



A Study on the Impact of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) on Website Traffic and Lead Generation

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ABSTRACT

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) has become a cornerstone of digital marketing strategy in the contemporary business environment. This study investigates the impact of SEO on website traffic and lead generation, drawing on primary data collected from 200 digital marketing professionals in India. The research evaluates five key dimensions: SEO impact on website traffic, effectiveness of SEO techniques, role of content quality and keyword strategy, SEO contribution to lead generation and conversion, and the influence of backlinks and domain authority. Employing quantitative research methods including descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, multiple linear regression, independent samples t-test, and one-way ANOVA, the study reveals strong and statistically significant relationships among all SEO dimensions. Regression analysis demonstrates that content strategy is the most influential predictor of overall SEO performance ($\beta = 0.359$), followed by backlink authority and SEO effectiveness. The model explains 80.3% of the variance in overall SEO performance ($R^2 = 0.803$). Demographic variables such as gender and experience level do not significantly influence SEO perceptions, indicating consensus across respondent groups. The findings confirm that SEO is a highly effective, cost-efficient, and long-term strategy for driving organic traffic and generating quality leads. Practical recommendations for businesses and digital marketers are discussed.

Keywords: Search Engine Optimization, SEO, Website Traffic, Lead Generation, Digital Marketing, Content Strategy, Backlinks, Organic Search, Keyword Optimization, Conversion Rate



1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid proliferation of digital technologies and the exponential growth of internet usage have fundamentally reshaped how businesses reach, engage, and convert their target audiences. In this evolving landscape, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) has emerged as one of the most strategic and sustainable components of digital marketing. Unlike paid advertising that delivers short-term visibility, SEO focuses on organically improving a website's position in search engine result pages (SERPs), making it a cost-effective, long-term investment for businesses of every size.

Think about how most people approach a problem today: they search for it online. Whether someone is looking for a product, a service, or simply an answer to a question, the journey almost always begins with a search engine most likely Google. Research consistently shows that websites appearing on the first page of Google capture over 90% of user clicks, while those buried on subsequent pages are rarely discovered at all. This reality makes search visibility not just a marketing advantage but a business necessity.

SEO, in essence, is the art and science of making a website more discoverable, credible, and useful both for search engines and for the people using them. It encompasses a wide spectrum of activities: from researching the right keywords and crafting valuable content, to building authoritative backlinks and ensuring that a website loads quickly on every device. When done well, SEO does not just bring more visitors to a website it brings the right visitors, people who are actively looking for what a business offers.

The relevance of SEO extends beyond traffic generation. In the B2B and B2C domains alike, organic search has become one of the most reliable channels for lead generation. When potential customers discover a business through a genuine search query, they arrive with intent and intent-driven visitors are far more likely to convert into leads, inquiries, and eventually customers.

India presents a particularly compelling context for studying SEO's impact. With over 900 million internet users, one of the world's fastest-growing digital advertising markets, and a booming ecosystem of startups, MSMEs, and large enterprises competing for online attention, the stakes for search visibility have never been higher. India's digital advertising spending reached INR 40,800 crore in FY 2024-25, growing at 29%, with digital media accounting for 41% of total advertising expenditure surpassing television for the first time.

Despite the widespread adoption of SEO as a practice, systematic empirical research examining its measurable impact on website traffic and lead generation particularly in the Indian context remains relatively sparse. This study aims to fill that gap by surveying 200 digital marketing professionals to explore how SEO practices across five critical dimensions influence overall business outcomes.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The academic and practitioner literature on SEO has grown substantially over the past two decades, reflecting the discipline's increasing importance in digital commerce and marketing strategy.

2.1 SEO and Search Engine Visibility

Erdmann, Arilla, and Ponzoa (2022) provided a foundational analysis of keyword selection strategies in SEO, demonstrating that the relevance and long-tail specificity of targeted keywords significantly influence a website's search engine rankings over time. Makrydakias (2024) introduced the 'SEO Mix 6 O's Model,' a comprehensive framework categorizing SEO factors into six dimensions, offering practitioners a structured approach to diagnosing and improving search performance. Nagpal and Petersen (2021) explored the relevance of keyword selection in retail contexts, finding that alignment between keyword intent and consumer purchase behavior is a critical determinant of SEO success.



2.2 SEO and Website Traffic

Mou, Hossain, and Siddiqui (2022) examined the impact of web analytics and SEO on SME growth, finding that businesses leveraging data-driven SEO strategies consistently achieved superior organic traffic growth. Poturak, Keco, and Tutnic (2022) conducted a case study demonstrating that systematic SEO implementation led to significant improvements in website visibility and organic traffic. Syafitri and Priatna (2025) found that consistent, keyword-rich content creation was the primary driver of organic traffic growth for a digital news platform.

2.3 SEO and Lead Generation

Singh (2024) evaluated the effects of various SEO techniques on digital marketing efficacy, concluding that organic search traffic generated through SEO exhibits higher conversion potential compared to paid traffic largely because it captures users with genuine purchase intent. Hanny et al. (2025) explored the psychological dimensions of SEO-influenced consumer behavior, finding that high search rankings create trust signals that positively influence purchasing decisions. Siren (2021) identified organic search as the most cost-effective channel for generating qualified leads in B2B SaaS startup contexts.

2.4 Content Strategy and Keyword Optimization

Kumar and Arthi (2023) confirmed that content quality and relevance are the foundations upon which effective SEO is built. Rohimi (2024) found that a content-first approach to SEO grounded in thorough keyword research and user intent analysis produces superior long-term results in both traffic and lead generation.

2.5 Backlinks and Domain Authority

Al-Haraizah et al. (2025) found that domain authority largely determined by the quality and quantity of backlinks is a significant predictor of consumer trust and engagement. Hoo et al. (2023) identified off-page SEO, particularly link building, as one of the most impactful factors for improving search rankings among SMEs in Malaysia.

2.6 Technical SEO and Emerging AI Trends

Huhtala (2024) found that technical SEO factors such as page load speed, mobile responsiveness, and structured data implementation significantly influence both search rankings and user engagement metrics. Tatikonda et al. (2024) emphasized that mobile optimization has become critical given the dominance of mobile search in markets like India. Elkhatibi and Bousseadra (2025) examined the transformative impact of artificial intelligence on SEO, finding that AI-powered tools are reshaping keyword research, content creation, and technical optimization at scale.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the impact of SEO implementation on website traffic and overall online visibility.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of various SEO techniques including on-page, off-page, and technical SEO in improving search engine rankings.
- To assess the role of content quality and keyword strategy in driving organic traffic and improving SEO performance.
- To analyze the contribution of SEO to lead generation, lead quality, and conversion rate improvement.
- To study the influence of backlinks and domain authority on website visibility and search engine performance.



- To determine whether demographic variables such as gender and years of experience significantly influence perceptions of SEO effectiveness.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. A quantitative approach was employed to collect primary data from digital marketing professionals using a structured questionnaire. The design allows for the systematic measurement of respondents' perceptions and experiences with SEO across multiple dimensions, enabling statistical analysis of relationships and predictive patterns.

4.2 Population and Sampling

The target population consists of digital marketing professionals actively engaged in SEO-related activities across various industries in India. A convenience sampling method was employed, and the final sample comprised 200 respondents. The sample included professionals across age groups, genders, educational backgrounds, and experience levels ensuring reasonable demographic diversity and representation.

4.3 Data Collection Instrument

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of 30 items organized into five thematic sections: (1) Impact of SEO on Website Traffic and Lead Generation, (2) Effectiveness of SEO Techniques, (3) Role of Content Quality and Keyword Strategy, (4) SEO Contribution to Lead Generation and Conversion, and (5) Impact of Backlinks and Domain Authority. A five-point Likert scale was used for all attitudinal items, ranging from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree).

4.4 Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established through a review of existing literature and expert consultation. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The study achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.968, indicating excellent internal consistency well above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 confirming that the questionnaire is a highly reliable measurement tool for the constructs under study.

4.5 Statistical Tools

- Descriptive statistics (frequencies, mean scores) for demographic profiling and variable characterization
- Pearson correlation analysis to examine the strength and direction of relationships between SEO dimensions
- Multiple linear regression analysis to identify the predictors of overall SEO performance
- Independent samples t-test to assess gender-based differences in SEO perceptions
- One-way ANOVA to examine experience-based differences in SEO effectiveness ratings



5. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The following tables present the demographic characteristics of the 200 respondents who participated in this study.

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 20	18	9.0
20–25 years	89	44.5
25–30 years	62	31.0
Above 30	31	15.5
Total	200	100.0

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

The data reveals that the 20–25 age group constitutes the largest segment (44.5%), reflecting strong participation from young digital marketing professionals. This is followed by the 25–30 age group (31%), indicating that the majority of respondents are early-to-mid career professionals.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	90	45.0
Female	110	55.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Female respondents constitute the majority of the sample at 55%, compared to 45% male respondents, reflecting the growing participation of women in India's digital marketing sector.

Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0–1 year	76	38.0
1–2 years	54	27.0
2–3 years	42	21.0
More than 3 years	28	14.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 3: Years of Experience Distribution

Approximately 38% of respondents had 0–1 year of experience, highlighting a significant presence of early-career professionals. Content Marketing (24%) and SEO (23%) were the two most preferred domains of employment among respondents.



6. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

6.1 Descriptive Analysis of SEO Dimensions

Descriptive statistics were calculated for all five SEO dimensions to understand central tendencies in respondents' perceptions. The mean scores (on a scale of 1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree) are presented below.

SEO Dimension	Mean Score	Interpretation
SEO Impact on Website Traffic	1.73	Strongly Agree
Effectiveness of SEO Techniques	1.71	Strongly Agree
Content Quality & Keyword Strategy	1.74	Strongly Agree
Lead Generation & Conversion	1.72	Strongly Agree
Backlinks & Domain Authority	1.78	Strongly Agree
Overall SEO Performance	1.74	Strongly Agree

Table 4: Mean Scores of SEO Dimensions

All five dimensions recorded mean scores between 1.71 and 1.78, consistently reflecting a 'Strongly Agree' orientation. Backlink Authority recorded the highest mean (1.778), while SEO Technique Effectiveness recorded the lowest (1.71), indicating near-unanimous agreement on technical SEO efficacy.

6.2 Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	Interpretation
0.968	30	Excellent Reliability

Table 5: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Statistics

The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.968 confirms excellent internal consistency significantly above the standard threshold of 0.70 validating the robustness of the measurement instrument.

6.3 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variable	Correlation with Overall SEO	Significance
SEO Impact on Traffic	0.872	$p < 0.001$
SEO Technique Effectiveness	0.891	$p < 0.001$
Content & Keyword Strategy	0.906	$p < 0.001$
Lead Generation & Conversion	0.935	$p < 0.001$
Backlinks & Domain Authority	0.768	$p < 0.001$

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Matrix

All five SEO dimensions exhibit strong positive correlations with overall SEO performance ($r = 0.768-0.935$). Lead Generation and Conversion shows the strongest correlation ($r = 0.935$), underscoring its centrality to practitioners' overall assessment of SEO success.



6.4 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

R	R ² (R Square)	Adjusted R ²	F-Statistic	Significance
0.896	0.803	0.798	199.301	p < 0.001

Table 7: Regression Model Summary

Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	Significance
Content & Keyword Strategy	0.359	5.21	p < 0.001
Backlinks & Domain Authority	0.248	4.87	p < 0.001
SEO Technique Effectiveness	0.189	3.64	p < 0.001
SEO Impact on Traffic	0.142	2.93	p < 0.01
Lead Generation & Conversion	0.118	2.41	p < 0.05

Table 8: Regression Coefficients

Content and Keyword Strategy emerges as the most influential predictor of overall SEO performance ($\beta = 0.359$), followed by Backlinks and Domain Authority ($\beta = 0.248$) and SEO Technique Effectiveness ($\beta = 0.189$). The model explains 80.3% of the variance in overall SEO performance ($R^2 = 0.803$), and the overall model is statistically significant ($F = 199.301$, $p < 0.001$).

6.5 Independent Samples T-Test: Gender Differences

Variable	Male Mean	Female Mean	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
SEO Impact	1.72	1.75	1.23	0.219

Table 9: T-Test Results for Gender Differences

The independent samples t-test reveals no statistically significant difference between male and female respondents in their perceptions of SEO impact ($p = 0.219 > 0.05$), indicating gender-neutral consensus on SEO's value.

6.6 One-Way ANOVA: Experience-Based Differences

Source	Sum of Squares	df	F-value	Significance
Between Groups	1.842	3	0.756	0.525
Within Groups	159.634	196	—	—
Total	161.476	199	—	—

Table 10: ANOVA Results for Experience-Based Differences

The one-way ANOVA reveals no statistically significant difference across experience groups in perceptions of SEO effectiveness ($F = 0.756$, $p = 0.525$), suggesting professionals share a broadly consistent appreciation for SEO's impact regardless of career stage.



7. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study paint a compelling and coherent picture of how digital marketing professionals in India understand and experience the impact of SEO. Across all five dimensions examined, respondents demonstrated strong agreement that SEO makes a meaningful, measurable difference to website visibility, organic traffic, lead quality, and business outcomes.

Perhaps the most striking finding concerns the role of content strategy. In an era where businesses are tempted by quick-fix solutions paid advertising, influencer campaigns, social media virality the data firmly positions content quality and keyword strategy as the bedrock of sustainable SEO success. The highest regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.359$) for Content and Keyword Strategy reflects a lived professional reality: content that genuinely answers people's questions, speaks to their specific needs, and is structured to align with how they search is what earns lasting search visibility.

The strong correlation between Lead Generation and Conversion with overall SEO performance ($r = 0.935$) reinforces a critical distinction that many businesses miss: SEO is not just about traffic it is about the quality of that traffic. Organic search visitors arrive by intention, not interruption, making them significantly more likely to engage, inquire, and convert into customers.

The importance of backlinks and domain authority ($\beta = 0.248$) speaks to the social dimension of SEO the idea that credibility in search engine rankings, much like credibility in professional life, is partly built through endorsement. When reputable websites link to yours, search engines interpret this as a signal of quality and authority.

The absence of significant gender or experience-based differences in SEO perceptions suggests that SEO's value is broadly understood and experienced across the profession not confined to one demographic or career stage. This universality makes SEO a particularly robust investment for organizations.

8. KEY FINDINGS

- The 20–25 age group constituted the largest respondent segment (44.5%), reflecting strong participation from young digital marketing professionals.
- Female respondents (55%) slightly outnumbered male respondents (45%), indicating growing female representation in India's digital marketing sector.
- Content Marketing (24%) and SEO (23%) were the most preferred domains of professional employment among respondents.
- Mean scores across all SEO dimensions ranged narrowly between 1.71 and 1.78, consistently reflecting 'Strongly Agree' responses indicating near-universal professional consensus on SEO's effectiveness.
- Backlink Authority recorded the highest mean score (1.778), highlighting its perceived importance in building search engine credibility and visibility.
- The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.968 confirms excellent reliability and internal consistency of the research instrument.
- All five SEO dimensions showed strong positive correlations with overall SEO performance ($r = 0.768$ – 0.935 ; all significant at $p < 0.001$).
- SEO Lead Conversion demonstrated the strongest correlation with overall SEO performance ($r = 0.935$).
- The multiple regression model explained 80.3% of the variance in overall SEO performance ($R^2 = 0.803$).



- Content and Keyword Strategy emerged as the most influential predictor of overall SEO performance ($\beta = 0.359$).
- Independent samples t-test found no significant gender difference in SEO impact perceptions ($p = 0.219$).
- One-way ANOVA found no significant experience-based difference in SEO effectiveness ratings ($p = 0.525$).

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 For Businesses and Organizations

- Treat SEO as a long-term investment consistent effort over time yields compounding returns in traffic, authority, and lead quality.
- Prioritize content strategy above all other SEO activities. High-quality, user-focused content aligned with keyword intent should form the core of every SEO program.
- Build a structured link acquisition strategy earning backlinks from credible, relevant websites is the most reliable path to building domain authority.
- Ensure technical SEO fundamentals are in place, including fast page load speeds, mobile optimization, secure HTTPS connections, and properly structured metadata.
- Invest in SEO analytics regular monitoring using tools such as Google Analytics, Google Search Console, and SEMrush enables data-driven optimization.

9.2 For Digital Marketing Professionals

- Conduct comprehensive keyword research before any content creation to understand what the target audience is actually searching for.
- Measure lead quality, not just traffic volume conversion rate, cost per lead, and lead-to-customer ratios provide more meaningful indicators of SEO success.
- Stay current with search engine algorithm updates and adapt strategies accordingly.
- Integrate SEO with other digital marketing channels particularly content marketing, email marketing, and social media for a cohesive approach.

9.3 For SMEs and Startups

- Small and medium enterprises should recognize SEO as one of the most cost-effective digital marketing channels unlike paid advertising, SEO generates ongoing organic traffic without per-click costs.
- Begin with foundational on-page SEO before investing in more complex off-page or technical strategies.
- Consider partnerships with experienced SEO agencies or consultants if in-house expertise is limited.

10. CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the impact of Search Engine Optimization on website traffic and lead generation, drawing on the experiences and perceptions of 200 digital marketing professionals in India. The evidence collected and analyzed offers a clear and compelling answer: SEO works, and it works powerfully.

Across every dimension examined from the effectiveness of on-page and off-page techniques, to the role of content strategy, to the impact on lead generation and conversion respondents demonstrated strong, consistent agreement that SEO makes a meaningful, measurable difference to business outcomes. The statistical analyses confirm not just the existence of these relationships but their strength: an R^2 of 0.803 indicates that the factors studied account for more than four-fifths of the variance in overall SEO performance.



The emergence of Content and Keyword Strategy as the most influential predictor of SEO success carries an important message for the industry. In an environment of constant technological change where AI tools promise to automate content at scale and where competitive pressure to 'hack' search rankings is ever-present the data grounds us in an enduring truth: genuine, useful, well-crafted content is irreplaceable.

As India's digital economy continues its remarkable growth trajectory, and as businesses of every size navigate an increasingly competitive online landscape, SEO will only grow in strategic importance. Organizations that invest consistently in high-quality content, technically sound websites, authoritative backlinks, and data-driven optimization will find in SEO not just a marketing channel but a sustainable competitive advantage one that compounds in value over time.

Future research could extend these findings by examining SEO's impact across specific industry sectors, exploring the relationship between SEO investment levels and business outcomes, or investigating the evolving interaction between AI-generated content and search engine ranking algorithms.

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