Editorial

Grasping Marketing and Consumer Behavior in the Digital Environment: Brazilian Scholars Insights

Compreendendo o Marketing e o Comportamento do Consumidor no Ambiente Digital: Insights de Pesquisadores Brasileiros

Open Access

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■ **ABSTRACT**

The papers on this Special Issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Administration* promote an important discussion in the Brazilian digital marketing field. In this editorial, we explain how the authors build bridges between digital marketing, marketplace, consumers, and firms' applications by means of empirical investigations. As new technologies force marketing to constantly change to adjust to social platforms in the digital environment, insights about Brazilian digital marketing are missing. Considering the digital economy, consumer behavior, and technological culture, the five papers raise interesting questions about how viral advertising and image/video/audio platforms affect consumer response measures (e.g., online purchases) and create social media experiences. Such experiences include omnichannel environments that connect and create ecosystems across firms, consumers, governments, stakeholders, and marketing professionals in organized networks.

Keywords: consumer behavior; digital marketing; framework; marketing strategy; technology.

■ **RESUMO**

Nos artigos deste Número Especial da *Revista de Administração Contemporânea* (RAC), os autores promovem uma importante discussão no campo do marketing digital brasileiro. Neste editorial, explicamos como os autores constroem pontes entre marketing digital, *marketplace*, consumidores e aplicações das empresas por meio de investigações empíricas. Como o marketing vem utilizando novas tecnologias isso demanda mudanças constantes de ajustes às plataformas sociais no ambiente digital e faltam insights sobre o marketing digital brasileiro. Considerando a economia digital, o comportamento do consumidor e a cultura tecnológica, os cinco artigos levantam questões interessantes sobre como a publicidade viral e as plataformas de imagem/vídeo/áudio afetam as medidas de resposta do consumidor (por exemplo, compras on-line) e criam experiências de mídia social. Tais experiências incluem ambientes *omnichannel* que conectam e criam ecossistemas entre empresas, consumidores, governos, partes interessadas e profissionais de marketing em redes organizadas.

Palavras-chave: comportamento do consumidor; marketing digital; estrutura; estratégia de marketing; tecnologia.

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INTRODUCTION

The Brazilian marketing field has been changing in the last three decades in terms of research topics, focus, and methods (Froemming et al., 2000; Vieira, 2003) to consider conscious consumption, consumer culture, and resistance to unnecessary consumption (Quintão & Morais, 2019). Technologies have transformed firms' competition and strategies over the last 30 years, considerably affecting the markets, resulting in profound changes in all marketing subfields and research topics (Mazzon & Hernandez, 2013). The firms' competition and strategies are now shaping consumer behavior through key touchpoints where digital technologies have a significant impact (Kannan & Li, 2017). For better grasping the role of technologies, consumers, and governments in digital marketing, we needed a Special Issue discussing the new findings and further avenues in this stream of research.

As *Journal of Contemporary Administration* (RAC) is a "journal focused on contemporary issues without losing sight of historicity and future perspectives" (https://rac.anpad.org.br/index.php/rac/foco, retrieved on August 3, 2023), and Brazilian scholars have been studying marketing evolution since 1990's (Froemming et al., 2000; Leite, 2008; Mazzon & Hernandez, 2013; Vieira, 1998; 2003), it is time to call for the vanguard with a specialized look at ethical, diversity, responsibility, governance, and sustainability issues. Considering that smartphones (1) provide a source for consumers to purchase products, allowing feedback from firms and brands (Almeida et al., 2018; Leite & Baptista, 2022), (2) develop a place for social media environments deliver spaces for sharing experiences,

brand activism (Zanette, 2023), and online engagement (Silva et al., 2020), (3) present interactive environments and platforms for purchase (Voorveld et al., 2018), and (4) evoke advertising capability of turning viral (Isabella et al., 2023), there is a relevant gap for discussing digital marketing in Brazil. Brazilian scientific community is young and vibrant, with academic institutional connections and interorganizational research networks (Brei et al., 2020).

We recover the *RAE — Revista de Administração de Empresas* Forum "Scientific Knowledge in Marketing in Brazil: Perspectives for the Development of Research and Theory." Seventeen years after Rossi and Farias (2006) discussed three marketing articles calling a 'moment of passage,' and indicated that in "the coming years, by natural evolution, we will have a marked commitment to a more active and expressive insertion at the frontier of knowledge in our discipline" (Rossi & Farias, 2006, p. 12), in this issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Administration* (RAC), we address and contribute to this gap discussing how some Brazilian scholars attempt to build bridges between digital marketing, consumers, markets, and firms' applications.

The five selected papers of this Special Issue raise questions about how viral advertising and image/video/audio platforms affect online purchases and create social media experiences. Such experiences include omnichannel environments, connection and creation of an ecosystem across firms, consumers, governments, stakeholders, and marketing professionals in organized networks. We explain how these empirical investigations are intertwined in shaping Brazilian digital marketing. Figure 1 depicts the framework of digital marketing considering scholars evidence.
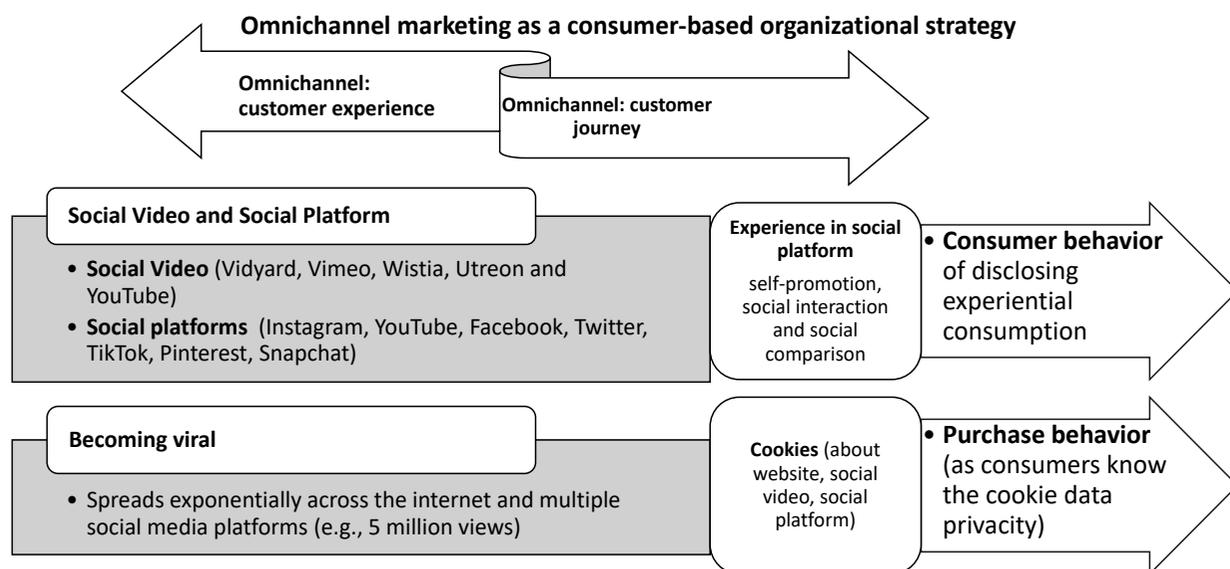

Figure 1. Scholars insights and conceptual framework.
Source: Developed by the authors.

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USING SOCIAL VIDEOS AND PLATFORMS FOR VIRALITY

Isabella et al. (2023) analyze how going viral on advertising YouTube videos changes the way that marketers use and deliver value. Firms are shifting their marketing strategies from traditional offline environments to digital online video platforms and using technologies for collecting data, developing new solutions, and delivering value. Private companies, such as V4 Campany (the biggest digital marketing firm in Brazil), have generated videos for different partners and customers, aiming to become viral. Isabella's et al. (2023) paper shows how attributes in advertising and online videos should be use for improving firm performance. The authors analyze videos with unique attributes via narrative, purpose, interaction, real characters, celebrities, technical themes, humor, and market, suggesting that the congruence of advertisements for companies has the greatest sharing potential when using video platforms (e.g., Vidyard, Vimeo, Wistia, Utreon, and YouTube).

Becheri et al. (2023) center their analysis on platforms' features. They suggest that platforms offer a bridge that mediates and standardizes the interactions between the actors of the market, allowing the construction and popularization of the modest fashion market, once stigmatized (see also Santos et al., 2015, for a review on e-commerce and fashion). Platforms are useful for generating information being a channel for integrating customers in the product development and monetary transactions. Becheri et al. (2023) then connect internet customers → platforms → information → fashion market. Table 1 presents the Brazilian scholars insights on digital marketing.

Table 1. RAC scholars' insights about digital marketing.

Brazilian scholars	What we are learning in digital marketing?
Isabella et al. (2023)	Firms are looking for acting and balancing their strategies in traditional offline environments and digital online video platforms .
Becheri et al. (2023)	Platforms are useful for generating information being a channel for integrating customers in the product development and monetary transactions.
Richarde et al. (2023)	"Cookie acceptance positively influences intention, only when the consumers accept cookie collection and when they have a need for the product" (p. 2).
Floriano and Silva (2023)	"Exploring the symbolic character and status of experiences in digital environments are ways to increase the consumption of this type of product".
Gasparin and Slongo (2023)	Improving omnichannel strategies necessitates understanding how consumers experience multiple touchpoints with firms along their journey to purchase products and services

Note. Developed by the authors.

The top Brazilian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in 2022 (e.g., ChildFund Brasil, *Associação Cultural Pisada do Sertão, Amigos do Bem, Visão Mundial, Vaga Lume*, etc.) are all active in the platforms, and also use their affordances to gain legitimacy and find different forms for transactions, leveraging both the social and the transactional assumptions. These non-governmental organizations might use the ideas of Isabella et al. (2023) and Becheri et al. (2023) for becoming viral and collecting feedback from customers in a co-productive way for developing social and voluntary actions. What we learn from Isabella et al. (2023)and Becheri et al. (2023) studies? We know that firms, NGOs, and influencers need to manage the information and attributes via narratives that should navigate the different platforms when their aim is to go viral. But what are the pieces of data and consumers' feelings behind the video and social platforms? The next two papers in this *Journal of Contemporary Administration* issue discuss the role of cookies (data tracker) and consumers' experience.

TRACKING DATA USING VIDEOS AND PLATFORMS: THE ROLE OF COOKIES AND EXPERIENCE

Social platforms, such as YouTube and Instagram, use website cookies as a form of identifying consumers. Website cookies, for example, can assist marketers in tracking the customer journey (Richarde et al., 2023), and indicate the avenues that a potential customer takes from early stages of awareness about an offer to the final stage of purchase decision (Tueanrat et al., 2021). Richarde et al.'s (2023) research shows that accepting website cookies increases consumer's purchase intention only when the consumer accepts cookies collections. The authors advance our knowledge by explaining how useful are website cookies for creating customization, understanding the buyer, and shaping consumer purchase intention. The rationality is to create an ethical procedure for users accept the cookies collections in order to customize, and understand the

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way that individuals use the internet. Richarde et al. (2023) suggest that "cookie acceptance positively influences purchase intention, only when the consumer accepts cookie collection and when they have a need for the product" (Richarde et al., 2023, p. 2), resulting in a higher level of aids related to information exposure. According to the authors, providing extra data to buyers about how firms collect cookies is beneficial, constructive and increase purchase attitude.

Using social platforms for creating, communicating, and delivering value orients marketing to become a more data-driven discipline, grounded in analytics (Zahay, 2021), empirical data systematic estimation (Ramaswamy et al., 1993), qualitative research (M. C. Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2022), and traditional marketing theory (Hunt, 1999; Toaldo & Luce, 2006). Consequently, grasping user experience (UX) by extracting insights and considering their experience is relevant for mapping consumption. Floriano and Silva (2023) cover the UX and analyze the behavior of disclosing experiences on social networks. When verifying the conspicuity in consumption and exposition of experiences, they conclude that consumers are focusing more on symbolic meanings than on satisfying psychological needs when adhering to experiential consumption. The authors address a gap and disseminate a customer-centric culture, which is fostering the Brazilian UX. This digital issue aligns, in practice, firms that are experimentally developing UX strategies, such as Ambev, *Oficina*, Co.Aktion, Estrela/PeopleXperience, *Instituto Cliente Feliz*, and HFOCUS. Floriano and Silva (2023) indicate "that self-promotion, social interaction and social comparison in digital environments encourage the consumption of experiences as a conspicuous activity (p.5)".

CONNECTING THE DOTS BY MEANS OF OMNICHANNEL STRATEGIES

In Brazil, omnichannel has been growing fast. According to a survey carried out by the company Linx, in the first half of 2022, omnichannel consumption grew by 20% in Brazil, with the 'pick-up' modality growing 90% in the same period (Guia da Farmácia, 2023). Omnichannel is a cross-channel content strategy that firms use to advance their user experience, cookies data collection, relationship development with their targets across multiple touchpoints and selling. Gasparin and Slongo (2023) c) cover this point by introducing and explaining how omnichannel has two different perspectives (e.g., customers versus consumers across journeys). Across 29 empirical studies on omnichannel customers, Gasparin and Slongo (2023) eexplain omnichannel strategy according to two dimensions, suggesting that customer develop experience and enjoyment on navigating in the web, and customer journey, as they are looking for voyages that facilitate firms' interaction. Arezzo (connecting online and offline stores), Magalu (developing the largest marketplace for Brazilian small business), Cacau Show (with experiential stores at Morumbi Shopping, in São Paulo), and Natura (as salespeople post links for offers and pick up at store) are examples of omnichannel strategies that are online-based.

In this Special Issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Administration*, we explain how Brazilian scholars generate insights considering digital marketing, consumers, and firms' applications. Five marketing papers contribute to the discussion of digital marketing from different managerial and theoretical perspectives, such as omnichannel (Gasparin & Slongo, 2023), online purchases (Richarde et al., 2023), social media experiences (Floriano & Silva, 2023), viral advertising (Isabella et al., 2023), and Instagram platform (Becheri et al., 2023). To add value to the enriching discussion from these papers, Table 2 presents examples of Brazilian firms that are using digital marketing strategies.

Table 2. Brazilian examples of digital marketing.

Brazilian firm	Example
Coral Tintas	In Brazil, *Coral* has an app to show how the chosen paint color will be displayed in the customer room.
R2U	R2U provides a tool for companies such as furniture stores.
Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein	*Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein* offers an interactive gamification application to reassure children who will undergo a computed tomography (CT) exam.
O Boticário	The campaign uses artificial reality (AR) on YouTube videos with a call-to-action video to test the company lipsticks.
Tetra Pak, Toyota, ThyssenKrupp	Tetra Pak uses mixed virtual reality glasses in their production line called Hololens, developed by Microsoft (remote access to production line).
Apiguana (see also Europ Assistance Brasil, Cielo, etc.)	Apiguana uses omnichannel to optimize customer service via e-commerce (i.e., Vtex platform). The platform uses product registration, integration of means of payment, shipping, and other touchpoints.

Note. Developed by the authors.

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FINAL REMARKS

Marketing professionals should reflect the role of personalization and hyper-targeting. Considering digital marketing strategy, firms can now use real-time data, artificial intelligence, and machine learning algorithms (P. Ferreira et al., 2023) to deliver highly targeted and customized content and products. For example, Netflix has been shifting from customized recommendations to customized product images. Consumers are now experiencing a new culture of voice search and smart devices. By using voice search, buyers enable smart voice devices to purchase products on Starbucks and Domino's, call Uber, ask for financial advice on Citi Bank, and summarize TED talks — for instance, Ivee Sleek, Jibo, Athom Homey, and LG Vacuum Cleaner. Marketers will develop strategies to account for voice-based queries to connect with potential consumers.

Artificial intelligence and automation keep playing a noteworthy role in developing chatbots (e.g., VoeGOL, Magalu), predictive analytics (e.g., IBM Wimbledon Championship predictive analysis for the winner), and automated content creation. A new culture of using and experiencing artificial intelligence and automation is shaping consumer behavior. Scholars also have been applying artificial intelligence for developing insights and manuscripts (Farias, 2023). Whole Foods Corporation leverages artificial intelligence for custom-made message automation, enhancing efficiency. Other firms use artificial intelligence and automation for improving blog traffic or personalizing quiz content.

Consumers believe in the content created by other consumers or influencers in an e-word-of-mouth experience. This process, called user-generated content, is connected to the practice of influencer marketing and will continue relevant in changing consumer perceptions. Best Brazilian brands from 2022/2023 (by Interbrand), Porto, Havaianas, Assai, Cielo, Claro, Nu, XP investments, and others) are examples of user-generated content aimed to create buzz marketing across new customers. In addition, firm-generated content calls for using augmented reality and virtual reality for providing new purchase dynamics and interactive connections with brands (Vieira et al., 2022). Marketers use augmented reality and virtual reality to influence offers' presentation as this technology reshapes how buyers experience products. *Igui Piscinas* and *Roca Brasil Cerámica* are examples of applications and sensory technology to present the latest offers for consumers.

Digital environments create an opportunity for dealing with data. However, data privacy and ethical marketing are mandatory conditions for shaping business. Big data services marketing solutions are available in different segments, with a concentration in banking and financial institutions, retail, and telecom. This market is expected to increase by USD 153.75 trillion by 2027 (Technavio, 2022). Marketers will need to take care of data privacy, secure customer data, and transparency about data use, always following ethical rules (Angelo, 2003). Personal information demands more control and confidentiality for consumers.

Digital marketing evolved from encompassing one-to-one interactive marketing (in terms of direct marketing and interactivity) to co-creation and co-production processes with the assistance of social media and customer-to-customer platforms (Zahay, 2021). First, LEGO Ideas uses co-creation to its community, as consumers have access to LEGO kits. When those achieve +10,000 votes, they are studied by senior marketing management staff. Second, LEGO Serious Play procedure curated by Strategic Play Global aim to resolve poverty and major societal problems, which is another United Nations (UN) goal. The actual digital marketing environment initiates in a collaborative system's structure and focuses on commercial interactions between companies, providing value creation (Busca & Bertrandias, 2020).

Sharing economy, collaborative systems, and collaborative consumers that both produce and consume (prosumers) content and traditional firms handle the production in digital network platforms with coordination tasks to satisfy customers' expectations (see Silva et al., 2016, for a review on collaborative systems). The digital marketing structure posits value delivery and share between partner companies at the center of this marketing process, but also needs to consider "digital enclave movements as a unique means by which racialized market actors redirect their resources" (Brouard et al., 2023, p. 56). Digital marketing considers consumers that use technology for purchasing and manages digital content marketing, search engine, social media, web optimization, conversion rate and sales funnel for better creating user experience (Floriano & Silva, 2023).

In summary, *Journal of Contemporary Administration* promotes this discussion in the Brazilian digital marketing field by advancing on how the authors build connections among digital marketing, marketplace, consumers, and firms' applications by means of empirical investigations.

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Conflict of Interest

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