
- It improves business processes and strengthens competitive advantage.
- Access of information anywhere at any time of the day.
- Ability to increase the productivity of organization as market are broadly scattered.

IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL MARKETING:

- **Growth opportunities for small business:** One of the most important advantages of digital marketing is one can select any method for marketing as per the budget and can easily reach large number of audiences at less cost. In traditional marketing launching any new product in the market is itself is very difficult task.
- **Convenience for the customers:** Without setting local outlet marketer can easily market the product on the internet this eliminates the barriers of distance. Now without any spending on distributor channels in different country one can easily export business globally.
- **Less cost:** Marketing product through retail outlet costs very high a compared to market product on the Internet. One should not have spent on maintenances of stores and on displaying products on the shops, as one can order as per the demand of the product.
- **Personalization of the customers:** Through digital market customer needs are fulfilled effectively and efficiently, having faster and easy interaction with the customer apart from this it increases customer satisfaction for the product as they can easily make comparison between the products and make purchase decision accordingly.
- **Build good relationship with the customers:** Internet helps to build good relationship between customers and marketer as it increases the customer retention level. It builds a good communication with the customer from the

point they purchase the product to the feedback related to the product and also solve the queries if the customers have any.

- **Instant Comparison between the products:** Customers can easily do comparison between the products and then accordingly make purchase decision. Online marketing allows customers to make free choices of the product and then take decision as per the satisfaction.
- **Clear Information available for the product:** In digital marketing all the information is available openly displayed on the internet any customer can go through the information provided and make decision accordingly. On the Internet each and every information in detail are available whereas in retail shops very limited information are provided by the retailer only as per their knowledge.

Tradition Marketing VS Digital Marketing

Any product marketing done through traditional strategy way as well as the digital marketing ways.

- Traditional marketing companies must refer to any of the advertising, promotions and campaign that increases the customer ratio for selling the product. Another simple way for marketing is kind of flyers, print the ads on newspaper, newsletter, doing broadcast, English magazine, and direct mail for selling the product to the various customers. In digital marketing companies using modern digital tools such as, internet, laptops, mobile phones that helps to selling any of the product to worldwide and boost up the customer ratio.
- Through the analytics research it is much easy to measure the efficiency of a campaign than in the Traditional marketing it is very difficult to measure the efficiency of campaign.
- In Digital marketing it is too easy to make changes and update information at any time than in Traditional marketing they have inform them about any changes and updated information about the product every time by advertisement or Print on Newspaper.

Relationship between Digital Marketing and Customer

There was a time when customers get the any product information through the tradition marketing ways such as from newspaper, television, radio, flyers etc. After then they get the updated information about the product then compared to another company's product portfolio that they heard before and doing comparison about product and taking time for select the best product from that. So, after all this process customer delay the decisions and their time pass on to compare the products and somehow customer just cancellation the product after taking many decisions. So, in Tradition marketing strategy each customers taking more time to

purchase the product so many of the companies did not get the best feedback from the customers in short term period.

Now a days digital channels are more efficient for customers such as internet, laptop, mobile phone etc. from this kind of the medium customer can access the internet and they can purchase anything from online platforms at sitting at their home. With digital marketing customers get any kind of the things without going to any long queues and without any travelling, they can get the best product from those favourite brands within the 5 – 6 working days delivered to their home. Customers also get the notification about any update product from their favourite's brands or shops so that day by day customer also upgraded their lifestyle, fashion and many more. Customers like the product and they give it the feedback and review for that company so that it is also more profitable to gain customer's feedback for that company portfolio and success ration for that specific product that sell more efficiently.

Literature Review

Digital marketing is being described as online marketing where promotion of brands is being done for getting connected with the customers through different online platforms (Dilami, Hosseini and Ahmadi 2021). Digital marketing can also be described as the important form of digital communication where internet is being used as an important medium for reaching the customers (Bruhn and Schnebelen 2017).

Integrated Marketing Communication has become a popular term in current business environment that represents the process for conveying the unified message across the globe by using different types of channels in terms of driving hire customer engagement (Hofacker et al. 2020). In other words, Integrated Marketing Communication concentrates on ensuring synergic effect between values and brand positioning (Falst and Holubcik 2017). It helps in reflecting common message for improving communication technique.

Consumer buying behavior is being referred as the action that is being taken by the customers before making purchase of any product and services (Nessel 2019). A process includes different components such as social media post, search engines, engaging and other options. IN understanding the customer buying behavior is being defined as the most complex process, where analyzing the attitude of customers towards communism their purchasing pattern believe and behavior is important (Saura 2020).

Through customised digital marketing where you can convey your message only to potential customers and lots of new customers can be attracted by using different digital techniques.

As far as ZARA is concerned the main target market is people who like fashion and keep themselves updated with latest trends in clothing, so this type of people use

internet very frequently to keep them update and interact with the community online most of the time.

The fast fashion brand ZARA uses many marketing strategies such as Supply Chain Strategy, Business-IT Strategy, Civilian Fashion Strategy, STP Marketing Strategy, Integrated Marketing, Digital Marketing and Internet Marketing.

The current research focusing on ZARA is rich in topics and diverse in approaches.

[1] starts from the analysis of the existing supply chain strategy of ZARA and applies RFM analysis phalanx to determine what strategies should be adopted for different objectives to maximize the benefits without weakening the existing competitive advantage, which is bound to help the growth of Chinese apparel retailers.

[2] analyses the supply chain management model of Zara, a world-renowned apparel brand, in light of supply chain management and current issues in the Chinese apparel industry.

[3] aim to study the elements of ZARA's flexible supply chain construction and its implications for Chinese apparel brands.

[4] takes the fashion clothing represented by ZARA as the research object, analyses the development status, product types and strategic positioning of fast fashion apparel and focuses on the uncertainty of ZARA's strategy.

[5] uses the business-IT strategy matching model as a theoretical framework to analyse the success of ZARA's IT application and the inspiration it brings to the in-depth application of information technology in domestic enterprises. Firstly, IT can only assist people to make judgments, cannot replace people; secondly, informatization should be standardized and phased, with a focus; thirdly, technical solutions should start from the inside; fourthly, process optimization should be taken as the key point; fifthly, business process must be effectively integrated with IT.

[6] proposed a brand image of ZARA "Civilian Fashion" consisting of four dimensions and 21 indicators, as well as four hypotheses on the relationship between brand image and consumer purchase behaviour and built corresponding theoretical models and empirical tests in combination with perceived value and consumer behaviour theory. The results show that subjective value, communication value and product image all have a positive influence on consumer purchasing behaviour, and that apparel brands should build and communicate a "civilian fashion" brand image by being close to customers, communicating culture and building products to improve brand recognition and competitiveness

[7] analyse the significance of ZARA's brand innovation culture to the development of design innovation in China. The study suggests that ZARA should enhance the status of design from the aspects of education and enterprise, firmly establish the awareness of design innovation-driven development, and also assume

corresponding social responsibilities to participate in solving social problems, thus forming a virtuous circle among enterprise, society and nature.

[8] ZARA will use Internet marketing to educate its customers through search engine optimization, emails and content creation with promotions. Internet marketing will work for ZARA being affordable and targeting the right young adults instead of targeting a broad audience.

4C Marketing Model

The Marketing Model of 4Cs, also known as “4C marketing Model”, was put forward by professor R.F. Lauterbur (1993), an American marketing expert, in 1990. It is the 4C theory corresponding to the 4P of traditional marketing. Guided by consumer demand, it redefined the four basic elements of the marketing mix: Customer, Cost, Convenience, and Communication. The theory holds that satisfying customer demand and improving customer satisfaction are the top priorities, followed by reducing customer purchase costs, providing convenience to customers in the purchase process as much as possible, and finally implementing effective marketing communication with consumers as the centre.

Marketing Strategy Analysis of Zara in Theory 4c

1. Meet Customer Needs

1.1 Imitate the Big Brands and Follow the Fashion Trend

In order to meet the target customers' pursuit of fashion trends, ZARA chooses to imitate the design of international brands in clothing design. At the same time, we will learn the preference of consumers according to the feedback information and sales data of customers, and then improve the products. This strategy allows ZARA to quickly design and produce clothing that meets the needs of consumers to keep up with fashion trends by quickly following the fashion trends of major brands.

1.2 A Small Number of Items, Creating a Sense of Scarcity

ZARA's clothing not only has high fashion degree, but also has the ability to launch as many as 20,000 styles every year, on average, more than 30 kinds of rich and varied product update ability every day. Unlike other clothing retailers, ZARA produces certain styles in small quantities, and even when they are popular, they sell them in limited quantities. ZARA makes use of the product strategy of creating a sense of scarcity with a small number of items to meet consumers' personalized needs for diversified and unique clothing products.

1.3 Civilian Price, Popular Fashion

The main target customers of ZARA are young consumers who are keen on fashion but have limited consumption capacity, and their income is not enough to afford luxury brands. They are willing to pay for fashion, but are relatively sensitive to price. In order

to meet the needs of these consumers, ZARA adheres to the price strategy of “affordable fashion”. Its prices range from tens of yuan to thousands of yuan, allowing consumers to wear designer clothes for less than a tenth of the cost of luxury brands.

2. Reduce Customer Cost

2.1 Reduce Design Cost

ZARA's design comes from the sharp capture and unique interpretation of fashion trends. Its design is not completely based on originality, but not completely copied. ZARA designers draw inspiration from major fashion shows, celebrity wear, and street fashion, and combine it with the cost consumers are willing to pay to eliminate some overpriced design elements. This kind of diversification absorbs the latest fashion elements and combines with the consumer consumption level to make a choice effectively reduces the design cost.

2.2 Reduce Procurement and Production Costs

ZARA sources its raw materials from two parts, one made by a subsidiary of Inditex and the other supplied by external suppliers. This can not only shorten the transportation time of raw materials, to solve the problem of raw materials cannot be supplied in time, but also can flexibly produce products according to market demand, reduce the dependence on raw material suppliers, production in an active position, thereby saving costs.

2.3 Reduce Logistics and Transportation Costs

ZARA USES different modes of transportation for different sales areas. For products sold in Europe, ZARA's freight contractors ship goods by truck to stores. Because of the low cost and high speed of trucks for short distance transportation. Goods can usually be shipped from a distribution center to any boutique in Europe within 48 hours. For sales regions far away from ZARA's distribution centers in North America and Asia, ZARA does not choose a more economical way of shipping. Instead, ZARA adopts the method of air transportation with high cost and the fastest speed, so as to ensure that products can be sold to consumers at the fastest speed and reduce the waiting cost for consumers to obtain the latest styles. The increase in sales and profits from this transportation strategy more than makes up for the high cost of air transportation.

3. Customer Convenience

3.1 Featured Store Furnishings

ZARA stores are based on consumers' convenience and comfort of shopping. The area of ZARA stores is generally large, exceeding 930 square meters. Spacious shops can fully show each piece of clothing to customers, convenient for customers to choose. ZARA divides its stores into three sections: women's wear, men's wear and children's wear. Different types of clothing will be placed in different areas, so that customers at a glance when buying. This one-stop shopping platform meets the diverse needs of consumers, solves the confusion of customers in matching clothes, and provides great convenience to customers.

3.2 Develop Online Channels

Although physical stores are the main sales channels of ZARA, with the rise of online shopping, ZARA also develops online channels. ZARA USES the network platform to show the latest fashion styles to consumers, and provides professional online consultation, virtual fitting and other services to consumers, thus saving time for customers to go to physical stores to choose. ZARA online sales maintain the same product and price strategy as those sold in physical stores. In this way, consumers can avoid the experience of feeling unfair due to different channels and different prices. ZARA also provides online ordering, in-store pick-up, return and exchange of goods and other after-sales services.

4. Good at Communicating with Customers

4.1 Train High-Quality Salespersons

The sales staff in ZARA stores are very friendly and have high professional quality. They will not always follow closely behind customers to sell goods. They will only provide customers with some wear guides and professional advice on clothing washing and nursing when they are in need.

4.2 Improve Communication Channels

ZARA collects customer feedback via phone calls and emails to produce products that meet customer needs. Meanwhile, all ZARA stores must report the daily sales volume and inventory quantity of the stores, and the headquarters will replenish the goods according to the actual situation of each store. Timely feedback of consumers' needs and preferences to headquarters enables ZARA's products to quickly respond to market changes.

4.3 Perfect Internal Control System.

ZARA's internal control system is relatively perfect. The work of store managers and clerks mainly follows the prescribed procedures, and the regional managers have more autonomy. Shop assistant duties: to provide consulting services to customers, help customers shopping, but only when customers have a need to recommend products, give customers full freedom. Responsibilities of the store manager: responsible for the completion of the sales assessment indicators, and at the same time, selective new and to the headquarters of the right to allocate goods. Regional manager responsibilities: each regional manager is in charge of 10 to 60 chain stores. Their main responsibility is to supervise and support the distribution of goods between stores.

RACE Model in Digital Marketing

In the strategic planning process race framework is very important that is being followed in digital marketing field. Depending on the structure associated with the

action plan different processing stages of the users are being reflected in this model, where using three stages such as reach at convert and engage the entire digital marketing process is being reflected.

Reach stage mainly focused on building the understanding approach of the brand for making the website digital in different social networking sites (Nessel 2019). The state mainly focuses on making the product and service reachable for the customers. In order to increase the reach of the product different techniques such as email marketing, content marketing, social media marketing and search engine are being used (Opreana & Vinerean 2015).

Act is another important stage in which the company tries to make the website visible to the customers (Siroker & Koornen 2013). In case of Zara, the company uses their website for making its informative approach in terms of addressing customer demands.

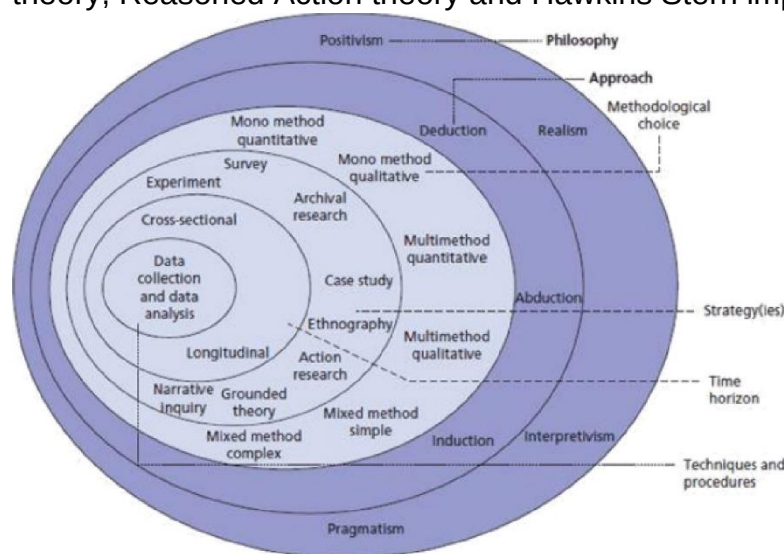
Convert stage helps in reflecting the important moves taken by the organization for gaining more customer attention (Dilaini, Hosseini and Ahmadi 2021). Being a totally offline service providing organization, company has decided to increase its online business. After the fall of self-due to negative customer experience, the company has decided to maximize age online operations.

Engage is mainly focus on improving customer communication for long-term growth by improving customer relationship (Hofackerc et al. 2020). Process includes the involvement of both new and existing customer. In case of engage stage, it has been found that the company has maintained is continuous effort in terms of gaining customer retention with its aggressive digital marketing strategy. In order to interact with more customers, the company has decided to interduce referral program in terms of attracting new customers. Increasing visibility in digital media platforms, Tesla has focus on launching attractive advertising contest for attracting potential target customers.

Considering major advantages of RACE model, it has been found that it is highly suitable for digital marketing approach. Dilami, Hosseini and Ahmadi (2021) stated that it is also suitable for launching new products and services. By critically defining customer life cycle it helps in managing the digital activities. By continuing this, it can be stated that it is the simplest model that can be adopted by the companies. However, James et al. (2017) stated that major disadvantage of this model is lack of knowledge regarding the implementation of process may negatively impact on the result. Having clear online goal is necessary for the companies before adopting this model. Especially in case of small sized organizations, implementation of RACE model becomes quite challenging.

Research Methodology

Research methodology is being referred as a technique that helps in identifying appropriate technique and method that can be suitable for addressing research objectives (Cuervo-Cazurra et al. 2017). In research paper, research methodology helps in evaluating reliability and stability of the research project. Research philosophy will be used for managing scientific evidences associated with concern area. This philosophical approach can help in utilizing scientific evidence for providing logical explanation of topic area. Deputies' research approach will be followed in this research project, where the researcher will typically associate with scientific evidence (Daniel and Harland 2017). Considering past research models as initial framework, the hypothesis for this research project will be tested. In order to develop critical analysis on topic area, customer behavior theories will be considered for reflecting customer purchasing decisions. The Maslow's motivation—need theory, Reasoned Action theory and Hawkins Stern impulsive buying theory will be



considered major theories in terms of analyzing the topic area (Petrenko 2017).

Research Techniques

Qualitative and quantitative are two types of research techniques. Quantitative data reflects the information about numbers and quantities on the other hand qualitative data is about describing the topic area in detailed manner (Cuervo-Cazurra et al. 2017). Quantitative data can be measured but the quality data cannot be measured. In this research project quantitative research technique will be appropriate because while conducting a survey approach, quantitative data can help in collecting numerical value. The research project will be developed using mono method. Therefore, in this research project only quantitative research technique will be appropriate because while conducting a survey approach, quantitative data can help in collecting numerical value. The data for cross sectional study will be collected within 10 weeks.

Data Collection Methods

There are two types of data sources such as primary and secondary data (Boslaugh 2007). While collecting primary and secondary data different types of methods such as interview, observation, case study, survey and checklists are being followed (Fletcher 2017). It is very important for the researchers to decide which will be appropriate for data collection based on the research objective. Depending on different purposes of the research paper, appropriate technique is being followed by the researcher. While formulating questionnaire for the survey technique, 15 close ended questions will be structured by the researcher. Basically, rating scale technique will be used for close ended questions and the residents will have five minutes per question to answer.

Analysis of data

Data analysis can be considered as the most important part in a research project. Data analysis is being defined as an important process that concentrates on inspecting, transforming, cleansing as well as modeling the data with the proposed research objectives for discovering useful information for formulating conclusion of the research project (Hickson 2016). In this research paper the researcher has decided to follow survey technique where quantitative data analysis approach will be followed by the researcher (Queiroz et al. 2017). While analyzing the data by using this Excel, data can be represented in tables and different diagrams. Mainly bar graph will be used along with the table when numerical value will be represented as percentage.

Statistical Analysis

1. **Data Collection** The questionnaires were administered based on a standard sampling method, and 285 questionnaires were distributed in the Egyptian market, and 213 available samples were obtained, except missing questionnaires, producing a response rate of 75% among those who have decided to participate.
2. **Statistical Analysis Methodology** SPSS software V. 23 was used to analyze the data, and to get the descriptive statistics, Cronbach's α used to test the strength of internal consistency reliability and correlation coefficients. Moreover, AMOS software V. 23 was used to conduct the structural equation modeling (SEM). AMOS is designed to estimate and test SEM. SEM is a statistical model of linear relations between latent (unobserved) variables and manifest (observed) variables. The aim is to approximate the coefficients in a series of structured equations. For this study, AMOS is used to analyze the correlation, where the route coefficients are checked in relevance and goodness-of-fit. The cumulative model fit tests were used to assess the fitness of the structural model. The goodness-of-fit indices that used for measurement and structural models are χ^2 test, normed χ^2 , Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Root

Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). The standardized estimates were used in reporting the causal relationships between the exogenous and endogenous constructs.

3. Data Analysis and Results

4. Sample Profile Out of a total sample of people who responded, 69.5 % were female, and 30.5 % were male. A wide majority of respondents were between 41 and 50 years of age (18.6%) and between 21 and 30 years of age (27.4%). And 40.7% of our sample used online shopping occasionally; however, 13.6% rarely used it. Descriptive statistics are displayed in Table 1.

Variable	Frequency	%
Female	148	69.5
Male	65	30.5
Age: Below 20	24	11.5
21 – 30	58	27.4
31 – 40	40	20.5
41 – 50	32	18.6
50+	10	5.4
Online Shopping: Rare	28	13.6
Occasionally	68	40.7
Frequently	32	17.6

Research ethics and privacy

Research ethics can be considered as moral principle that helps in guiding the researcher for conducting research papers without harming the participants associated with the research project whether unknowingly or knowingly (Kumar 2019). In this research project the protocols of Data Protection Act 1998 will be strictly followed by the researcher. Before starting the survey, process consent form will be shared with the individuals and maintaining privacy and confidentiality of the participants' personal questions will not be asked to the participants. Collected information will not be shared with anyone and the researcher will try to maintain unbiased behavior towards the participants in terms of honest y and accuracy in this project.

Conclusion

It is very important to know the psychology of the consumers in the dynamic

environment. Ever changing buying behavior of the consumers in the digitalized world should be understood properly to make the business sustainable. The revolutionized economy possesses many threats and challenges which are to be faced by the marketers today. People should be made more aware regarding the advantages of digitalized marketing. More efforts should be laid down to make digital marketing safe so that there is an increase in the market size. The digitalization has brought positive change in behavior of consumers. The greater change can be seen in big cities and among working couples due to lack of time it is convenient for them to do buying, payments at any time anywhere. Also digitalization gives rewards to consumer in form of coupons, gift vouchers, discount, cash back, cash discount which motivates them to use digital transactions. At last to create awareness and increase the usage of digitalization there is need to have promotional campaigns, roads shows, workshops among costumers.

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