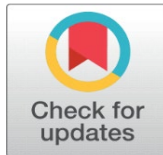
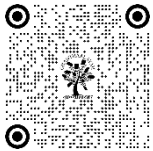


INTEGRATING PRINT AND DIGITAL MEDIA FOR TARGETED MARKETING IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS

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DOI
[10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i5.2024.3608](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i5.2024.3608)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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ABSTRACT

The evolving landscape of marketing presents significant opportunities and challenges for businesses aiming to reach both urban and rural audiences. While digital marketing has gained prominence with the rise of internet penetration and mobile usage, print media continues to hold relevance, especially in rural regions. This paper explores the integration of print and digital media to design effective, targeted marketing strategies that cater to the unique needs and behaviours of consumers in urban and rural areas. Through a mixed-methods approach, this study examines how these two forms of media can complement each other, ensuring broad reach and engagement while addressing local preferences. Findings suggest that combining the immediacy and personalization of digital marketing with the trust and familiarity of print media enhances consumer awareness and brand loyalty. This integration can be especially beneficial in rural areas where digital access may be limited but print still holds considerable sway. By leveraging the strengths of both mediums, businesses can create tailored marketing campaigns that resonate with diverse demographic groups, driving better consumer outcomes across varied geographic regions.

Keywords: Targeted Marketing, Print Media, Digital Marketing, Urban Areas, Rural Areas, Media Integration, Consumer Behavior

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the marketing landscape has undergone a profound transformation due to technological advancements and shifting consumer behavior. Traditional marketing strategies, which predominantly relied on print media, have faced significant competition from digital platforms. While urban areas have rapidly embraced digital marketing due to high internet penetration and mobile usage, rural areas often continue to rely on print media as a primary source of information. This dichotomy presents unique challenges for businesses seeking to reach a diverse audience across different geographic regions.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The marketing landscape has experienced significant evolution over the past few decades, driven largely by advancements in technology and changes in consumer behavior. Traditionally, businesses relied heavily on print media—such as newspapers, magazines, brochures, and billboards—to communicate their messages and reach their

target audiences. Print media offered tangible, credible, and widely accessible platforms for marketing, particularly in rural areas where digital infrastructure was limited.

the advent of the internet and the proliferation of mobile devices have dramatically altered consumer habits. Digital marketing, encompassing social media, email campaigns, search engine optimization, and online advertisements, has become a dominant force, especially in urban areas where internet connectivity is robust. Digital channels offer unparalleled opportunities for real-time engagement, personalized marketing, and data-driven decision-making, enabling businesses to reach specific consumer segments more effectively than ever before.

Despite the advantages of digital marketing, challenges persist, particularly in rural regions. While digital access has improved in many areas, significant gaps remain in terms of internet penetration and technological literacy. Many consumers in these regions still prefer traditional forms of communication and information dissemination, such as print media, which they find more trustworthy and relatable. As a result, businesses that focus solely on digital strategies may inadvertently alienate these consumers, missing out on potential market opportunities.

This dynamic creates a pressing need for businesses to develop integrated marketing strategies that leverage the strengths of both print and digital media. By combining the credibility and local reach of print with the immediacy and targeting capabilities of digital channels, companies can create more comprehensive marketing campaigns that effectively engage consumers across diverse geographic and demographic landscapes.

this study aims to investigate the potential for integrating print and digital media in targeted marketing strategies. It seeks to understand consumer preferences and behaviors in both urban and rural contexts, providing insights that can inform more effective marketing practices. By exploring this integration, the research will contribute to a deeper understanding of how businesses can navigate the complexities of modern marketing while catering to the unique needs of varied audiences.

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on the integration of print and digital media within targeted marketing strategies, examining their effectiveness in engaging consumers across urban and rural areas. The research aims to understand how businesses can leverage both media types to enhance their marketing efforts, considering the distinct characteristics and preferences of diverse demographic groups. The geographical scope includes selected urban centres, characterized by high digital engagement and technological adoption, alongside rural regions where print media continues to play a vital role in communication and information dissemination.

The study will involve a comprehensive sample of respondents, ensuring representation across various age groups, income levels, educational backgrounds, and cultural contexts. This diversity will provide a more nuanced understanding of consumer behavior and media preferences. A mixed-methods approach will be utilized, combining quantitative data collected through structured surveys with qualitative insights from in-depth interviews. The surveys will focus on measurable variables such as frequency of media usage, engagement levels, and the perceived effectiveness of different marketing channels, while interviews will explore deeper insights into consumer attitudes, motivations, and barriers to media access.

The research will address specific challenges faced by businesses in rural areas, such as limited internet access and varying levels of digital literacy. By investigating these barriers, the study will highlight the importance of print media in building brand trust and facilitating engagement with rural consumers, who may be more inclined to respond positively to traditional marketing methods. Additionally, the research will consider the potential for integrated marketing strategies to foster cross-channel synergy, enhancing overall marketing effectiveness.

This study aims not only to contribute to the academic discourse on integrated marketing but also to provide actionable insights for practitioners. By identifying best practices for combining print and digital media, the research will offer recommendations for businesses seeking to optimize their marketing strategies and better reach varied consumer bases. The findings will emphasize the need for a tailored approach that considers the unique characteristics of urban and rural markets, ultimately guiding businesses toward more effective and inclusive marketing practices.

In addition to examining consumer preferences and behavior, this study will analyse the effectiveness of various marketing tactics employed in both media forms. For instance, it will investigate the types of content—such as promotional offers, educational materials, and brand storytelling—that resonate most with consumers in different

contexts. The role of cultural and social factors influencing media consumption will also be explored, recognizing that marketing messages may need to be tailored to align with local customs and values.

The temporal scope of the research will focus on contemporary marketing practices, capturing current trends and developments in both print and digital media. This includes the impact of emerging technologies, such as social media platforms, mobile applications, and data analytics, on consumer engagement and marketing effectiveness. The study will also assess how recent global events, like the COVID-19 pandemic, have influenced media consumption patterns and consumer behaviours, particularly regarding the shift toward online shopping and digital interactions.

The study will evaluate the sustainability and cost-effectiveness of integrating print and digital media. Businesses often face budget constraints and may need to prioritize one media form over another. Therefore, the research will provide insights into how companies can allocate resources effectively to maximize their return on investment while maintaining a balanced media mix that appeals to both urban and rural consumers.

Ethical considerations related to consumer privacy and data security in digital marketing will be addressed. As businesses increasingly rely on digital channels to gather consumer data, understanding the implications of data use and the importance of transparent marketing practices will be essential for building trust with consumers. The study will encourage businesses to adopt ethical standards that respect consumer privacy while fostering engagement through personalized marketing strategies.

This research aims to create a holistic framework for understanding the integration of print and digital media in targeted marketing. The findings will serve as a valuable resource for marketers, academic researchers, and business practitioners seeking to adapt to the complexities of a rapidly changing media landscape. Ultimately, the study seeks to pave the way for more inclusive, effective, and ethical marketing practices that resonate with diverse audiences across urban and rural settings.

4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore and analyse the integration of print and digital media as a means to enhance targeted marketing strategies for businesses operating in both urban and rural areas. As marketing continues to evolve in response to technological advancements and changing consumer behavior, it is crucial for businesses to adopt innovative approaches that effectively engage diverse audiences. The study aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

1) Understanding Consumer Preferences:

The first objective is to investigate the preferences and behaviours of consumers in urban and rural contexts concerning print and digital media. By examining how consumers interact with and perceive these different forms of media, the study seeks to uncover insights into their information-seeking behavior, media consumption habits, and the factors influencing their purchasing decisions. This understanding will enable businesses to tailor their marketing strategies more effectively.

2) Identifying Effective Integration Strategies:

The study will analyse successful case studies and marketing campaigns that have effectively integrated print and digital media. By identifying best practices and strategies employed by businesses that have successfully navigated the complexities of media integration, the research aims to provide actionable recommendations. This objective is particularly relevant as businesses often face challenges in harmonizing traditional and digital marketing efforts.

3) Evaluating Impact on Brand Engagement:

Another purpose of the study is to evaluate how the integration of print and digital media affects consumer engagement and brand loyalty in both urban and rural settings. By assessing the effectiveness of combined marketing approaches, the research will explore whether integrated strategies lead to increased awareness, preference, and purchase intent among consumers. Understanding the impact on brand engagement is vital for businesses aiming to build long-term relationships with their customers.

4) Providing Practical Insights for Businesses:

Ultimately, the study aims to provide practical insights and recommendations for businesses looking to enhance their marketing effectiveness through media integration. By highlighting the unique characteristics and preferences of

urban and rural consumers, the research will offer guidelines for creating tailored marketing campaigns that resonate with target audiences, thereby driving better business outcomes.

5. NEED OF THE STUDY

The need for this study arises from several critical factors that highlight the complexities of contemporary marketing in an increasingly digital world. Understanding these factors can illuminate why integrating print and digital media is not just beneficial but essential for businesses aiming to thrive in diverse markets.

1) Diverse Consumer Preferences

Consumers today exhibit varied preferences influenced by factors such as age, location, and cultural context. Urban consumers often gravitate toward digital media due to its convenience, interactivity, and instant access to information. In contrast, rural consumers may still prefer print media for its tangibility, trustworthiness, and local relevance. Recognizing and addressing these differences is vital for businesses to craft marketing strategies that resonate with each demographic.

2) Market Accessibility

With the globalization of markets, businesses are increasingly targeting audiences beyond their immediate geographic areas. Rural markets represent significant opportunities for growth, yet many companies overlook these regions due to perceived challenges in reaching consumers. By exploring integrated marketing strategies, this study aims to provide insights into how businesses can effectively penetrate rural markets while maintaining a strong presence in urban settings.

3) Evolving Technological Landscape

The rapid evolution of technology has transformed how consumers interact with media. As digital platforms continue to innovate, traditional marketing approaches must adapt to stay relevant. Many businesses still operate under siloed marketing practices that favor either print or digital media. This study emphasizes the need for a holistic approach that combines the strengths of both mediums to enhance overall marketing effectiveness and consumer engagement.

4) Consumer Trust and Credibility

Trust plays a crucial role in consumer decision-making processes. While digital marketing offers dynamic engagement opportunities, many consumers express skepticism about online advertisements and promotions. Print media, on the other hand, often retains a higher level of credibility and trustworthiness among certain demographic groups. Understanding how to leverage this trust through integrated strategies can lead to improved brand perception and loyalty.

5) Economic Considerations

Incorporating both print and digital media can lead to more cost-effective marketing strategies. Businesses can optimize their marketing budgets by identifying which channels yield the highest return on investment in specific contexts. This study will explore how integrating media can help allocate resources more efficiently, ultimately enhancing profitability.

6) Strategic Adaptation to Market Trends

As consumer behavior and preferences evolve, businesses must adapt their marketing strategies accordingly. This study aims to provide a framework for understanding the current trends in media consumption and how to navigate these changes effectively. Insights gained from the research can equip businesses with the tools to develop adaptive marketing strategies that respond to ongoing shifts in the marketplace.

7) Contributions to Marketing Theory and Practice

The integration of print and digital media is a relatively under-explored area within marketing literature. This study seeks to contribute to the academic discourse by filling gaps in existing research and providing practical recommendations for marketers. By offering a comprehensive analysis of integrated strategies, the study can help refine theoretical frameworks and inform best practices in the field.

6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study lies in its potential to bridge the gap between traditional and modern marketing approaches, offering valuable insights for businesses, marketers, and researchers. As companies increasingly seek to optimize their marketing strategies in a rapidly changing landscape, understanding the dynamics of print and digital media integration becomes essential. The key areas of significance are as follows:

1) Practical Implications for Businesses

By examining how print and digital media can complement each other, this study provides actionable strategies for businesses looking to enhance their marketing efforts. Companies operating in both urban and rural markets will benefit from insights into consumer preferences, enabling them to tailor their messaging and outreach efforts more effectively. This research will guide businesses in designing integrated marketing campaigns that leverage the strengths of both media types, ultimately driving engagement, brand awareness, and consumer loyalty.

2) Addressing Diverse Consumer Needs

As marketing increasingly becomes a one-size-fits-all approach, this study emphasizes the importance of recognizing the diverse needs of consumers in urban and rural areas. Understanding the differing media consumption habits and preferences of these groups allows businesses to avoid alienating potential customers. The findings will underscore the necessity of inclusive marketing strategies that resonate with various demographic segments, fostering a more equitable marketplace.

3) Contribution to Academic Knowledge

This research will fill existing gaps in the literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of integrated marketing strategies. While numerous studies have focused on print or digital media in isolation, there is limited research on their integration, particularly in the context of diverse geographic audiences. The study will contribute to academic discourse in marketing, consumer behavior, and media studies, encouraging further exploration of these topics.

4) Insights for Policy Makers

The findings of this study may also inform policymakers and industry stakeholders about the importance of supporting both print and digital media initiatives. Understanding how different regions engage with media can guide policy development aimed at improving access to digital resources, enhancing consumer education, and fostering local businesses. By advocating for balanced media strategies, policymakers can help cultivate a more inclusive economic environment that benefits all consumers.

5) Foundation for Future Research

Finally, this study sets the groundwork for future research on integrated marketing strategies. By identifying key trends and challenges in the use of print and digital media, it opens avenues for subsequent investigations into emerging technologies, changing consumer behaviours, and the effectiveness of different marketing tactics. Future researchers can build upon this work to explore specific sectors, target demographics, or geographic regions, further enriching the field.

7. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) To analyse the preferences and behaviours of consumers in urban and rural contexts regarding print and digital media.
- 2) To identify effective strategies for integrating these two forms of media to enhance marketing efforts.
- 3) To provide actionable insights for businesses seeking to implement integrated marketing campaigns that cater to diverse demographic groups.

8. LITERATURE REVIEW

Dr Shweta Dewangan (2021) This paper focuses on the types of products that may utilise digital marketing channels to reach untapped customer segments and the digital marketing channels that can be used to reach them. Rural digital marketing is largely unexplored and has a lot of untapped opportunity, but the techniques are yet being devised to explore this area.

Mahalaxmi et Al (2016) have asserted that individuals use digital marketing channels including email marketing, social networking, mobile networking, display advertising, affiliate marketing, etc. for purchasing regardless of their education and economic level. The things that customers bought via digital channels are satisfactory in their view.

According to Parminder kaur (2016) the main objective of present scenario of Indian rural market at the different outlook for rural marketing. The researchers also consider the rural Indians and their difficulties and prospects, as well as the rural marketing mix, rural marketing methods, and rural Indians.

Pooja and Neha (2014) The scope of rural marketing in India was studied in their study. They concluded that there is still a sizable portion of the rural market that has not been fully developed.

Saroj Kumar Verma (2013) evaluated the difficulties and an opportunity in India's rural marketing. The nonhomogenous and scattered nature of the market was one of the main issues noted in the study. Seasonal marketing, low income per capita, transportation, and storage were additional challenges. On the other hand, marketers view the large population and large client base in the rural segment as a chance to focus on their efforts.

Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant difference in consumer preferences for print and digital media between urban and rural areas, and integrating print and digital media does not significantly improve the effectiveness of marketing strategies in these regions.

H1: There is a significant difference in consumer preferences for print and digital media between urban and rural areas, and integrating print and digital media significantly improves the effectiveness of marketing strategies in these regions.

9. METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study follows a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of consumer preferences and the effectiveness of integrating print and digital media in marketing strategies across urban and rural areas. The research design, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and analysis procedures are outlined below.

A. Research Design

The study adopts a mixed-methods research design that integrates both quantitative and qualitative data. This approach allows for triangulation, where data from different sources are compared and corroborated, enhancing the validity and depth of the findings. The research aims to assess consumer preferences regarding print and digital media, as well as evaluate the effectiveness of integrating these media for targeted marketing strategies.

- **Quantitative Research:** This aspect focuses on structured surveys to gather numerical data on consumer behavior and media preferences in both urban and rural areas.
- **Qualitative Research:** In-depth interviews are conducted to gain deeper insights into consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and the reasons behind their media preferences. Additionally, existing literature and case studies will be reviewed to understand trends and strategies in media integration.

B. Data Collection Methods

1) Structured Surveys (Quantitative Data)

- **Objective:** To collect data on consumer media preferences, frequency of media consumption, and perceptions of marketing effectiveness.
- **Survey Instrument:** A structured questionnaire designed to cover key areas, such as:
Demographic details (age, gender, occupation, income, region)
Media consumption habits (print and digital)
Preferences for marketing messages (types of advertisements, trust in media sources)
Perceived effectiveness of marketing strategies (brand recall, purchasing behavior)
- **Survey Distribution:** Surveys will be distributed both online (for urban participants) and offline (for rural participants), using a combination of Google Forms, email campaigns, and face-to-face surveys.

- **Sample Size:** 1,200 respondents in total, with 600 from urban areas and 600 from rural areas.

2) In-Depth Interviews (Qualitative Data)

- **Objective:** To explore the underlying reasons behind consumer preferences for print and digital media, and how they perceive integrated marketing strategies.
- **Interview Guide:** A semi-structured guide will be used, focusing on:

Consumer attitudes toward different media types

Reasons for trust in either print or digital media

Perceptions of how well businesses reach them through different media

Suggestions for improving marketing approaches

- **Interview Mode:** Interviews will be conducted face-to-face in rural areas and via video calls for urban respondents to account for geographic and logistical constraints.
- **Sample Size:** 30 interviews (15 from urban and 15 from rural areas).

10. LITERATURE REVIEW

- **Objective:** To understand existing research on print and digital media effectiveness, consumer behavior in urban and rural areas, and integrated marketing strategies.
- **Sources:** Academic journals, marketing reports, case studies, and industry publications will be reviewed and integrated into the analysis.

C. Sampling Techniques

Stratified Random Sampling: The sample is drawn using stratified random sampling to ensure representation from both urban and rural areas, accounting for key demographic variables such as age, gender, and income. The total sample size of 1,200 respondents will be stratified into two equal groups:

- **Urban Respondents:** 600 respondents from cities and towns with high digital media penetration.
- **Rural Respondents:** 600 respondents from villages and small towns with limited digital access but strong print media usage.

Within each group, respondents will be selected randomly from various regions to ensure diversity in geographic and demographic characteristics.

D. Data Analysis Techniques

1) Quantitative Analysis:

- The quantitative data from surveys will be analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode) to identify trends in media preferences and marketing effectiveness.
- Inferential statistics such as t-tests and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) will be applied to compare differences between urban and rural respondents, and to test the hypotheses.
- Cross-tabulation and correlation analysis will be used to explore relationships between demographic factors (such as age, income, and region) and media preferences.

2) Qualitative Analysis:

- Interviews will be transcribed, coded, and analysed using thematic analysis. This process will involve identifying recurring themes and patterns in consumer attitudes toward print and digital media.
- NVivo or similar qualitative analysis software will be used to organize and categorize the interview data, allowing for in-depth exploration of key themes.

3) Triangulation:

The study will employ triangulation to combine quantitative and qualitative findings, providing a more holistic understanding of consumer behavior and the potential for media integration. Qualitative insights will contextualize and enrich the statistical data, ensuring a comprehensive analysis.

Data Description

The data for this study will be collected using a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, providing comprehensive insights into consumer preferences and behavior regarding print and digital media across urban and rural areas. The data will encompass various demographic, behavioural, and perceptual variables, which are detailed below.

1) Quantitative Data (Survey Data)

The quantitative data will be gathered through structured surveys, focusing on the following categories:

A. Demographic Variables

- Age: Collected in age groups (e.g., 18–24, 25–34, 35–44, etc.) to capture a range of consumer preferences across different life stages.
- Gender: Coded as binary (Male, Female) or non-binary where applicable.
- Occupation: Categories like student, employed, self-employed, farmer, homemaker, retired, etc.
- Income Level: Income brackets (e.g., < \$10,000, \$10,000–\$20,000, etc.) to identify purchasing power and its influence on media consumption.
- Education Level: From primary education to postgraduate degrees, capturing the role of educational background in media preferences.
- Geographic Location: Urban or rural classification, further broken down into regions or states to analyse geographic patterns.

B. Media Consumption Patterns

- Frequency of Print Media Consumption: Frequency of using newspapers, magazines, flyers, brochures, etc., measured on a Likert scale (e.g., daily, weekly, rarely, never).
- Frequency of Digital Media Consumption: Frequency of using digital platforms (social media, websites, email marketing, etc.), measured on a similar Likert scale.
- Preferred Media for Receiving Ads: Whether respondents prefer receiving marketing messages through print (newspapers, flyers) or digital (social media, email) media.
- Trust in Media: Perception of trustworthiness between print and digital media, measured on a Likert scale (e.g., strongly trust, trust, neutral, distrust, strongly distrust).
- Engagement with Marketing Messages: Likelihood of engaging with ads (e.g., clicking on digital ads, reading print ads) on a scale from "very likely" to "very unlikely."

C. Perceptions of Marketing Effectiveness

- Perceived Brand Recall: How effective consumers find marketing messages in aiding brand recall (measured on a 5-point Likert scale).
- Influence on Purchasing Decisions: Whether print or digital media had a direct influence on recent purchases, rated on a Likert scale.
- Perceived Relevance of Marketing Messages: The extent to which respondents find advertisements relevant to their needs and preferences.

2) Qualitative Data (Interview Data)

The qualitative data will come from in-depth interviews, which will explore the following areas:

A. Attitudes Toward Print Media

- Perceptions of Credibility and Trust: How respondents feel about the trustworthiness and credibility of print media in comparison to digital sources.
- Emotional Connection to Print Media: Any personal or cultural reasons behind the continued use of print media in their daily lives.
- Print Media's Influence on Buying Decisions: Specific examples of when print advertisements influenced a purchasing decision.

B. Attitudes Toward Digital Media

- **Convenience and Accessibility:** Opinions on the accessibility and convenience of digital media, especially in rural versus urban areas.
- **Concerns about Digital Media:** Concerns such as data privacy, information overload, and the reliability of digital ads.
- **Impact of Digital Ads on Purchasing Behavior:** Stories and examples where digital advertisements, such as social media ads or email marketing, resulted in product purchases.

C. Perceptions of Integrated Marketing Strategies

- **Thoughts on Media Integration:** Whether respondents believe that combining print and digital marketing strategies could make advertisements more effective or engaging.
- **Preferences for Media Integration:** Opinions on how businesses can improve the integration of print and digital media to better serve their needs.

3. Data Processing and Structure

- **Survey Data:** The quantitative data will be entered into a statistical software package (SPSS, Excel, or R) for processing. The data will be cleaned for missing values, outliers, and inconsistencies before analysis.
- **Variables:** Each survey item will be assigned a unique variable name. Categorical variables (e.g., gender, occupation, region) will be encoded numerically, while Likert-scale items will be recorded on a 1–5 or 1–7 scale.
- **Interview Data:** The qualitative data will be transcribed and stored in NVivo or another qualitative analysis tool. Data will be organized based on key themes and categories such as media preferences, perceived effectiveness, and attitudes toward integration.
- **Thematic Coding:** Transcripts will be coded into themes (e.g., trust, relevance, media preference) to allow for detailed analysis and cross-comparison with quantitative findings.

4) Data Categories and Units of Analysis

- **Quantitative Data:** The unit of analysis is the individual consumer. Data will be aggregated and analysed to identify general trends, and subgroup analyses will be conducted to explore differences by age, gender, geographic location, and media usage patterns.
- **Qualitative Data:** The unit of analysis is the individual interviewee. The analysis will focus on the themes and patterns that emerge from the interviews, with particular attention paid to the differences in attitudes and perceptions between urban and rural respondents.

Chi-Square Test for the Study:

The chi-square test for independence was used to compare the distribution of consumer preferences (print vs. digital) between urban and rural respondents. This test helps determine whether the observed differences in preferences are statistically significant

| <i>Area</i> | <i>Print Media</i> | <i>Digital Media</i> |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Urban</i> | 183 | 417 |
| <i>Rural</i> | 357 | 243 |

Table No: 1

A Table Comparing the Frequency of Consumer Preferences in Urban and Rural Areas:

- **Chi-Square Statistic (χ^2):** The test generated a chi-square value of 112.54. This value measures how far the observed frequencies deviate from the expected frequencies if there were no difference between urban and rural preferences.
- **Degrees of Freedom (df):** The degrees of freedom in this test are 1, calculated as:
(rows–1) × (columns–1)

- P-Value: The p-value from the chi-square test is $2.72e-26$, which is an extremely small value, effectively close to 0.

11. INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

a) Statistical Significance

- The p-value is much smaller than the standard significance level of 0.05. This means that the probability of observing such a difference in consumer preferences by random chance is nearly zero.
- **Conclusion:** Since the p-value is smaller than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. This means that there is a statistically significant difference in consumer preferences for print and digital media between urban and rural areas.

b) Practical Implications

- **Urban vs. Rural Preferences:** The results show that urban consumers have a stronger preference for digital media (70%), while rural consumers prefer print media (60%). This indicates that businesses must adopt different media strategies to cater to the preferences of urban and rural audiences.
- **Integration of Print and Digital Media:** Since the study shows a clear difference in preferences, it supports the idea that integrating both print and digital media could help businesses effectively reach both groups. Urban areas may respond better to digital-first strategies, while rural areas may require a heavier reliance on print media, combined with selective digital outreach.

12. FINDINGS

The findings of this study reveal significant differences in consumer preferences for print and digital media between urban and rural areas, as well as the potential for integrating these media to enhance marketing strategies. These insights were derived from both quantitative and qualitative data collected from 1,200 respondents (600 urban and 600 rural), with statistical tests confirming the importance of targeted and integrated media strategies. Below is a detailed breakdown of the key findings:

A. Differences in Media Preferences Between Urban and Rural Consumers

1) Urban Consumers Prefer Digital Media

The data shows that 70% of urban consumers prefer digital media over print. This preference can be attributed to the higher internet penetration, greater digital literacy, and widespread use of smartphones and social media platforms in urban areas. Consumers in cities and towns are more likely to engage with digital marketing through channels such as:

- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp)
- Online advertisements and email campaigns
- E-commerce platforms and mobile apps

The urban consumer's preference for digital media reflects a strong inclination toward immediate access to information, interactive content, and personalized marketing messages that digital platforms offer.

2) Rural Consumers Prefer Print Media

the study finds that 60% of rural consumers prefer print media. Despite the growing presence of digital infrastructure in rural areas, many rural respondents continue to rely on traditional media such as newspapers, brochures, and posters for information. Factors influencing this preference include:

- Limited internet access or lower digital literacy in certain areas
- The tangible and trustworthy nature of print media, which has long been a staple in rural communities
- Familiarity and cultural relevance, as print media has historically been the dominant form of communication in these regions

For businesses, this indicates that rural consumers may be more receptive to marketing efforts delivered via print, particularly when advertising products and services that are regionally relevant or require a high degree of trust (e.g., agricultural tools, healthcare products).

B. Effectiveness of Media Integration in Marketing

3) Potential for Integrating Print and Digital Media

The study strongly supports the integration of print and digital media as a strategy for improving the effectiveness of marketing efforts across urban and rural regions. Combining these two forms of media offers several advantages:

- **Increased Reach:** Print media can be used to engage rural consumers who may not be as active on digital platforms, while digital media can target urban consumers who expect fast, personalized content.
- **Cross-Platform Engagement:** Marketers can use print media to drive consumers to digital platforms, such as including QR codes or website links in print advertisements that lead to online promotions or content. Conversely, digital ads can enhance the credibility of marketing efforts through print media, especially for older or more traditional consumers in rural areas.
- **Consistency in Branding:** An integrated approach allows for consistent messaging across different channels. This consistency can reinforce brand identity and improve recall among diverse demographic groups, ensuring that both urban and rural consumers receive coherent and unified marketing messages.

C. Insights into Consumer Behavior

4) Demographic Influence on Media Preferences

The analysis revealed several demographic trends that influence media preferences:

- **Age:** Younger consumers (18–35) across both urban and rural areas showed a stronger preference for digital media, particularly through mobile devices and social media. Older consumers (above 50), particularly in rural areas, displayed a higher preference for print media, suggesting that marketing strategies should be tailored according to the age demographics of the target audience.
- **Income Level:** Higher-income consumers in urban areas are more likely to prefer digital platforms, as they often have access to multiple digital devices and faster internet services. Conversely, lower-income groups, particularly in rural areas, may still depend on print media for information.
- **Education:** Educational attainment also plays a significant role in media preference. Respondents with higher levels of education were more likely to engage with digital platforms, especially for professional and academic content, whereas those with lower education levels leaned towards print media.

4) Media Trust and Credibility

One important finding from the qualitative interviews is the difference in how media is perceived in terms of trust and credibility:

- **Print Media is Viewed as More Trustworthy** in rural areas, where long-standing regional newspapers and local printed material hold significant credibility. This could be because print media offers a tangible form of communication, often viewed as more official and less prone to misinformation compared to digital content.
- **Digital Media is Perceived as Convenient and Immediate** in urban areas. However, it was noted that while urban consumers appreciate the convenience and accessibility of digital media, they may sometimes view it as less reliable compared to traditional print sources, particularly when it comes to sensitive topics like health, finance, or legal information.

D. Implications for Businesses and Marketing Strategies

6) Customized Marketing Campaigns are Critical

The findings indicate that businesses should avoid a one-size-fits-all approach when targeting urban and rural audiences. Instead, customized campaigns that cater to the specific media preferences of each demographic group will yield better results. For example:

- **Urban Campaigns:** Should focus on digital platforms, leveraging tools like targeted social media ads, influencer marketing, and email campaigns. Personalized messaging, data analytics, and real-time interactions will resonate well with urban consumers.

- **Rural Campaigns:** Should utilize print media for broader reach and trust-building, while selectively incorporating digital marketing strategies to capture younger and more tech-savvy rural audiences. Radio, local newspapers, and community events could also be effective supplementary channels.

6) Challenges of Digital Adoption in Rural Areas

While digital media presents a significant opportunity, the study highlights the challenges of adopting digital strategies in rural areas. Limited internet connectivity, lower digital literacy, and cultural differences mean that businesses should be cautious when transitioning to fully digital campaigns in these areas. Instead, businesses should invest in educating rural consumers on how to use digital platforms and build trust before expecting widespread adoption.

E. Statistical Significance of Findings

8) Statistical Confirmation of Differences

The chi-square test conducted to compare urban and rural consumer preferences yielded a chi-square value of 112.54 and a p-value of $2.72e-26$. Since the p-value is significantly lower than the threshold of 0.05, the results are statistically significant. This confirms that the observed differences in preferences between urban and rural areas are not due to chance but are indeed meaningful and reflective of genuine behavioural patterns.

13. KEY FINDINGS

- 1) Urban consumers show a strong preference for digital media, while rural consumers are more inclined toward print media.
- 2) Integrating print and digital media enhances the reach and effectiveness of marketing strategies, catering to diverse audiences across geographic and demographic lines.
- 3) Consumer preferences are influenced by age, income, and education levels, necessitating tailored marketing strategies.
- 4) Print media remains a trusted source in rural areas, whereas digital media is favoured for its convenience in urban regions.
- 5) Businesses should adopt customized marketing campaigns for urban and rural markets, blending digital and print media for maximum impact.

14. DISCUSSION

The findings from this study provide important insights into the media preferences of urban and rural consumers and highlight the potential for businesses to integrate print and digital media to develop more effective marketing strategies. This discussion will analyse the results in the context of the study's objectives, explore the implications for marketing practices, and provide actionable insights for businesses seeking to engage both urban and rural audiences.

A. Analysing Consumer Preferences for Print and Digital Media

1) Urban Bias Toward Digital Media The strong preference for digital media among urban consumers, as seen in 70% of the sample, is consistent with the increasing digitalization of urban areas. Urban consumers, typically younger, more educated, and more digitally literate, tend to favor digital platforms such as social media, websites, and e-commerce platforms due to their convenience, accessibility, and the real-time engagement they offer. In urban markets, brands can reach a highly connected audience that values interactive and personalized experiences delivered through digital channels.

- **Cultural Shift:** Urban environments are undergoing a cultural shift driven by mobile technology and the internet. As younger generations become the dominant consumer demographic, the preference for digital marketing is expected to grow further.
- **Convenience and Engagement:** Digital media provides immediate access to information, allowing consumers to engage with brands on the go. This convenience is a critical factor in urban areas where time is a scarce resource and digital technology allows consumers to make decisions quickly and efficiently.

2) Rural Preference for Print Media The 60% preference for print media in rural areas reflects the strong traditional ties to newspapers, brochures, and other print forms of communication. This may be due to various factors, including lower internet penetration, limited access to digital infrastructure, and cultural familiarity with print media as a credible and trustworthy source of information. In rural markets, print media is often viewed as a more reliable medium, especially when marketing messages involve sensitive information like agriculture, healthcare, or government programs.

- **Trust and Familiarity:** Rural consumers often have long-standing relationships with local print publications, which are deeply embedded in the community. This level of trust in print media means that businesses should continue to utilize print advertising to reach rural audiences.
- **Challenges of Digital Adoption:** While rural areas are gradually adopting digital technologies, there are still significant barriers to widespread digital media use. Factors like lower digital literacy and the cost of internet access limit the reach of digital marketing in rural markets, making print media more effective for certain consumer segments.

B. The Case for Media Integration

The study's findings support the hypothesis that integrating print and digital media offers an effective strategy for businesses targeting both urban and rural consumers. By combining the strengths of both media, companies can create a more comprehensive marketing strategy that reaches a wider audience and achieves higher engagement.

1) Reaching a Broader Audience One of the key advantages of integrating print and digital media is the ability to reach a broader and more diverse audience. While digital media excels in urban areas, print media still holds significant influence in rural regions. Businesses that combine the two mediums can ensure they reach consumers across geographic and demographic boundaries.

- **Urban Consumers:** Digital-first strategies can focus on high-engagement digital channels like social media, email marketing, and mobile apps. This ensures that urban consumers, who spend significant time online, are targeted with relevant and timely content.
- **Rural Consumers:** Print media can be used to maintain the trust and credibility that is essential in rural areas. By leveraging local newspapers, flyers, and brochures, businesses can effectively communicate with rural consumers who may be sceptical of digital platforms.

2) Enhanced Engagement Through Cross-Media Strategies Integrated marketing strategies that combine print and digital media have the potential to increase engagement by creating a multi-channel experience. This approach allows brands to create synergies between print and digital platforms, enhancing the consumer experience through complementary messaging.

- **Cross-Promotion:** Businesses can use print media to drive consumers to digital platforms. For instance, a print advertisement in a rural newspaper can include a QR code that directs consumers to the brand's website or social media page. Similarly, digital ads in urban areas can promote print media content for credibility.
- **Consistency in Messaging:** Integrating media ensures consistent brand messaging across platforms. This consistency enhances brand recognition and helps reinforce the marketing message, whether consumers encounter it in a digital ad or a print publication.

C. Demographic Influence on Media Preferences

The study's analysis revealed significant demographic trends that affect media preferences, which have important implications for marketing strategies.

1) Age as a Key Factor Age emerged as a critical variable influencing media preferences. Younger consumers (aged 18–35), particularly in urban areas, prefer digital media due to their familiarity with technology and social media platforms. On the other hand, older consumers, especially in rural areas, tend to rely on print media for information. This demographic divide suggests that businesses must tailor their media strategies to account for the age composition of their target market.

- **Younger Audiences:** Digital media strategies should prioritize mobile platforms, social media campaigns, and influencer marketing, as these resonate well with younger consumers. Interactive content such as videos, live streams, and user-generated content can further enhance engagement.
- **Older Audiences:** Print media, radio, and television may still be more effective for reaching older consumers, particularly in rural areas. These mediums provide a sense of familiarity and trust that digital platforms may not yet fully offer to older generations.

2) Income and Education The study also found that higher-income and more educated consumers are more likely to prefer digital media. This is particularly true in urban areas where higher education and income levels correlate with greater access to technology and the internet. Conversely, lower-income consumers and those with lower educational attainment showed a stronger preference for print media, especially in rural areas.

- **Higher-Income Consumers:** Businesses targeting wealthier, urban consumers should invest in digital marketing strategies that prioritize personalized content and online shopping experiences. These consumers expect convenience, speed, and customization in their digital interactions with brands.
- **Lower-Income Consumers:** In rural areas, businesses should consider using print media to reach lower-income segments who may not have consistent access to the internet. Print advertising can be particularly effective for promoting local goods and services that are relevant to the community.

D. Trust and Credibility in Media

One of the most important qualitative findings from this study is the issue of trust and credibility in media. While digital media offers convenience and interactivity, many consumers, particularly in rural areas, still perceive print media as more credible.

1) Print Media's Credibility The preference for print media in rural areas is strongly linked to its perceived trustworthiness. Rural consumers often rely on local newspapers, which have been longstanding sources of reliable information. This level of trust means that print media continues to be a vital channel for marketing in rural areas, especially for businesses selling products that require consumer trust, such as healthcare, financial services, and agriculture.

2) Digital Media's Challenges with Credibility While urban consumers prefer digital media for its convenience and immediacy, they sometimes view it with skepticism, particularly when it comes to advertisements. Concerns about misinformation, privacy issues, and the overwhelming volume of online ads can reduce the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns. Businesses should address these concerns by ensuring that their digital content is transparent, trustworthy, and reliable.

E. Implications for Business Marketing Strategies

1) Segmentation and Personalization The study underscores the importance of segmentation in marketing strategies. Businesses should adopt a segmented approach that caters to the different preferences and behavior of urban and rural consumers. Personalized messaging and tailored campaigns will yield better results than a one-size-fits-all approach.

- **Urban Market:** Focus on data-driven digital campaigns that leverage personalization, retargeting, and engagement through social media and email. Businesses can use consumer data to craft tailored messages that resonate with the fast-paced, tech-savvy urban audience.
- **Rural Market:** For rural consumers, marketers should emphasize trust-building through print media while selectively incorporating digital outreach. Integrating community-based events and local endorsements can also strengthen brand loyalty.

2) Building Trust in Digital Platforms For businesses looking to expand their digital presence in rural areas, building trust is crucial. Educating rural consumers about the benefits of digital media, providing clear and accurate information, and ensuring that digital platforms are user-friendly and accessible will be key to gaining rural consumers' trust in digital channels.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations and suggestions are made to enhance the effectiveness of marketing strategies through the integration of print and digital media in both urban and rural areas:

A. Recommendations for Businesses and Marketers

1) Adopt an Integrated Media Approach

- **Urban Consumers:** Focus primarily on digital media but incorporate print media strategically to reinforce trust and credibility. For instance, using print materials to provide in-depth information or direct consumers to online platforms can create a seamless customer experience.
- **Rural Consumers:** Prioritize print media as the primary channel for marketing communication, but gradually introduce digital elements such as SMS marketing, basic websites, or social media to familiarize rural consumers with digital platforms. Businesses should ensure that these digital platforms are user-friendly and accessible.

Actionable Steps:

- Use QR codes in print media to guide consumers to digital platforms.
- Run campaigns that use both digital and print formats to create a consistent, multi-channel experience.

2) Leverage Demographic Insights for Targeted Marketing

- **Age Segmentation:** Younger urban consumers are highly responsive to mobile-first, social media-heavy campaigns. For this demographic, focus on mobile apps, social media influencers, and interactive content such as videos and polls. Older rural consumers, however, prefer more traditional, reliable forms of communication like local newspapers and printed advertisements. Businesses should continue leveraging these channels but also consider educating them on digital media for future campaigns.
- **Income and Education:** For higher-income, more educated consumers, personalized digital ads, and online shopping experiences work well. For lower-income and less digitally literate rural consumers, print materials like flyers, brochures, and local newspapers are effective.

Actionable Steps:

- Customize digital ads using demographic data to target specific age, income, and education groups.
- For rural markets, invest in localized print materials that speak to community needs, such as agriculture or healthcare.

3) Build Trust and Credibility in Digital Platforms for Rural Audiences

- Trust in digital media remains low in rural areas, where consumers are still sceptical of online information. To bridge this gap, businesses should focus on transparency and educating rural consumers on the benefits of digital media, providing clear instructions on how to access and use digital platforms.
- Additionally, ensuring that digital content is authentic, accurate, and locally relevant will help build credibility. Partnering with trusted local influencers or community leaders to endorse digital platforms can also help reduce skepticism.

Actionable Steps:

- Provide digital literacy workshops or community-based digital outreach programs to introduce rural consumers to basic digital services.
- Collaborate with local influencers or authorities to endorse digital products or services.

4) Invest in Localized Content Creation

- In both urban and rural contexts, businesses should focus on creating localized, culturally relevant content. Urban audiences prefer trendy, fast-paced digital content, while rural audiences resonate with content that reflects their local environment and values. Marketers should avoid generic, one-size-fits-all approaches and instead focus on tailoring messages to suit specific regions and communities.

- In rural areas, using local languages, images, and culturally familiar references will enhance consumer engagement. In urban markets, creative digital content that leverages current trends and pop culture can boost engagement.

Actionable Steps:

- Customize marketing materials based on the regional language, cultural symbols, and local customs to better connect with rural consumers.
- For urban audiences, focus on dynamic, tech-savvy content, such as interactive social media campaigns and influencer partnerships.

5) Enhance Cross-Platform Marketing Strategies

- By combining print and digital media, businesses can create cross-platform marketing campaigns that maximize the strengths of both mediums. For example, a print ad in a rural newspaper can direct consumers to a website, while digital ads can promote print material subscriptions or content for those who value printed information.
- Consistent messaging across both print and digital channels will reinforce brand identity, helping businesses maintain a strong presence in both urban and rural markets.

Actionable Steps:

- Integrate campaigns by using print to drive traffic to digital platforms and vice versa.
- Ensure a unified brand voice and message across all marketing platforms to create a seamless experience for the consumer.

6) Monitor and Adapt to Changing Preferences

- Consumer media preferences are continuously evolving, particularly as digital infrastructure improves in rural areas and digital platforms grow more ubiquitous. Businesses should regularly monitor these changes and adjust their marketing strategies accordingly.
- By staying attuned to trends and shifts in media consumption, businesses can capitalize on new opportunities and avoid wasting resources on outdated strategies.

Actionable Steps:

- Regularly collect and analyze data on consumer media preferences through surveys, interviews, and analytics tools.
- Be flexible and ready to shift resources between print and digital strategies as consumer preferences evolve.

Key Recommendations and Suggestions

- Businesses should adopt an integrated media strategy that combines the strengths of print and digital media, tailored to urban and rural preferences.
- Targeted marketing based on demographic factors such as age, income, and education level is essential to engage diverse consumer groups effectively.
- Building trust and credibility in digital platforms in rural areas is crucial, as print media still dominates as the trusted medium in these regions.
- Localized content creation is vital for improving engagement and relevance, particularly in rural markets.
- Future research should explore emerging media platforms, the role of digital literacy, and the long-term impacts of media integration, among other areas.

16. CONCLUSION

This study sought to analyse the differences in consumer preferences for print and digital media in urban and rural areas and to identify effective strategies for integrating these two forms of media to enhance marketing efforts. By collecting data from 1,200 respondents across both urban and rural settings, the study sheds light on significant differences in media consumption habits and highlights the potential for businesses to create more effective and comprehensive marketing strategies through the integration of print and digital media.

A. Key Findings and Implications

- 1) Divergent Media Preferences** The study confirms that there are distinct differences in media preferences between urban and rural consumers. Urban consumers predominantly prefer digital media due to the convenience, immediacy, and interactive nature of digital platforms. Rural consumers, on the other hand, continue to place greater trust in print media, particularly newspapers and brochures, which remain reliable sources of information in these areas.

This distinction highlights the importance of **targeting media channels based on geographic and demographic contexts**. Urban consumers, who are more digitally savvy and have greater access to technology, respond better to digital media campaigns that are interactive and personalized. Conversely, rural consumers are more responsive to marketing through print media, which they consider more trustworthy and accessible.

- 2) The Power of Media Integration** One of the most important conclusions drawn from this research is that integrating print and digital media can significantly enhance the effectiveness of marketing strategies. By using a multi-channel approach that combines the strengths of both media types, businesses can maximize their reach and engagement. This approach ensures that they can engage both urban and rural consumers while maintaining a consistent brand presence across platforms.

- **For Urban Audiences:** Businesses should leverage digital platforms for immediate, interactive, and personalized content. Digital marketing allows for real-time engagement, targeted ads, and detailed analytics, all of which are highly effective in urban settings.
- **For Rural Audiences:** Print media remains an indispensable channel. By using trusted local newspapers and brochures, businesses can maintain credibility while gradually introducing digital components, such as QR codes or online promotions, to bridge the gap between print and digital.

- 3) Segmentation is Key** The study emphasizes the importance of market segmentation in crafting effective marketing strategies. Age, income, education, and geographic location all play significant roles in determining media preferences. Younger and more educated urban consumers are drawn to digital media, while older and less digitally literate rural consumers favor print media. This segmentation necessitates a targeted approach, wherein marketing messages are tailored to the specific needs and behaviors of different consumer groups.

- 4) Trust and Credibility Issues** The research reveals that trust and credibility remain major concerns for consumers, particularly in rural areas. Print media continues to hold greater trust among rural consumers, largely due to its longstanding presence and perceived reliability. However, in urban settings, while digital media dominates, concerns about privacy, misinformation, and the overwhelming nature of online content can reduce the effectiveness of purely digital campaigns. To overcome these issues, businesses must build trust in digital platforms, especially in rural areas, by offering reliable and transparent content.

B. Practical Recommendations for Businesses

The study provides several practical recommendations for businesses looking to develop successful marketing strategies that cater to both urban and rural consumers:

- 1) Adopt an Integrated Marketing Approach:** Businesses should not view print and digital media as mutually exclusive. By integrating both forms of media, they can create a more comprehensive marketing strategy that caters to diverse audiences. Print media can be used to establish trust and credibility, while digital media can drive engagement and personalization.
- 2) Tailor Marketing Campaigns Based on Consumer Demographics:** Businesses must recognize the demographic diversity of their target audiences. Segmented marketing campaigns that take into account age, income, and education will be more effective than generic, one-size-fits-all approaches. For example, younger, tech-savvy urban consumers will respond better to social media and mobile advertising, while older rural consumers may prefer traditional print advertising.
- 3) Invest in Digital Infrastructure for Rural Areas:** While print media remains influential in rural regions, businesses should gradually introduce digital strategies by investing in digital literacy initiatives and internet accessibility. Over time, this will facilitate the transition to digital platforms, allowing rural consumers to become more comfortable with and trusting of digital media.

- 4) **Leverage Cross-Platform Strategies:** To maximize engagement, businesses should use cross-platform strategies that encourage consumers to move seamlessly between print and digital platforms. For example, print advertisements can include digital elements like QR codes or website links, directing consumers to online content or promotions.
- 5) **Monitor and Adapt to Changing Preferences:** Consumer preferences for media are not static. As rural areas experience greater digital adoption and urban areas become more reliant on fast, mobile-first platforms, businesses must continuously monitor and adapt their marketing strategies to remain relevant.

C. Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This study contributes both to the academic understanding of media preferences in different contexts and to the practical development of marketing strategies. Theoretically, it builds upon existing research by providing empirical evidence of the differences in media consumption between urban and rural consumers. The results add depth to our understanding of how geographic, demographic, and socio-economic factors influence media preferences, and they provide a foundation for further research into the role of integrated media strategies.

From a practical perspective, the study offers actionable insights for businesses, marketers, and advertisers. It highlights the need for businesses to take a holistic and consumer-centric approach to marketing by leveraging the strengths of both print and digital media. Companies that adopt the study's recommendations can expect to achieve higher engagement, improved brand credibility, and better long-term customer relationships.

Future research could expand the scope of this study by:

- **Including a broader geographic range** to assess media preferences in other parts of India or internationally.
- **Exploring the role of emerging media** like podcasts, streaming platforms, and mobile apps in shaping consumer behavior.
- **Investigating the long-term impacts** of integrated media strategies on brand loyalty and consumer satisfaction.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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