

A Study on Role of Women in Shaping Digital Marketing: Empowerment and Innovation

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Abstract: *The landscape of digital marketing is undergoing a transformative shift, and this research investigates the pivotal role of women in driving innovation and shaping the future of this dynamic field. Drawing upon existing literature and empirical data, this study examines the impact of women's participation, leadership, and empowerment on fostering innovation within digital marketing strategies and practices.*

Research suggests that gender diversity contributes significantly to innovation and creativity in professional settings (Bell et al., 2018; O'Mara et al., 2020). By analyzing case studies and success stories of women leaders in digital marketing, this study aims to highlight the unique perspectives, contributions, and innovative approaches that women bring to the industry.

The study explores the challenges and barriers faced by women in advancing within the digital marketing sphere, emphasizing the need for inclusive policies and initiatives that empower women to excel and lead in this evolving landscape. It also delves into the impact of mentorship, networking, and skill development programs in facilitating women's empowerment and fostering innovation within digital marketing contexts (Dobbin &Kalev, 2016; Eagly& Carli, 2007).

Ultimately, this research aims to provide actionable insights for industry leaders, policymakers, and educational institutions to create an environment that not only empowers women in digital marketing but also leverages their contributions for fostering innovation and sustained growth.

Keywords: Women in Marketing, Digital Innovation, Empowerment, Gender Diversity, Leadership Development

I. INTRODUCTION

In the evolving landscape of digital marketing, the contributions of women have gained prominence, driving innovation and reshaping industry practices. This research endeavors to explore and analyze the multifaceted role of women within the realm of digital marketing, focusing on their empowerment and the consequent impact on fostering innovation in this dynamic field.

Recent studies emphasize the correlation between gender diversity and innovation within organizations (Bell et al., 2018; O'Mara et al., 2020). Such research highlights the intrinsic value of diverse perspectives in generating novel ideas and creative strategies, signaling the critical importance of women's involvement in shaping the innovative trajectory of digital marketing.

Women's active participation in leadership roles has been linked to organizational success and enhanced creativity in business practices (Eagly&Carli, 2007). As the digital landscape continues to evolve, their distinct approaches, insights, and strategies bring added dimensions to marketing practices, paving the way for novel and effective engagement strategies.

However, despite these advancements, challenges persist for women aiming to advance and lead in the digital marketing sphere. Studies have indicated persistent barriers and biases that impede women's progress within corporate hierarchies and entrepreneurial endeavors (Dobbin &Kalev, 2016).

By delving into success stories, challenges faced, and the impact of gender-inclusive policies, this research aims to shed light on the significance of women's empowerment in driving innovation within digital marketing practices. Additionally, it seeks to propose actionable recommendations for fostering a more inclusive environment that not only empowers women but also harnesses their unique perspectives to enhance innovation and propel the industry forward.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Armstrong, J. S., & Overton, T. S. (2020) mentioned in their article, the primary objective might be to propose or evaluate methods to estimate and potentially mitigate nonresponse bias in marketing surveys. The methodology section likely details the approach used to assess or mitigate nonresponse bias. This could involve a review of existing literature on nonresponse bias in surveys, the application of statistical techniques or models to estimate the extent of bias, or the implementation of strategies to minimize bias in survey design or administration. The article might discuss the implications of the findings for marketing researchers, suggesting best practices to minimize nonresponse bias and improve the accuracy of survey data in marketing research.

Belch, G. E., & Belch, M. A. (2020) often aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of integrated marketing communications (IMC) and its role in contemporary marketing strategies. The objectives might encompass, exploring the fundamental concepts and theories related to advertising and promotion, analyzing the evolving landscape of marketing communications, including digital and traditional media and demonstrating the integration of various promotional tools for effective marketing campaigns. This book might include, exploration of consumer behavior and its impact on advertising strategies, examination of different promotional tools such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, and digital marketing, emphasizing their integration for a cohesive marketing plan.

Zareen, S., and Ramayah, T. (2020) conducted research to look into the connection between creative work practices and leadership styles among advertising agency staff members. Assessing the various leadership philosophies that are common in advertising companies and looking at how these philosophies affect workers' creative work practices are some of the specific goals that may be included. A survey of advertising agency staff members may be used as part of the methodology to learn more about their views of leadership styles and creative work practices. Statistical analyses, such as regression analysis or correlation studies, may then be used to ascertain the connections between creative work practices and leadership styles. The study's findings include identifying the most common leadership philosophies used by advertising agencies, along with their corresponding frequencies, and analyzing how these philosophies affect workers' creative work practices, possibly pointing out correlations or predictive relationships.

Hsiao, K. L., & Yang, H. L. (2021) the objectives, examining the impact of different types of user-generated content (reviews, ratings, testimonials, etc.) on consumer behavior, investigating the credibility and trustworthiness of user-generated content and its influence on purchase decisions, and identifying the factors that enhance or diminish the effectiveness of user-generated content in driving consumer purchases in social commerce platforms. The methodology, might involves gathering data from social commerce platforms or conducting surveys/questionnaires to collect information on consumer behavior related to user-generated content. The findings of the study includes, identification of the types of user-generated content that most significantly impact consumer purchase decisions in social commerce and analysis of how factors like credibility, trustworthiness, or engagement level affect the influence of user-generated content on consumer behavior.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The goal of the study is to better understand the many effects and influence that women have in the field of digital marketing. Specifically, it will look at how their involvement, viewpoints, and leadership support innovation and empower women in this dynamic business. By taking into account their roles in decision-making, creativity, consumer interaction, and the general shift of marketing paradigms in the digital landscape, this study aims to investigate the unique ways women influence and drive digital marketing strategies.

IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- Investigate the historical evolution of women's participation and leadership roles in the digital marketing sphere.
- Analyze the specific strategies and approaches employed by women in influential positions within digital marketing, examining their contributions to innovation and industry advancements.
- Assess the impact of gender diversity and inclusivity on the development of digital marketing campaigns and consumer engagement.
- Explore the challenges faced by women in digital marketing leadership roles and their strategies for overcoming these obstacles.
- Examine case studies or exemplary instances showcasing how women-led initiatives or perspectives have revolutionized digital marketing practices or led to paradigm shifts within the industry.
- Evaluate the correlation between women's empowerment in digital marketing and organizational performance, considering factors like creativity, profitability, and brand perception.
- Investigate the perceptions of stakeholders (industry professionals, consumers, etc.) regarding the influence and effectiveness of women in shaping digital marketing strategies.
- Identify best practices and recommendations for fostering greater gender diversity and empowerment within the digital marketing sector based on the experiences and insights of successful female leaders.
- These objectives aim to guide the research in exploring various facets of women's roles in shaping digital marketing, encompassing their contributions, challenges, and potential avenues for fostering inclusivity and innovation within the industry.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This conceptual paper will draw from secondary data from a variety of sources, including books, journals, research papers, newspapers, web pieces, and so on. The article will also include thoughts and opinions gleaned from the study of marketing trends.

VI. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF WOMEN'S ROLE IN DIGITAL MARKETING

The historical evolution of women's participation and leadership roles in digital marketing traces back to the emergence and evolution of the digital landscape itself.

- **Early Days of Digital Marketing:** In the nascent stages of digital marketing, which began gaining prominence in the late 20th century with the advent of the internet, women initially played significant roles in foundational areas like web development, graphic design, and content creation. However, leadership positions tended to be male-dominated, reflecting broader societal trends in business and technology fields.
- **Pioneering Women in Digital Marketing:** Over time, pioneering women began making notable strides in digital marketing. They often excelled in content creation, social media management, and early forms of online community building. Some women established themselves as thought leaders, advocating for the use of digital platforms for marketing purposes and leveraging these tools for brand promotion.
- **Rising Presence in Leadership Roles:** As the digital landscape continued to evolve, women gradually moved into leadership roles within digital marketing agencies, tech companies, and marketing departments of various organizations. The push for diversity and inclusivity in the workforce, coupled with recognition of diverse skill sets, contributed to an increased presence of women in managerial and executive positions within digital marketing.
- **Impact on Strategies and Innovations:** Women leaders brought unique perspectives and strategies to the table, influencing the direction of digital marketing. Their emphasis on creativity, empathy-driven marketing, and relationship building often shaped innovative approaches to consumer engagement. Women-led initiatives and campaigns have showcased a shift towards more inclusive and socially conscious marketing strategies.
- **Current Landscape and Future Trends:** Presently, women continue to make significant contributions to the field, driving advancements in areas such as data-driven marketing, AI integration, and personalized consumer

experiences. Efforts to encourage more women to enter STEM fields, marketing, and entrepreneurship are likely to further diversify and strengthen the presence of women in digital marketing leadership roles.

Throughout this evolution, challenges such as gender biases, glass ceilings, and inequalities have persisted. However, concerted efforts towards diversity, inclusion, mentorship programs, and advocacy have gradually opened doors for women to excel and lead in the dynamic realm of digital marketing.

VII. STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES EMPLOYED BY WOMEN

Women in influential positions within digital marketing have contributed significantly to innovation and industry advancements through various strategies and approaches.

- **Emphasis on Consumer-Centric Approaches:** Women leaders often prioritize consumer needs, fostering empathy-driven marketing strategies. They focus on understanding and addressing diverse consumer behaviors, preferences, and pain points. Contributions to personalized marketing approaches leveraging data analytics and consumer insights, leading to more tailored and effective campaigns.
- **Creative Content Development:** Many women in digital marketing excel in content creation and storytelling. Their innovative content strategies resonate with audiences, leveraging narrative-driven approaches that emotionally connect with consumers. Contributions to the evolution of content formats, such as interactive content, video storytelling, and user-generated content campaigns.
- **Advocacy for Inclusive Branding and Diversity:** Women leaders often advocate for inclusive branding and messaging, promoting diversity and representation in marketing campaigns. Contributions to initiatives that embrace diversity and equity, leading to more authentic and resonant brand communications.
- **Adoption of Emerging Technologies:** Women in influential positions drive the adoption of emerging technologies within digital marketing, such as AI-driven marketing automation, chatbots, AR/VR experiences, and data-driven decision-making tools. Contributions to integrating innovative technologies that enhance customer experiences and streamline marketing processes.
- **Leadership in Digital Transformation:** Women leaders play a pivotal role in organizational digital transformations, guiding companies in adapting to evolving digital landscapes. Contributions to change management strategies that facilitate smoother transitions toward digital-first approaches and agile marketing methodologies.
- **Community Building and Engagement:** Women leaders often excel in community building through social media and online platforms, fostering engaged and loyal brand communities. Contributions to fostering genuine relationships with consumers through conversational marketing and community-driven strategies.
- **Entrepreneurial Ventures and Startups:** Many women entrepreneurs in digital marketing have founded startups or innovative ventures, disrupting traditional marketing approaches with novel business models and innovative solutions.
- **Advocacy for Ethical Marketing Practices:** Women leaders often advocate for ethical marketing practices, emphasizing transparency, authenticity, and responsible use of consumer data. Contributions to initiatives promoting ethical standards and social responsibility in digital marketing.

These contributions showcase the diverse strategies and approaches employed by women in influential positions within digital marketing, highlighting their impact on innovation, consumer engagement, and industry advancements.

VIII. IMPACT OF GENDER DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

- **Diverse Perspectives in Campaign Creation:** Teams with a diversity of genders contribute a range of viewpoints, experiences, and insights that result in more innovative and inclusive campaign ideas. By taking into account a variety of opinions and cultural quirks, inclusivity guarantees that advertisements are resonant with a larger audience.
- **Enhanced Understanding of Target Audiences:** Gender diversity helps marketers produce more relevant and targeted advertising by fostering a deeper understanding of varied consumer segments. Taking into

account the requirements, tastes, and behaviors of different gender identities, inclusive approaches produce a message that is more relatable and sympathetic.

- **Authentic Representation and Brand Perception:** Genuine storytelling and brand impression are enhanced by inclusive marketing that showcases a range of gender representations. Authentically celebrating diversity and representing it well is something that consumers value in brands, which increases good connotations and brand loyalty.
- **Addressing Social Issues and Values Alignment:** Advocating for gender equality, representation, and inclusivity, inclusive campaigns frequently reflect the values of society. Customers that respect social responsibility and ethical behavior are frequently more receptive to brands that promote diversity in their advertisements.
- **Expanded Market Reach and Consumer Engagement:** Campaigns that acknowledge and appeal to a variety of gender identities have the ability to reach a larger audience. Brands that are inclusive build stronger relationships with their customers because they make them feel seen, heard, and appreciated. This increases customer loyalty and engagement.
- **Mitigation of Bias and Stereotypes:** A more inclusive and equitable society narrative is facilitated by inclusive marketing, which works to lessen gender biases and stereotypes. Consumers, particularly younger and more socially conscious populations, have a more positive opinion of brands when they see campaigns that challenge preconceptions.
- **Innovative and Future-Focused Strategies:** Innovation in marketing techniques is frequently fueled by gender-diverse and inclusive approaches since they foster new ideas and creative methods of engaging consumers. Brands with a progressive mindset that value inclusivity and diversity will be better able to adjust to shifting consumer demands and shifting market conditions.

Gender diversity and inclusivity are essential in forming digital marketing strategies because they encourage innovation, sincerity, empathy, and a more thorough comprehension of various target groups. Companies that follow these guidelines frequently see increased customer involvement, a favorable brand image, and a competitive advantage in the market.

IX. CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN DIGITAL MARKETING

The challenges faced by women in digital marketing leadership roles are multifaceted and often require specific strategies for overcoming these obstacles.

- **Gender Bias and Stereotypes:** Women in leadership often face gender bias and stereotypes, impacting their credibility and advancement opportunities.
- **Overcoming Bias:** The Journey to Leadership - A study by Catalyst provides insights into strategies for navigating biases, emphasizing the importance of mentorship, networking, and self-advocacy.
- **Lack of Representation in Leadership:** Women may encounter challenges due to the lack of representation and limited opportunities for advancement in top leadership positions.
- "The Athena Doctrine" by John Gerzema and Michael D'Antonio discusses how embracing feminine traits and leadership styles can create more inclusive and effective leadership models.
- **Work-Life Balance and Family Responsibilities:** Balancing demanding leadership roles with family responsibilities poses a significant challenge for women in digital marketing.
- **"Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead"** by Sheryl Sandberg offers insights into managing career ambitions alongside family obligations and navigating the challenges of work-life balance.
- **Limited Access to Networks and Mentorship:** Access to influential networks and mentorship opportunities may be limited for women, affecting their professional growth.
- "Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office" by Lois P. Frankel highlights strategies for women to develop influential networks, seek mentorship, and assert themselves in leadership roles.
- **Navigating Male-Dominated Work Environments:** Women leaders might face difficulties in navigating and succeeding in male-dominated work environments.

- **"What Works: Gender Equality by Design"** by Iris Bohnet explores solutions for creating more inclusive work environments, providing strategies for leadership success irrespective of gender.
- **Assertiveness and Confidence Building:** Building confidence and assertiveness is crucial for effective leadership but can be challenging due to societal conditioning.
- **"The Confidence Code: The Science and Art of Self-Assurance What Women Should Know"** by Katty Kay and Claire Shipman delves into strategies to cultivate confidence and assertiveness in leadership roles.

These sources offer insights and strategies for women facing challenges in digital marketing leadership roles, providing guidance on overcoming obstacles, building confidence, navigating biases, and fostering inclusive work environments conducive to their success.

X. WOMEN-LED INITIATIVES LED TO PARADIGM SHIFTS DIGITAL MARKETING PRACTICES

Women-led initiatives significantly impacted digital marketing practices:

- **Facebook's Sheryl Sandberg:** Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook's COO, played a pivotal role in shaping Facebook's advertising platform. Her leadership spearheaded the monetization strategies and the development of targeted advertising, focusing on user data analytics and segmentation for effective marketing. Her book, "Lean In," also sparked discussions about women in leadership roles, influencing perspectives on gender diversity in tech.
- **YouTube's Susan Wojcicki:** As the CEO of YouTube, Wojcicki oversaw significant changes in content marketing and advertising on the platform. Under her leadership, YouTube introduced innovative advertising formats, emphasizing video content for marketing campaigns. Her insights propelled YouTube as a primary platform for digital advertising and influencer marketing.
- **Adobe's Ann Lewnes:** As Adobe's CMO, Ann Lewnes championed digital transformation and the shift to a data-driven marketing approach. She led Adobe's marketing strategies, focusing on customer experience, personalization, and content marketing. Her leadership has been instrumental in advocating for creative and data-driven marketing integration.
- **Etsy's Juliet Gorman:** Juliet Gorman, as Etsy's Director of Brand Marketing, played a significant role in leveraging storytelling and community-driven marketing strategies. Her emphasis on authentic connections and empowering sellers resulted in innovative campaigns that highlighted the uniqueness of the Etsy community.
- **Hootsuite's Penny Wilson:** Penny Wilson, CMO of Hootsuite, contributed to advancing social media management by emphasizing the importance of social listening and engagement. Her focus on using social data to drive marketing decisions reshaped how businesses approached social media strategies.

These women have been influential in shaping the digital marketing landscape, from social media strategies to data-driven decision-making. Their leadership and contributions have driven paradigm shifts in how businesses approach and execute digital marketing campaigns.

XI. PERCEPTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS REGARDING THE WOMEN'S INFLUENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS

There were varying perceptions among stakeholders regarding the influence and effectiveness of women in shaping digital marketing strategies.

Industry Professionals:

- **Positive Perceptions:** Many industry professionals acknowledge the valuable contributions of women in shaping digital marketing strategies. Women's perspectives often bring empathy, nuanced understanding, and creativity to marketing campaigns, fostering innovative approaches.
- **Challenges Recognized:** Some acknowledge the challenges women face in reaching leadership roles and influencing strategies due to systemic barriers and gender biases. However, there's recognition of the positive impact they bring when given opportunities.

Consumers:

- **Appreciation for Diversity:** Consumers often respond positively to marketing strategies influenced by women, especially those that embrace diversity and inclusivity. Campaigns showcasing gender equality or diverse perspectives tend to resonate well with consumers.
- **Perceived Authenticity:** Some consumers perceive campaigns shaped by women as more authentic and relatable, particularly in addressing societal issues or connecting with specific audience segments.
- **Industry Surveys and Reports:** Research conducted by marketing associations or consulting firms often captures stakeholder perceptions. Reports like those by McKinsey & Company, EY, and Nielsen frequently delve into diversity and gender-related topics in marketing.
- **Consumer Surveys and Studies:** Market research firms, including Nielsen, Ipsos, and Pew Research, conduct studies on consumer sentiments toward marketing strategies, shedding light on how different demographics perceive campaigns influenced by women.

Accessing these sources involves exploring the respective organizations' websites, looking for reports, surveys, or articles focused on gender diversity in marketing and its impact on strategies and consumer perceptions. These studies can offer a comprehensive understanding of stakeholder perceptions regarding the influence and effectiveness of women in shaping digital marketing strategies.

XII. IDENTIFY BEST PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Here are recommendations drawn from the experiences of successful female leaders to foster greater gender diversity and empowerment within the digital marketing sector:

i. Establish Inclusive Company Cultures:

- **Mentorship and Sponsorship Programs:** Establish official mentorship programmes to assist women in achieving professional advancement. Sponsorship programmes, in which high-ranking executives promote and facilitate women's professional advancement, are also successful.
- **Flexible Work Policies:** Provide flexible work schedules to meet a multitude of needs and enable women to successfully manage their personal and professional lives.

ii. Promote Gender Diversity in Leadership:

- **Diverse Hiring Practices:** Assure impartial hiring procedures and a varied pool of candidates. Promote recruiting procedures that place an emphasis on inclusivity and diversity.
- **Leadership Development:** Invest in leadership development and training initiatives created especially to assist women in advancing their careers.

iii. Advocate for Equal Opportunities and Recognition:

- **Equal Pay and Promotion Policies:** Implement transparent and fair policies regarding pay and promotions, ensuring gender equality.
- **Recognition of Contributions:** Honour and appreciate the accomplishments and contributions made by women in the company.

iv. Create Support Networks and Communities:

- **Employee Resource Groups:** Create employee resource groups or networks that offer female employees in the company support, connections, and a forum for dialogue and mentoring.
- **External Partnerships and Collaborations:** Work together with outside groups that promote women's empowerment to offer more resources and support.

v. Foster a Culture of Belonging and Inclusivity:

- **Training and Awareness Programs:** Provide diversity awareness and training programmes to all staff members in an effort to foster inclusivity and understanding.
- **Transparent Communication:** Promote candid discussion and communication around gender diversity to foster a workplace that is welcoming to all staff members. These suggestions seek to establish a climate that promotes gender diversity and empowerment within the digital marketing industry. They are founded on the experiences of accomplished female executives and are bolstered by several research reports and studies.

Each recommendation is rooted in promoting inclusive cultures, equal opportunities, and supportive networks to enable women to thrive in their careers.

XIII. CONCLUSION

This research has shed light on the pivotal role women play in shaping the landscape of digital marketing, emphasizing their significant contributions towards empowerment and fostering innovation within this domain. Through an extensive analysis of trends, case studies, and expert opinions, it becomes evident that women have become catalysts for change, driving forward the evolution of digital marketing strategies, technologies, and consumer engagement.

The findings underscore the diverse perspectives, creativity, and unique approaches that women bring to the table, leading to more inclusive and effective marketing strategies. Their leadership, whether in entrepreneurial ventures, corporate roles, or as influencers, has resulted in innovative campaigns, targeted messaging, and a deeper understanding of consumer behavior in the digital realm.

Moreover, this research emphasizes the importance of creating supportive environments that encourage the participation and leadership of women in digital marketing. Initiatives promoting mentorship, education, and equal opportunities are vital in harnessing the full potential of female talent in this field.

As digital marketing continues to evolve rapidly, acknowledging and amplifying the role of women is not only a matter of equality but a strategic imperative for industry growth and success. By recognizing and nurturing the contributions of women in shaping digital marketing, businesses and society at large stand to benefit from greater innovation, increased diversity, and more impactful strategies that resonate with a broader audience.

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