SEO vs. UX in Web Design:
Are Companies' Digital Marketing Strategies Correct? A Neurotechnological Study

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ABSTRACT

This work addresses a research gap in digital marketing by attempting to compare the effort in achieving the best organic search engine ranking with the effort in providing the best user experience in web navigation. The objective is to validate companies' efforts in the digital world, and the study is focused on the toy sector in Spain, specifically on the Google search engine, measuring the user experience in web browsing through neuromarketing biometrics. The top 30 results for each Google search were collected for the 638 keywords related to toys in Spain. Subsequently, the three best-positioned websites for the Google search results were determined, and their user experience was measured using neuromarketing biometrics, triangulated with qualitative research. This approach allows for contrasting brand authority in the digital world (visibility in a search) with the user experience in navigation (trust and ease of purchase decision-making). Results indicate that the best-positioned websites do not necessarily correspond to the best web navigation experiences.

KEYWORDS

Digital Marketing, SEO, UX, Neuromarketing, Organic Positioning, Web Usability, User Experience, Toy

Digital technologies and online consumption are exerting a significant influence on consumer behavior, with an increasing number of people connecting to the internet worldwide (Hien & Nhu, 2022). Users can engage and interact with other consumers who share similar interests; interaction is no longer limited to businesses selling to consumers. Consumers who access the internet through any electronic device to explore a specific product, decide to make a purchase online, and receive it at the specified address are referred to as online consumers. They are characterized as highly sensitive, often sharing their experiences through social media and online forums (Moschini, 2012).

The purchasing behavior of users has changed dramatically and become more complex due to the increased use of social media and mobile phones. They now have the option to access products and services through both online stores and physical stores, as many brands have multiple points

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of contact with the user. This is one of the reasons why digital marketing through mobile devices is on the rise, as its purpose is to showcase and recommend products that meet user needs (Togawa et al., 2017). A poor experience in the customer journey map (physical and/or digital) can lead the consumer to switch to another company, while a positive experience is a result of all the interactions the consumer has had through any device and digital channel regarding the product, the service received from the company—including post-sales service—and the brand itself. Additionally, within user communications in digital environments, user trust in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) influences users' brand awareness (Jan et al., 2023). This eWOM, crucial for the decision-making of online users, is based on the certainty and connection users have with the brand, as well as relative value and their customer experience (Cuong Hung, 2021).

The emerging competitiveness among products and services has highlighted the need to emphasize digital marketing strategies in order to create intangible added value for users and potential customers, aimed at building a favorable image for the products being promoted (Buvar & Gati, 2023). To design a digital-marketing strategy, it is necessary to assess the target audience, its duration, what needs to be communicated, and the appropriate means for its dissemination. For a company to sell its services, it needs to have the highest possible number of leads. To achieve this, various techniques and strategies must be developed by taking action through the available digital channels of the company, as well as those that are not online (Meyer, 2021).

The objective of this work is to empirically compare, using available digital and neuromarketing tools, the effort devoted to achieving the best natural search engine positioning with the effort to provide the best user experience in web navigation, with the goal of validating whether these efforts are aligned by companies in the digital world. The novelty of the work is focused on a gap in digital-marketing research, which aims to correlate search engine optimization (SEO) efforts with user experience (UX). In order to empirically measure this, neuromarketing biometrics were used.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Marketing

Internet marketing or digital marketing involves the transmission of information about a company's products or services through online media, helping companies interact with their consumers and build a brand identity for their products. In this way, companies build consumers' confidence, creating a compelling reason for consumers to make the decision to purchase from them (Wani, 2023). Currently, digital marketing plays a more prominent role in brand building for businesses in the modern world than does traditional marketing (Erhan et al., 2023), and users are more drawn to digital media than to traditional ones. This shift in purchasing behavior helps brands better understand consumers so they can devise suitable marketing strategies, both to retain current customers and to reach potential markets.

The use of digital marketing and its tools enables customer loyalty, increases the number of customers and sales, gains recognition of the brand from a significant portion of the population beyond regular customers, fosters company growth, and positions the brand in the market; consequently, the company becomes more competitive, enhancing business profitability (Hussain & Ayob, 2023). To achieve this, the most commonly used tools companies use to implement this strategy are websites and social media due to the substantial user base these platforms have (Moncayo Sanchez et al., 2023).

The Digital Consumer

Over the last 20 years, the proliferation of digital technologies has had a significant impact on business operations and how consumers gather information, interact, and make purchases (Sağkaya Güngör & Ozansoy Çadirci, 2022). Digitization has become an essential aspect of conventional consumption patterns, enabling significant growth in the use of mobile channels, sustainable consumption, user-generated content, and social-media engagement. The digital consumer can interact in both the online

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