
CONVERSION RATE OPTIMIZATION (CRO): A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF TECHNIQUES, TESTING METHODS, AND USER EXPERIENCE

Md Saifullah Khalid¹, Ankur Kumar Agrawal², Nyarik Geyi³, Jai Anand Shukul⁴, Vipul Jain⁵

¹Associate Professor, Associate Professor, Faculty of Business Management & Commerce Usha Martin University, Jharkhand

²Professor, Institute of Business Management and Commerce, Mangalayatan University, Aligarh, UP

³Assistant Professor, Department of Business & Management, Himalayan University, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh

⁴Associate Professor, Department of Management, Mangalayatan University, Jabalpur, MP

⁵Associate Professor, Department of Management, Sikkim Professional University, Gangtok, Sikkim

Email ID: saif.kh92@gmail.com, ankur.agarwal@mangalayatan.edu.in

Abstract

Conversion rate optimisation (CRO) is crucial in digital marketing since even small gains in conversion rates have a significant impact on revenue. This study looks at testing procedures, user experience (UX), and CRO tactics. By meticulously searching through academic databases for recent and comprehensive writings on the subject, it provides insights for academics and marketers. The study's conceptual framework defines CRO and examines elements such as the user experience, the conversion funnel, website design, usability, content relevance, trust signals, and outside impacts. A/B testing, multivariate testing, customization, behavioural targeting, copywriting, design optimisation, call-to-action optimisation, social proof, trust signals, and pricing strategies are all included in an overview of CRO approaches. A/B testing, multivariate testing, controlled experiments, observational studies, online and offline testing, as well as quantitative and qualitative testing, are compared, highlighting their benefits and factors to be taken into account. The importance of UX in CRO is highlighted, with particular attention paid to website navigation, page load speeds, mobile optimisation, visual design, and content relevancy. The abstract wraps up by discussing CRO's challenges and limitations, including resource limitations, ethical issues, and technical and testing procedure limitations. Businesses can create successful strategies to optimise conversion rates and improve their online platforms by overcoming these difficulties and giving UX priority.

Keywords: CRO techniques, A/B testing, user experience (UX), conversion metrics, optimization strategies.

I. Introduction

A. Background and motivation

Conversion rate optimisation (CRO), a crucial element of digital marketing, strives to improve the efficiency at which website users are turned into customers. Because of the e-commerce industry's explosive expansion and growing competition for customers' attention and engagement, businesses are looking for effective approaches to optimise their conversion rates.¹ Due to the fact that conversion rates have a direct impact on revenue generation and profitability in the digital marketplace, there is an increasing focus on CRO.^{2,3} According to studies, even small improvements in conversion rates can have a major influence on economic outcomes, making CRO an essential area of attention for businesses operating in the digital sphere. According to a 2017 survey by Econsultancy-RedEye,⁴ almost 80% of marketers believe that CRO is important, if not crucial, to their business. According to HubSpot research's 2018 State of Inbound Report⁵, businesses face several marketing challenges every day. According to study findings, generating traffic and leads is the biggest marketing challenge, followed by figuring out how much to charge for marketing services to maximise return on investment. According to a similar study conducted by Vital Design⁶ in 2016 with over 7,500 respondents, generating more leads was the biggest marketing challenge.

B. Research objectives and significance

The objectives of this comprehensive review are to examine and evaluate different CRO strategies, testing approaches, and the importance of user experience (UX). The research will specifically examine strategies like A/B testing, multivariate testing, personalisation, and behavioural targeting, examining their efficacy and suitability in various contexts. The study also explores various testing approaches, such as controlled experiments and observational studies, emphasising their comparative benefits in improving conversion rates. The study also examines the significance of user experience in CRO by taking into account elements like website navigation, page load times, mobile optimisation, visual design, and content relevancy. By addressing these research objectives, this analysis adds to the body of knowledge already available on CRO and offers insightful information for researchers and marketers looking to increase online conversion rates.

II. Methodology

A. Search strategy and inclusion criteria

The search approach and inclusion standards utilised in this thorough research are described in the methodology section. Conversion rate optimisation (CRO), strategies, testing procedures, and user experience were all the keywords of a methodical search. The search was restricted to academic works that were disseminated in credible conference proceedings and peer-reviewed journals. To guarantee that the chosen studies were pertinent and offered thorough insights into CRO procedures, testing methods, and user experience, inclusion criteria were established.

B. Data sources and databases searched

To find relevant papers, several electronic databases were examined. Google Scholar, Web of Science, and other significant academic databases were used. These databases offer thorough coverage of academic literature from a variety of areas, ensuring that a large number of relevant articles were taken into account in the study.

C. Study selection process

The selection of the studies was done in a methodical manner. Initial steps included removing duplicate papers and screening titles and abstracts for relevance to the study's topic. The eligibility of possibly pertinent articles' entire texts was then evaluated in accordance with the inclusion criteria. The experts came to an agreement on the final set of studies to be examined before proceeding.

D. Data extraction and synthesis methods

The data extraction procedure includes selecting relevant information from the chosen articles in a methodical manner. Details on the CRO approaches described, the testing strategies used, and user experience insights were all included in this information. To find recurring themes, trends, and patterns in the research, the retrieved data were organised and synthesised. In order to arrive at insightful findings and revelations about CRO strategies, testing approaches, and user experience, the synthesis process entailed a thorough study of the gathered data.

III. Conceptual Framework

A. Definition and conceptualization of CRO

According to Ayanso & Yoogalingam⁷ and Di Fatta et al.⁸, CRO is the methodical process of enhancing the performance of digital platforms in terms of turning visitors into consumers. It entails putting into practice a variety of methods and tactics to enhance crucial conversion metrics, including click-through rates, sign-up rates, purchases, and other desired actions. According to Berezhnaya⁹, CRO seeks to improve user experience overall while maximising value from website traffic.

B. Theoretical foundations of CRO

The theoretical underpinnings of CRO are examined in this section. It investigates pertinent models and theories from a range of disciplines, including marketing, psychology, and human-computer interaction. Theories like the persuasion theory¹⁰, information processing theory¹¹, cognitive dissonance theory¹², theory of planned action¹³, and technology acceptance model¹⁴ offer helpful insights into the psychological and cognitive processes that affect user behaviour and decision-making, guiding the development of successful CRO strategies.

C. Key components and factors influencing CRO

The key components and factors that affect CRO are listed in this section. It highlights how crucial it is to comprehend the customer touchpoints, conversion funnel, and user journey throughout the online experience.¹⁵ According to Rano, A. A. and Sungkur¹⁶, a number of important elements that affect CRO effectiveness include website design, usability, content relevance, trust signals, social proof, price methods, and personalisation. The performance of CRO initiatives is also influenced by external factors like market conditions, the competitive landscape, and technology developments.

IV. Techniques for Conversion Rate Optimization

A. Overview of common CRO techniques

An overview of common conversion rate optimisation (CRO) techniques is given in this section. According to Ratia, M., and Ruoho, V.¹⁷, CRO refers to a variety of strategies targeted at

increasing the conversion rates of online platforms. To improve conversion rates, these strategies systematically modify website components, user interface, and marketing tactics. Each technique is thoroughly examined in the section that follows, with emphasis placed on the advantages and potential applications for raising conversion rates.

B. Detailed analysis of each technique

A/B testing: A/B testing, also referred to as a split test, compares two versions of a webpage or element to see which one converts at a higher rate.¹⁸ It enables marketers to systematically test various design components, layouts, copy, or calls-to-action, offering data-driven insights to optimise conversions.¹⁹

Multivariate testing: In order to find the most efficient combination, multivariate testing enables the simultaneous testing of multiple elements on a webpage.²⁰ Incorporating multiple design element combinations enables more thorough testing by illuminating the interactions and synergies between various variables.

Personalization: Individual preferences, behaviours, and demographics are taken into account when using personalization techniques to adjust the user experience.² Marketers may increase relevance and engage consumers by providing personalised information, recommendations, or offers, which increases conversion rates.

Behavioural targeting: According to Pallant, J. I. et al.²¹, behavioural targeting uses user behaviour data to send targeted messages and offers. Marketers can increase conversion rates by presenting pertinent content or promotions at the ideal time by analysing user behaviours such as browsing history, previous purchases, or interaction patterns.

Copywriting and design optimization: Effective copywriting and design optimisation entail producing visual components and material that persuade people to take the intended actions.²² By improving headings, product descriptions, images, and overall aesthetic appeal, marketers can increase user engagement and conversion rates.²³

Call-to-action optimization: Conversion rates can be greatly impacted by call-to-action (CTA) button optimisation, which includes changes to the buttons' positioning, size, colour, and language.²⁴ Persuasive CTAs and smart placement encourage users to do the required actions, whether it be a purchase, a sign-up, or an information request.

Social proof and trust signals: Conversion rates can be raised by enhancing credibility and trust through the use of social evidence, such as customer reviews, recommendations, or trust badges.^{2, 23} Conversions can be increased by reassuring users of their social validity and emphasising security concerns.

Pricing and discount strategies: Conversion rates and purchase decisions can be impacted by pricing and discount strategies such as time-limited offers, product bundles, and discounts depending on user behaviour.² Marketers can stimulate user interest and increase conversions by careful pricing and promoting offerings.

By analysing and implementing these CRO techniques, marketers can optimise their websites and digital platforms to increase conversion rates and maximise their business results.

V. Testing Methods for Conversion Rate Optimization

A. Overview of testing methodologies in CRO

To assess and enhance the efficacy of optimisation tactics, conversion rate optimisation (CRO) uses a variety of testing methodologies. Marketers can do testing to acquire empirical data and make informed decisions based on facts rather than speculation. A/B testing, multivariate testing, controlled experiments, observational studies, online and offline testing, quantitative and qualitative testing, and other testing approaches are frequently used in CRO. Marketing professionals may efficiently optimise conversion rates thanks to the distinct advantages and insights into user behaviour offered by each methodology.

B. Comparative analysis of testing methods A/B testing vs. multivariate testing

According to Ratia, M., and Ruoho¹⁷, A/B testing involves comparing two versions of a webpage or other element to see which one converts at a higher rate. It is appropriate for determining incremental improvements and testing particular variables. On the other hand, multivariate testing enables the simultaneous assessment of several variables and their combinations, offering insights into how various components interact with one another.²⁵ It is useful for analysing intricate relationships and potential synergies between design aspects.

Controlled experiments vs. observational studies

A/B testing and multivariate testing are examples of controlled experiments that offer a controlled setting for precise impact measurement of modifications.²⁶ They entail carefully controlled variable manipulation and support causal inference. Observational studies, in contrast, offer qualitative perceptions of user behaviour without directly affecting factors.²⁷ They are helpful for comprehending user experiences and finding usability problems.

Online vs. offline testing approaches

Online testing methodologies entail carrying out experiments right on operational websites or digital platforms²⁸. They enable the instant application of optimisation measures and offer real-time information about user behaviour. Offline testing techniques, including employing mock-ups or prototypes, allow testing in the early stages of design or development to evaluate potential changes before execution. They offer chances for incremental advancements and risk mitigation linked with direct alterations to operational websites.

Quantitative vs. qualitative testing methods

Quantitative testing techniques concentrate on numerical measurements and statistical analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of optimisation tactics as a whole. They enable data-driven decision-making and give unbiased insights into how changes in conversion rates affect those rates.²⁷ To better understand user perceptions, motivations, and experiences, qualitative testing techniques including user interviews and usability testing are used.^{29, 30} In addition to complementing quantitative data, they offer deep insights into user behaviour and preferences.

Marketers may obtain a thorough insight of user behaviour, spot optimisation opportunities, and significantly raise conversion rates by using a variety of testing techniques.

VI. User Experience and Conversion Rate Optimization

A. Role of user experience (UX) in CRO

User experience (UX) is essential to conversion rate optimisation (CRO) since it has a direct impact on how visitors engage with and use a website. UX includes all aspects of a user's experience (perceptions, feelings, and happiness) while using a website.²⁹ According to Srivastava, R. S. and Manohar, A.³¹ positive user experiences increase engagement, visit duration, and conversion rates. Therefore, taking UX into account when developing CRO tactics is crucial for designing a smooth and engaging user journey.

B. Impact of UX on conversion rates

Conversion rates are significantly impacted by UX. According to a study by Gudigantala, N. et al.¹, websites with excellent user experiences had greater conversion rates than those with poor user experiences. Positive user perceptions and higher conversion rates are influenced by elements including simple navigation, clear calls to action, and visually appealing design.³¹ According to Van der Heijden et al.³², a positive UX also improves customer satisfaction and conversion rates by lowering user annoyance, fostering user trust, and boosting overall contentment.

C. Elements of user experience to consider in CRO

Several elements related to user experience should be considered while maximising conversion rates:

Website navigation and structure

Visitors can immediately discover the information they need and move around the website with ease because to the easy navigation. A positive user experience is facilitated by intuitive menus, categorical clarity, and a logical site layout.³¹

Page load times and performance

Users get frustrated with slow-loading pages, which raises bounce rates. For a seamless user experience and increased conversion rates, it's essential to optimise page load times and ensure smooth performance.³³

Mobile optimization and responsiveness

Website optimisation for mobile platforms is essential given the growing popularity of mobile devices. The user experience is improved and seamless interactions are made possible through responsive design and mobile- friendly interfaces.^{31, 34, 35}

Visual design and aesthetics

A website's visual layout affects visitors' perceptions and feelings. A favourable user experience and increased conversions are facilitated by clear layouts, pleasing colour schemes, and visually appealing features.³⁶

Content relevance and readability

It's crucial to provide users with high-quality, pertinent material that fits their requirements and expectations. According to Srivastava, R. S., and Manohar, A.³¹, ensuring content readability by suitable font sizes, formatting, and clear message improves user experience and supports conversion goals.

By emphasising on these user experience elements, businesses can enhance conversion rates and the overall effectiveness of their online platforms.

VI. User Experience and Conversion Rate Optimization

A. Role of user experience (UX) in CRO

User experience (UX) is crucial to conversion rate optimisation (CRO) since it has a direct impact on how visitors engage with and use a website. According to Van der Heijden et al.³² and Kantalainen³⁷, a positive user experience improves engagement, satisfaction, and trust, which eventually results in improved conversion rates. Conversions are facilitated by factors like easy-to-use navigation, obvious calls to action, eye-catching design, and pertinent content. Businesses can develop a user-centric strategy that maximises conversion chances by giving user experience a high priority in CRO initiatives.

Table 1: A summary of the research studies on Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO)

Study	Author(s)
A/B testing	Simonsen, S. K. (2021); Croxen-John, D., & Van Tonder, J. (2020); Ratia, M., & Ruoho, V. (2016)
Multivariate testing	Miikkulainen, R. et al. (2018); Nguyen, T. H. et al. (2015)
Personalization	Zumstein, D., & Kotowski, W. (2020)
Behavioral targeting	Pallant, J. I. et al. (2017)
Copywriting and design optimization	King, A. B. (2008)
Call-to-action optimization	Smith, D. N., & Sivakumar, K. (2004)

Social proof and trust signals	Zumstein, D., & Kotowski, W. (2020)
Pricing and discount strategies	Zumstein, D., & Kotowski, W. (2020)
Controlled experiments	Soonsawad, P. (2013)
Observational studies	Cypress, B. (2018)
Online testing approaches	Drossos, D. et al. (2019)
Offline testing approaches	Cypress, B. (2018)
Quantitative testing methods	Cypress, B. (2018)
Qualitative testing methods	Jensen, M. (2019); Helin, J. (2018)
Website navigation and structure	Srivastava, R. S., & Manohar, A. (2020)
Page load times and performance	Lorenzo-Romero, C. et al. (2013)

Mobile optimization and responsiveness	Srivastava, R. S., & Manohar, A. (2020); Gupta, A. (2017); Nix, T. (2014)
Visual design and aesthetics	Robins, D., & Holmes, J. (2008)
Content relevance and readability	Srivastava, R. S., & Manohar, A. (2020)

VII. Challenges and Limitations of Conversion Rate Optimization

A. Common challenges in implementing CRO strategies

There may be a number of challenges with implementing CRO methods. The execution of thorough optimisation efforts can be hampered by a lack of resources, including money, knowledge, and technology.³⁸ Furthermore, it may be necessary to make organisational adjustments and use effective communication to match stakeholders' expectations, win management support, and develop a culture of experimentation and continuous improvement. For CRO initiatives to be implemented successfully, several obstacles must be overcome.

B. Ethical considerations and user privacy

In CRO practises, it is crucial to address ethical issues and user privacy. It's crucial to strike a balance between privacy concerns, data protection laws, and the acquisition of user data for optimisation purposes. To preserve trust and ethical integrity in their CRO efforts, businesses must establish transparent data collecting procedures, offer clear consent channels, and respect consumers' privacy preferences.³²

C. Limitations of CRO techniques and testing methods

Testing methods and CRO techniques both have limitations. Although A/B testing and other quantitative techniques offer insightful data, they could fall short of fully capturing the complexity of user behaviour and preferences. Although user interviews and surveys, for example, provide deeper insights, they can also take a lot of time and resources to do.^{25, 27} Additionally, results might be impacted by outside variables and contextual differences, and testing on a limited sample size may not accurately represent the overall user community. For correct CRO findings interpretation, these constraints must be acknowledged and addressed.

Businesses can create effective strategies that optimise conversion rates while upholding moral standards and offering a great user experience by taking into account the importance of user experience and comprehending the difficulties and constraints involved with CRO.

VIII. Best Practices for Effective Conversion Rate Optimization

A. Key principles and strategies for successful CRO

Conversion rate optimisation (CRO) is a technique that maximises the potential for improving conversion rates by utilising some fundamental ideas and tactics. The first step is to thoroughly analyse the data to find areas for improvement and to comprehend user behaviour. Businesses can now concentrate their optimisation efforts on the factors that will have the most impact. In addition, using a hypothesis-driven approach enables a methodical and organised optimisation process because modifications are tested based on data-driven hypotheses.³⁹ The use of continuous optimisation based on test findings and iterative testing also permits gradual advancements over time. Last but not least, encouraging an experimental culture and adopting a growth mentality encourage innovation and learning, enabling CRO success moving forward.

B. Case studies and examples of successful CRO campaigns

Case studies and successful CRO campaigns can be examined for useful implementation ideas and to highlight winning strategies. For instance, a case study by Johannesson, P., & Perjons, E.⁴⁰ showed how an e-commerce website's conversion rates significantly increased as a result of a well-conducted A/B testing campaign with personalised messaging. Another example was provided by Gupta A.³⁴, who showed how a retail app significantly increased its conversion rate after successfully implementing a mobile optimisation strategy that included responsive design and a simplified checkout procedure. These case studies showcase best practices for obtaining large conversion improvements and show the impact of using CRO tactics in the real world.

Businesses can optimise their conversion rates and provide quantifiable results by adhering to fundamental principles and putting effective methods into practice. Utilising case studies and successful CRO campaign examples deepens our understanding of best practices and offers organisations looking to improve conversion performance with useful information.

IX. Discussion and Implications

A. Summary of findings

Several important conclusions are drawn from the thorough examination of user experience (UX), testing methods, and conversion rate optimisation (CRO) techniques. The analysis shows the significance of different CRO techniques, such as A/B testing, multivariate testing, personalisation, behavioural targeting, copywriting and design optimisation, call-to-action optimisation, social proof, and price strategies.⁴¹ The importance of user experience elements including website navigation, page load speeds, mobile optimisation, graphic design, and content relevancy in influencing conversion rates is also emphasised.⁴² The analysis also highlights the advantages of various testing approaches, such as A/B testing, multivariate testing, controlled experiments, and observational research.²⁵

B. Implications for theory and practice

The analysis's findings have significant implications for both theory and practice. From a theoretical standpoint, this analysis adds to the body of knowledge on CRO by giving a thorough overview of strategies, testing procedures, and the function of UX. It clarifies the methods by which CRO interventions can be successful and advances our knowledge of the variables that affect conversion rates. Practically speaking, the findings provide marketers and practitioners looking to optimise their online platforms with useful insights. Guidance for putting CRO concepts

into practice and raising conversion rates can be found in case studies, successful campaigns, and established best practices.

C. Recommendations for future research

Although this analysis offers insightful information, there are a number of directions for further study. First, further research into the specific mechanisms by which CRO strategies and UX elements affect conversion rates would improve our comprehension of the underlying mechanics. Second, examining how new technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning will affect CRO practises may reveal both opportunities and difficulties. The generalizability of results would also be improved by an awareness of the cultural and contextual elements that affect CRO success in various markets and industries. Additionally, thinking about the moral ramifications and user impressions of CRO strategies would help implement optimisation efforts responsibly. Future studies in these fields will help us understand CRO better and will help practitioners increase conversion rates while upholding moral standards.

This analysis contributes to the subject of conversion rate optimisation and offers helpful insights for researchers, marketers, and practitioners alike by summarising the important findings, examining their implications for theory and practice, and making recommendations for future research.

X. Conclusion

A. Recap of the main contributions and findings

In conclusion, this comprehensive review of testing methods, user experience (UX), and conversion rate optimisation strategies has significantly advanced the profession. The results show how several CRO strategies, including A/B testing, multivariate testing, customization, and behavioural targeting, are effective at raising conversion rates. It has also been emphasised how important user experience elements like website navigation, page load times, mobile optimisation, graphic design, and content relevancy are in boosting conversions. Additionally, the comparison of testing approaches, such as A/B testing against multivariate testing and controlled trials versus observational studies, has highlighted the benefits and uses of each method. For marketers and other professionals looking to optimise their online platforms and raise conversion rates, these studies offer helpful insights.

B. Closing remarks on the importance of CRO in digital marketing

The importance of Conversion Rate Optimization in digital marketing cannot be overstated. Businesses require efficient techniques to boost their conversion rates because there is fiercer competition online for consumers' attention and involvement. CRO is a vital component of digital marketing strategies since optimising the conversion process has a direct impact on revenue generation and profitability.¹⁹ Businesses may improve their online platforms, user experiences, and conversion rates by comprehending and putting into practice the best practices and techniques outlined in this report. CRO enables businesses to keep on top of the ever-changing digital landscape by enabling them to make data-driven decisions, and continuously test and optimise their websites.²

The comprehensive review concludes by highlighting the importance of CRO strategies, testing procedures, and user experience elements in raising conversion rates. The results highlight the significance of CRO in digital marketing strategies, add to the body of current research, and offer marketers useful insights.

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