



The Awareness Paradox: Why Better Knowledge of Digital Marketing Boosts Appreciation Without Reducing Skepticism

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Abstract

Background: Digital marketing has become a cornerstone of modern business strategies, particularly in rapidly digitizing regions like Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. With increasing internet penetration and smartphone usage, businesses leverage digital platforms for advertising, customer engagement, and sales. However, consumer awareness, perceptions,



and the societal impact of digital marketing remain understudied in Nepal's context. This research examines how digital marketing awareness influences individuals' perceptions, focusing on its positive and negative effects, gender-based differences, and general opinions.

Objective: The study aims to (i) Assess the level of digital marketing awareness among Kathmandu Valley residents. (ii) Examine the relationship between awareness and perceived positive/negative impacts. (iii) Evaluate general consumer opinions toward digital marketing.

Methods: A quantitative research design was employed, using a structured questionnaire distributed to 200 respondents across various colleges and residential areas in Kathmandu Valley. Data was analyzed using SPSS, incorporating descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and hypothesis testing. Demographic variables (age, gender, education, internet usage) were examined, and relationships between awareness, perceived impacts, and general opinions were assessed.

Findings: (i) Awareness and Positive Impact: A moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.345$, $p < 0.01$) was found, indicating that higher awareness leads to more favorable perceptions. (ii) Gender Differences: No significant correlation was observed between gender and awareness, positive/negative impacts, or general opinions ($p > 0.05$). (iii) Negative Impact: Awareness showed no significant link ($p = 0.773$) to negative perceptions, suggesting that informed consumers do not necessarily associate digital marketing with harm. (iv) General Opinion: Awareness had no meaningful influence ($p = 0.887$), implying that other factors shape overall attitudes. **Conclusion:** The study reveals that while digital marketing awareness enhances positive perceptions, it does not significantly affect negative views or general opinions. Gender plays a negligible role in shaping these perceptions. Businesses should focus on transparency, consumer education, and ethical practices to maximize trust and engagement. Policymakers may consider regulations to address privacy concerns without stifling digital growth. **Novelty:** This research provides first-hand empirical insights into digital marketing awareness and its societal impact in Nepal, a region underrepresented in global digital marketing literature. Unlike prior studies focused on Western markets, this work highlights localized consumer behavior, offering actionable strategies for Nepalese businesses and regulators.

Keywords: Digital marketing, Consumer awareness, Kathmandu Valley, Positive impact, Negative impact, Gender differences, Quantitative analysis, Nepal.

Introduction

Digital marketing has revolutionized the way businesses interact with consumers, leveraging online platforms to promote products, services, and brands (Nasti, Lubis & MS, 2024). In recent years, its influence has expanded globally, including in developing countries like Nepal. The rapid growth of internet penetration and smartphone usage in Kathmandu Valley has made digital marketing a dominant force in shaping consumer behavior, preferences, and purchasing decisions (Yadav, Chaturbedi Neupane, 2024). This study explores the awareness, perception, and impact of digital marketing among individuals in Kathmandu Valley, assessing how exposure to digital marketing influences their attitudes and experiences.



The rise of social media, search engines, and e-commerce platforms has transformed traditional marketing strategies, making digital marketing more interactive and data-driven (Alkadrie, 2024). Businesses now rely on targeted ads, influencer collaborations, and personalized content to engage consumers (Acharya, Shrestha, Neupane & Mahat, 2024). In Nepal, digital marketing has gained significant traction, particularly among the youth and urban populations. However, there remains a gap in understanding how aware people are of these strategies and whether they perceive them as beneficial or intrusive. This research aims to bridge that gap by analyzing the relationship between digital marketing awareness and its perceived positive and negative effects.

Consumer awareness plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of digital marketing (Aryal et al., 2024). When individuals are well-informed about digital marketing techniques, they may engage more critically with advertisements, distinguishing between useful promotions and misleading content. Conversely, a lack of awareness could lead to uninformed decisions or susceptibility to deceptive marketing practices. This study investigates whether higher awareness correlates with a more favorable or skeptical view of digital marketing, providing insights into consumer education needs in Nepal's evolving digital landscape.

Another key aspect of this research is examining the gender-based differences in digital marketing awareness and perception (Adhikari et al., 2018). Previous studies suggest that men and women may interact with digital content differently due to varying interests, online behaviors, and trust levels in advertisements. By analyzing survey responses from both male and female participants, this study assesses whether gender influences awareness levels, perceived benefits, or concerns regarding digital marketing. The findings could help marketers tailor gender-specific campaigns for better engagement.

The positive impacts of digital marketing include convenience, access to information, personalized recommendations, and competitive pricing (Mukhtar, et al., 2023). Consumers in Kathmandu Valley increasingly rely on digital platforms for product research, reviews, and purchases. However, there are also negative consequences, such as privacy concerns, data security risks, and information overload. This study evaluates the extent to which individuals perceive these advantages and disadvantages, shedding light on the overall effectiveness and ethical considerations of digital marketing in Nepal.

Additionally, the study explores the general opinion of respondents toward digital marketing. While some may view it as an essential tool for modern commerce, others might see it as disruptive or manipulative. Understanding public sentiment helps businesses refine their strategies to align with consumer expectations while maintaining transparency and trust. The research also considers whether awareness influences general opinion, providing a deeper understanding of how education and exposure shape perceptions.



Methods and Materials

The study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the impact of digital marketing awareness on individuals in Kathmandu Valley. A structured questionnaire was used as the primary data collection tool, distributed among students from various colleges and residents of Kathmandu Valley. The questionnaire included sections on demographic information, awareness of digital marketing, perceived positive and negative impacts, and general opinions. A total of 200 respondents participated, ensuring a diverse representation across different age groups, genders, and educational backgrounds.

The sampling technique used was convenience sampling, allowing for efficient data collection from accessible respondents within the target population. The questionnaire was designed using Likert-scale questions to measure awareness, perceived impacts, and opinions, ensuring standardized responses for quantitative analysis. The collected data was then processed and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which facilitated descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and hypothesis testing.

Demographic variables such as age, gender, education level, and internet usage frequency were analyzed to understand the respondent profile. The study also examined the relationship between awareness and perceived impacts (positive and negative) using Pearson's correlation coefficient, which helped determine the strength and direction of associations.

The limitations of the study include the use of convenience sampling, which may limit generalizability, and the self-reported nature of the survey, which could introduce response bias. However, the structured approach to data collection and robust statistical analysis helped mitigate some of these limitations. The findings provide valuable insights into how digital marketing awareness influences perceptions and behaviors in Kathmandu Valley, contributing to existing literature on digital marketing's societal impact.

Results and Analysis

Demographic Analysis of Data

Table 1 : Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 20	22	11.0	11.0	100.0
	26-30	93	46.5	46.5	46.5
	26-30	43	21.5	21.5	68.0
	Above 31	42	21.0	21.0	89.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows the demographic data in terms of age done in the study. The table shows that the age group 21-25 has more majority than the other age group in the Kathmandu Valley with the valid percent 46.5% .The least number of respondents wherefrom the age group below 20 with the valid percent.

Table 2 : Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	106	53.0	53.0	53.0
	Female	94	47.0	47.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 represents the demographic information of gender among the respondents who took part in the study. The table depicts that a greater number of male took part in the questionnaire in comparison to the female. There were 106 male participants whereas only 94 female participants.

Table 3 : Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	School Level	7	3.5	3.5	3.5
	Plus 2	26	13.0	13.0	16.5
	Bachelor	130	65.0	65.0	81.5
	Master	37	18.5	18.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 represents the demographic information in aspects of educational degree. The table shows us that the bachelor degree people participated with the frequency of 130 in the questionnaire more than the other people. Similarly, the master category consisted of the second highest number of participants with the frequency of 37. The school level category consisted of the least frequency i.e. 7.

Table 4 Demographic Information (How frequently do you use the internet daily?)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 1 hour	3	1.5	1.5	1.5
	1-3 hour	32	16.0	16.0	17.5
	3-5 hour	82	41.0	41.0	58.5
	More than 5 hour	83	41.5	41.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 shows the respondents profile according to their spend amount of time online. The respondent of more than 5 hour is found to be valid as a greater number of respondents have given validity in the collection of the data.

Correlation

Table 5 Correlation between Mean of Awareness and Mean of Positive Impact			
		mean of awareness	mean of positive impact
mean of awareness	Pearson Correlation	1	.345**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	200	200
mean of positive impact	Pearson Correlation	.345**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	200	200
**, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The results show a moderate positive relationship between how aware people are and the positive impact they experience. In simple terms, the more people are aware, the more likely they are to feel a positive impact. The correlation is statistically significant, meaning this isn't just a random finding—there's a real connection between the two. The data suggests that awareness plays a key role in shaping the positive experiences people have in this study.

Table 6 Correlation between Mean of Awareness and Mean of Negative Impact			
		mean of awareness	mean of negative impact
mean of awareness	Pearson Correlation	1	.021
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.773
	N	200	200
mean of negative impact	Pearson Correlation	.021	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.773	
	N	200	200

The results show a very weak connection between how aware people are and the negative impact they experience. The relationship is so small that it's almost nonexistent, and the p-value of 0.773 tells us this finding is not significant. In other words, being more aware doesn't seem to have any real effect on the negative experiences people have in this study. The data suggests that awareness and negative impact don't really seem to be linked in any meaningful way.

Table 7 Correlations between Mean of Awareness and Mean of General Opinion			
		mean of awareness	mean of general opinion
mean of awareness	Pearson Correlation	1	.010
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.887
	N	200	200
mean of general opinion	Pearson Correlation	.010	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.887	
	N	200	200

The above results show there's almost no connection between how aware people are and their general opinion. The correlation is tiny (0.010), and the p-value is 0.887, which is much higher than 0.05, meaning the relationship isn't statistically meaningful. In simple terms, being more aware doesn't really change or affect people's general opinion. The data suggests that awareness and general opinion don't have any real connection in this study.

Discussion

The findings reveal a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.345$, $p < 0.01$) between digital marketing awareness and perceived positive impacts, suggesting that informed consumers are more likely to recognize the benefits of digital marketing, such as convenience and access to information. This aligns with previous research by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2022), who found that digital literacy enhances consumer engagement with online marketing content. However, the study found no significant relationship between awareness and negative impacts ($r = 0.021$, $p = 0.773$), contradicting some concerns in literature about digital marketing leading to privacy concerns or information overload (Martin & Murphy, 2017). This discrepancy may suggest that while consumers in Kathmandu Valley acknowledge the advantages of digital marketing, they may not associate higher awareness with increased risks, possibly due to differing cultural attitudes toward digital privacy compared to Western contexts (Smith et al., 2020).

Additionally, the study found no meaningful correlation between awareness and general opinion ($r = 0.010$, $p = 0.887$), indicating that other factors beyond awareness—such as personal experiences with digital ads or brand trust—may shape overall perceptions. This supports the argument by Kotler et al. (2021) that consumer attitudes toward digital marketing are influenced by multiple variables, including perceived credibility and relevance of content. The lack of gender-based differences in awareness and perceptions ($p > 0.05$) contrasts with some studies suggesting gender-specific responses to digital ads (Wolin & Korgaonkar, 2020), possibly reflecting Nepal's evolving digital landscape where gender gaps in internet usage are narrowing. Future research should explore longitudinal effects of digital marketing exposure and include rural populations for broader insights.



Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into digital marketing awareness and its impacts among residents of Kathmandu Valley. The findings demonstrate that while higher awareness correlates with positive perceptions of digital marketing, it does not significantly influence negative perceptions or general opinions. The moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.345$) between awareness and positive impact suggests that educated consumers are more likely to appreciate the benefits of digital marketing, such as convenience and accessibility. Notably, the absence of gender differences in perceptions challenges some existing literature, indicating a more uniform reception of digital marketing across genders in this context. These results contribute to understanding consumer behavior in Nepal's evolving digital economy, highlighting that awareness campaigns may enhance positive engagement without necessarily amplifying concerns about privacy or information overload.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, businesses and policymakers should prioritize consumer education initiatives to increase digital marketing literacy, which could further enhance positive user experiences. Marketers should focus on transparent and ethical practices to maintain trust, particularly as awareness grows. Future research should expand to rural areas and incorporate qualitative methods to explore underlying reasons for the weak relationship between awareness and negative perceptions. Additionally, longitudinal studies could assess how changing digital trends influence consumer attitudes over time. For academic purposes, comparative studies across different regions in Nepal would help determine whether these findings reflect nationwide trends or are specific to Kathmandu Valley. Implementing these recommendations could lead to more effective digital marketing strategies that align with consumer needs while addressing potential concerns.



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