

Digital Marketing Tools and Brand Awareness: Evidence from Digitally Aware Youth in the Lifestyle Product Market

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between digital marketing tools and brand awareness among digitally aware youth in the lifestyle product market. Drawing on Keller's and Aaker's brand equity frameworks, brand awareness is conceptualised as consumers' ability to recognise and recall a brand within a product category. The study investigates content marketing, retargeting, and social media marketing as key determinants of brand awareness.

Design/methods/approach: Primary data were collected from the survey of 128 respondents in Kathmandu Metropolitan City using a structured questionnaire adapted from validated scales. A descriptive and relational research design was employed to analyse the associations between the selected digital marketing tools and brand awareness.

Findings: Findings revealed that content marketing, retargeting, and social media marketing are positively and significantly associated with brand awareness among urban youth.

Implications: The findings indicate that marketers should use an integrated digital strategy—prioritising social media, leveraging informative content, applying retargeting selectively, and emphasising brand reputation and product uniqueness—to effectively build brand awareness, especially for small businesses in Kathmandu.

Originality/value: The study contributes empirical evidence from an emerging market context and provides practical insights for marketers seeking to enhance brand visibility among digitally engaged young consumers.

Keywords: Brand awareness, content marketing, re-targeting, social media marketing

JEL Classification: M31, M37, O33

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Introduction

The rapid advancement of internet technologies and the widespread adoption of smartphones and social media platforms have fundamentally transformed consumer behaviour and firm–customer relationships (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). Digital platforms enable real-time interaction, personalisation, and user-generated content, shifting consumers from passive recipients of information to active participants in brand communication (Çizmeçi & Ercan, 2015). Social media marketing helps enhance brand visibility, fostering customer interactions, and drive customer value creation (Sthapit & Vaidya, 2024). These developments have given rise to digital marketing, defined as a technology-enabled process through which firms create and deliver value collaboratively with customers and partners (Kannan & Li, 2017).

Digital marketing has evolved beyond basic online promotion to incorporate tools such as content marketing, social media marketing, and retargeting. These tools allow firms to engage customers more interactively and strategically (Makrides, Vrontis, & Christofi, 2020). In increasingly competitive markets, building strong brand awareness has become a strategic priority. Brand awareness refers to a consumer’s ability to recognise and recall a brand within a specific product category and represents the foundational stage of brand equity development. Without awareness, brand preference and purchase decisions cannot occur.

Lifestyle products—such as apparel, cosmetics, and personal accessories—are highly sensitive to branding efforts because they carry symbolic and social meanings. Digitally active youth, particularly in urban centres, are exposed to extensive online marketing communications that may influence their brand perceptions. However, empirical evidence on how specific digital marketing tools relate to brand awareness in emerging market contexts such as Kathmandu remains limited. Sthapit and Khadka (2016) examined the influence of social media marketing on customers’ buying decisions and their responses to the social media sites (SMSs) of travel intermediaries in Nepal; however, the study did not address the effect of digital marketing tools on brand awareness.

Although prior studies have examined digital marketing and branding, limited research isolates the role of specific tools—namely content marketing, retargeting, and social media marketing—in shaping brand awareness among youth in emerging markets. Furthermore, demographic characteristics such as gender and age may influence patterns of social media usage, which in turn may affect exposure to digital marketing activities.

To bridge these gaps, this study seeks to examine the relationship between digital marketing tools and brand awareness among digitally literate youth in the lifestyle product

market of Kathmandu Metropolitan City. In pursuit of this primary objective, the following specific objectives have been established:

- Assess the association between gender and social media usage;
- Examine the association between age group and social media usage;
- Assess the relationship between digital marketing tools (content marketing, retargeting, and social media marketing) and brand awareness;
- Determine the extent to which these digital marketing tools contribute to brand awareness.

This study contributes to brand equity and digital marketing literature by providing empirical evidence from an emerging market context. The findings offer practical insights for marketers, advertising agencies, and lifestyle brands seeking to enhance brand awareness among digitally engaged youth. Additionally, the study provides a foundation for future research examining the effectiveness of specific digital marketing strategies in similar socio-economic settings.

Literature Review

The literature review is structured around both theoretical foundations and a review of empirical studies.

Theoretical Foundations

Brand awareness constitutes the foundational dimension of brand equity. Both Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model and Aaker's Brand Equity model emphasise awareness as the first and essential step in building strong brands.

Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model: Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model conceptualises brand equity from the consumer's perspective, emphasising how brand knowledge influences consumer response (Keller et al., 2011). The model is structured as a pyramid comprising four levels: brand identity (salience), brand meaning, brand response, and brand resonance. Brand awareness (salience) forms the foundation, reflecting a consumer's ability to recognise and recall a brand.

The model suggests that strong brand equity develops when brands create favourable, strong, and unique associations. In digital contexts, repeated exposure, engaging content, and interactive communication enhance brand salience, making the CBBE framework particularly relevant for analysing digital marketing tools and brand awareness.

Aaker's Brand Equity Model: Aaker (2009) defines brand equity as a multidimensional construct consisting of brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, brand

loyalty, and proprietary assets. Brand awareness is a core component that influences familiarity, credibility, and subsequent brand evaluations.

Unlike Keller's hierarchical structure, Aaker presents brand equity as an interconnected system of assets that generate competitive advantage. Both models position brand awareness as a foundational element of brand equity, thereby providing theoretical support for examining how digital marketing tools contribute to building brand awareness.

Both models, therefore position brand awareness as a prerequisite for brand preference and long-term competitive advantage.

Review of Empirical Studies

Empirical research consistently demonstrates a positive relationship between digital marketing activities and brand-related outcomes.

Yasmin et al. (2015) examined various digital marketing tools—including online advertising, email marketing, social media, and SEO—and found strong positive correlations between digital marketing activities and sales growth. Social media and online advertising exhibited particularly high correlation coefficients.

Iftikhar and Khan (2017) explored the influence of email marketing, mobile marketing, and retargeting on consumer buying behaviour. Their findings revealed that retargeting and mobile marketing positively affected buying behaviour, highlighting the importance of targeted digital strategies.

Beig and Khan (2018) investigated content sharing and engagement on social media and found significant positive effects on brand experience dimensions. Their structural equation modelling results confirmed that content interaction enhances consumer perception and emotional connection with brands.

EIAydi (2018) examined Facebook marketing practices and reported that interaction, content sharing, accessibility, and credibility significantly influenced brand awareness. Social media marketing variables showed moderate to strong positive associations with awareness.

Yuvaraj and Indumathi (2018) found a significant positive relationship between digital marketing strategies and brand building through regression analysis. Similarly, Dash and Sharma (2019) reported that digital media expenditure generated stronger marketing responses compared to traditional advertising.

Dumitriu et al. (2019) highlighted that SMEs using social media and SEO demonstrated stronger brand equity development, emphasising integration of digital tools. Dastane (2020) confirmed a significant positive impact of digital marketing on online purchase

intention. Kedra (2021) further demonstrated that digital content marketing positively influences brand awareness, with social media acting as an important mediating factor.

Collectively, prior studies indicate that digital marketing tools—particularly social media marketing and content marketing—play a significant role in enhancing brand awareness and related brand outcomes. However, limited empirical evidence exists within the Nepalese context, especially focusing on digitally aware youth in lifestyle product markets. The present study addresses this contextual gap by examining the relative influence of content marketing, retargeting, and social media marketing on brand awareness in Kathmandu.

Operationalisation of Variables

In the digital era, marketing communication increasingly occurs through interactive and technology-enabled channels. Digital marketing tools—such as content marketing, retargeting, and social media marketing—serve as mechanisms through which firms enhance brand salience and strengthen brand-related associations. Grounded in Keller’s and Aaker’s frameworks, the present study conceptualises these tools as strategic drivers of brand awareness.

Digital Marketing Tools and Brand Awareness: The conceptual relationship between digital marketing tools and brand awareness is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Content Marketing: Content marketing involves the creation and distribution of valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and engage target audiences. Empirical studies suggest that informative and engaging content enhances brand recall and recognition by repeatedly exposing consumers to brand-related messages (Beig & Khan, 2018; Kedra, 2021). Digital content marketing has been positively associated with brand awareness, particularly when integrated with social media platforms and customer engagement strategies. Consistent exposure to branded content strengthens cognitive associations, thereby reinforcing brand salience.

H1: Content marketing is positively associated with brand awareness.

Retargeting: Retargeting refers to the practice of delivering targeted advertisements to users who have previously interacted with a brand’s website or digital content. By repeatedly exposing consumers to tailored advertisements, retargeting increases brand recall and reinforces brand-related cues. Studies examining digital advertising and retargeting strategies indicate that targeted digital interventions enhance consumer attention and behavioural responses (Iftikhar & Khan, 2017). Repeated exposure through retargeted ads may increase the likelihood that consumers recognise and remember a brand within a product category.

H2: Retargeting is positively associated with brand awareness.

Social Media Marketing: Social media marketing (SMM) encompasses promotional campaigns, influencer collaborations, brand communities, and interactive engagement across social networking platforms. Prior research consistently demonstrates a positive relationship between social media marketing practices and brand awareness (ElAydi, 2018; Yasmin et al., 2015). Social media facilitates user interaction, content sharing, and peer influence, all of which amplify brand visibility and recognition. Moreover, engagement-driven communication strengthens cognitive and affective brand associations, thereby enhancing brand salience.

H3: Social media marketing is positively associated with brand awareness.

Demographic Factors and Social Media Usage: Digital engagement patterns may vary across demographic groups. Previous studies suggest that age and gender differences can influence the intensity and manner of social media usage, which may affect exposure to digital marketing content (ElAydi, 2018). Understanding these associations provides contextual insight into how digital marketing tools reach target audiences.

H4: Gender is significantly associated with social media usage.

H5: Age group is significantly associated with social media usage.

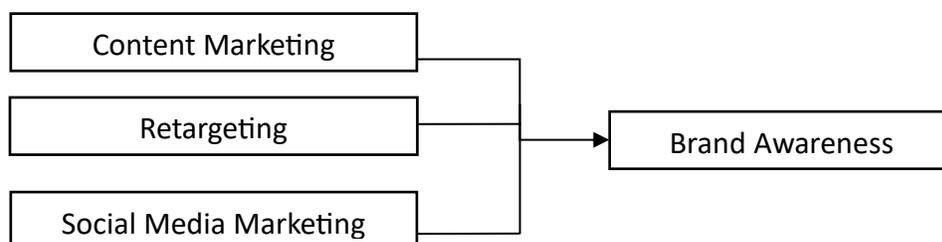
Conceptual Framework and Model Specification

Grounded in Keller's and Aaker's brand equity models, this study conceptualises brand awareness as the dependent variable and content marketing, retargeting, and social media marketing as independent variables. Demographic characteristics (gender and age group) are examined in relation to social media usage patterns.

The framework assumes that digital marketing tools enhance brand salience by increasing exposure, strengthening brand-related associations, and facilitating interactive engagement. Through repeated and meaningful digital interactions, consumers are more likely to recognise and recall brands within the lifestyle product category.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Model Specification

Based on the above study framework, the following model (regression equation) has been formulated:

$$y = \alpha + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + e_i$$

Where,

y= brand awareness

α =intercept

x_1 =content marketing

x_2 =re-targeting

x_3 =social media marketing

β_1 = coefficient of content marketing

β_2 = coefficient of retargeting

β_3 = coefficient of social media marketing

e_i = error terms

Significance was assessed at $p < 0.05$, and assumptions of regression (normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity) were verified.

Variables

- *Content Marketing* (x_1): Delivery of informative, engaging content (posts, blogs, videos, podcasts) to attract and retain consumers (Khan, 2019; Carranza, 2017).
- *Retargeting* (x_2): Targeted digital advertisements for consumers who previously engaged with the brand, enhancing recognition and conversion (Hurley, 2016; Iftikhar & Khan, 2017).
- *Social Media Marketing* (x_3): Promotion, influencer campaigns, and community engagement on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn (Yasmin et al., 2015; Scott, 2010).
- *Brand Awareness* (y): Consumers' ability to recognise, recall, and associate a brand with its features and values, contributing to trust and loyalty (ElAydi, 2018; Kedra, 2021).

Research Methods

This section outlines the research methods, including the research approach, sampling design, and data collection and analysis procedures.

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the impact of digital marketing tools on brand awareness among lifestyle product consumers in Kathmandu. A combination of descriptive, relational, and causal research designs was employed. Descriptive analysis captures respondent profiles and patterns of social media usage. Relational analysis examines associations between variables, while causal analysis evaluates the direction and magnitude of the effect of content marketing, retargeting, and social media marketing on brand awareness.

Population and Sample

The target population comprised digitally active consumers in Kathmandu Metropolis, representing various age groups, income levels, and preferences. Due to the large population, convenience sampling was employed, focusing on digitally aware youth who are frequent mobile and social media users. Following VanVoorhis and Morgan (2007) and a 95% confidence level with a 9% margin of error, the required sample size was calculated as 118, and a total of 120 respondents were surveyed.

Data Collection and Analysis Methods

Primary data were collected from January to March 2024 in Kathmandu via a structured online questionnaire, divided into two sections: demographic classification (age, gender) and research-specific questions. The questionnaire included Likert-scale items, multiple-choice questions, and ranking questions, developed from validated scales in prior studies (Kedra, 2021; Iftikhar & Khan, 2017; Yuvaraj & Indumathi, 2018). A pilot test ensured clarity and reliability, after which minor revisions were made.

Data were analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics summarised respondent profiles and social media usage. Pearson correlation tested relationships between independent variables and brand awareness, as well as between demographics and social media use. Multiple regression analysis examined the effect of content marketing, retargeting, and social media marketing on brand awareness.

The study is geographically confined to Kathmandu, which limits the generalisability of the findings. Furthermore, the focus was restricted to lifestyle products; inclusion of other categories, such as electronics or luxury goods, may have produced different results. The relatively modest sample size ($n = 120$) may also constrain the broader applicability of the findings. Additionally, the analysis was limited to correlation and regression techniques; the use of more advanced modelling approaches could yield deeper and more nuanced insights.

Results

This section presents the data analysis and corresponding results in alignment with the study objectives.

Profile of Respondents

A total of 128 respondents from Kathmandu participated in the study. Of these, 52.3% were female and 47.7% male. Regarding age, 65.6% were 25 years or younger, while 34.4% were above 25 years. In terms of ethnicity, 51.6% belonged to indigenous groups and 48.4% to caste groups. Social media activity revealed that Facebook and Instagram were most frequently used (106 respondents), followed by YouTube (96), and TikTok (37).

Most respondents (78.9%) reported familiarity with a brand after repeated social media advertising. Additionally, 81.3% indicated that easily accessible information strongly influenced their purchase decisions, and the same percentage valued offers and promotions in developing a connection with a brand's website.

Regarding brand value, brand reputation was ranked most important (58.6%), followed by product uniqueness (35.9%), product reliability (29.7%), customer interaction (28.9%), and customisation (lowest at 3.32 mean weight). For product recognition and recall, respondents indicated social media posts (83), offers and discounts (64), reviews (21), influencer content (10.1%), and campaigns/recurring ads (34–36) as effective strategies.

Social Media Usage Patterns

The analysis of respondents' social media engagement (Table 1) indicates that Facebook and Instagram are the dominant platforms among the youth in Kathmandu, with most of respondents (82.2%) active on each platform. YouTube is used by 74.4% of respondents, whereas TikTok accounts for 28.7%. This distribution highlights the importance of Facebook and Instagram as primary channels for digital marketing campaigns targeting young consumers.

The table explains how active the respondents are on various social media platforms. *Table 1* presents the information in tabular form where it can be seen that majority of people are active on Facebook and Instagram (106 out of 128 responses). Second most active platform is YouTube with 96 respond rates and finally Tiktok with 37 responses. Nearly one-third of the sample which is 30.7% agreed that they are using Facebook and Instagram whereas around 27.8% were actively found using YouTube. Only 10.7% of the sample use Tiktok.

Table 1

Social Media Usage Patterns of Respondents

Social media platforms	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Facebook	106	30.70%	82.20%
Instagram	106	30.70%	82.20%
YouTube	96	27.80%	74.40%
Tiktok	37	10.70%	28.70%
Total	345	100.00%	267.40%

a Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Note: Respondents could select multiple platforms; percentage exceeds 100%.

Note: From the author’s survey, 2024

Brand Familiarity through Digital Advertising

Repeated exposure to advertisements on social media significantly enhances brand familiarity (Table 2). Among 128 respondents, 101 (78.9%) reported that they became familiar with a brand after repeated online advertisements, whereas only 27 (21.1%) remained unfamiliar. This confirms that frequency of exposure is a key determinant of brand recognition, consistent with the principles of Keller’s Customer-Based Brand Equity model, which emphasises brand salience as foundational to consumer engagement.

Table 2

Brand Familiarity through Social Media/Digital Advertising

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
Yes	101	78.9
No	27	21.1
Total	128	100

Influence of Accessible Information on Purchase Decisions

The availability of relevant and easy-to-access information plays a critical role in consumer decision-making. As shown in Table 3, altogether 116 respondents (90.6%) reported that accessible information would significantly influence their purchasing decisions, while only 12 respondents (9.4%) were unaffected. The result underscores the importance of digital content and product transparency, aligning with Aaker’s model, which links brand credibility and perceived value to consumer trust.

Table 3

Influence of Accessible Information on Buying Decisions

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	116	90.6
No	12	9.4
Total	128	100

Role of Offers and Promotions in Brand Engagement

Promotional strategies on websites enhance consumer engagement and perceived connection to the brand. Table 4 shows that 104 respondents (81.3%) felt a connection to websites offering promotions and special offers, while 24 respondents (18.8%) did not. These findings highlight the effectiveness of incentives in strengthening brand-consumer relationships in online environments.

Table 4

Influence of Offers and Promotions on Connection to Website

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	104	81.3
No	24	18.8
Total	128	100

Perceived Elements of Brand Value

Respondents were asked to rank elements contributing to brand value. As presented in Table 5, brand reputation emerged as the most critical factor (mean weighted score = 2.672), followed by unique products (2.734) and product reliability, serviceability, and durability (2.992). Interaction with customers (3.281) and customisation (3.320) were ranked lower. This suggests that while functional attributes and brand credibility are prioritised, personalised services are considered secondary in establishing brand value.

Table 5

Viewpoint on Most Important Elements Contributing to Brand Value

Features	Rank 1		Rank 2		Rank 3		Rank 4		Rank 5		Total responses	Weighted value	Weighted mean	Rank
	No	%												
Reputation of the brand	28	21.90	11	8.60	75	58.60	3	2.30	11	8.60	128	342	2.672	1
Unique product	21	16.40	46	35.90	26	20.30	16	12.50	19	14.80	128	350	2.734	2
Product reliability, serviceability and durability	19	14.80	38	29.70	18	14.10	31	24.20	22	17.20	128	383	2.992	3
Customisation	28	21.90	16	12.50	7	5.50	41	32.00	36	28.10	128	425	3.320	5
Interaction with customers	32	25.00	17	13.30	2	1.60	37	28.90	40	31.30	128	420	3.281	4
Total	128		128		128		128		128			1920		

Note: From the author's survey, 2024

Factors Enhancing Brand Recall

Table 6 demonstrates that social media posts (64.8%) and product reviews (66.4%) are the most influential factors in helping consumers recognise and remember a product. Offers and discounts (50%), influencer content (32%), social campaigns (28.1%), and recurring advertisements (26.6%) also contribute but to a lesser extent. These findings indicate that credibility and visibility, rather than repetitive exposure alone, are key to brand recall.

Table 6

Factors Enhancing Consumers' Brand Recall

Features	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Posts on Social Media	83	20.50%	64.80%
Influencer	41	10.10%	32.00%
Reviews of the product	85	21.00%	66.40%
Offers and discounts	64	15.80%	50.00%
Recurring ads from frequently visited websites/apps	34	8.40%	26.60%
Campaigns with social messages	36	8.90%	28.10%
Total	404	100.00%	315.60%

a Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Note: Calculations based on the data from author's survey, 2024

Perceived Impact of Digital Marketing Tools

Content Marketing: Respondents strongly agreed that content marketing enhances brand understanding, with a grand weighted mean of 4.12 (Table 7). The most influential statements included the usefulness of varied content formats (4.38) and the accuracy and reliability of information (4.34). This underscores content marketing as a critical driver of brand awareness.

Table 7

Impact of Content Marketing on Brand Awareness

Statements	Ratings					Total responses	Weighted value	Weighted mean
	SDA	DA	N	A	SA			
With the contents of information provided to me on digital platforms and web pages, I can develop a good understanding about the product brand.	3	4	37	60	24	128	482	3.77
I make more informed buying decisions because of the brand related information I get easily.	1	4	31	73	19	128	489	3.82
Updated information on the website/page makes me aware about the product brand.	0	3	14	52	59	128	551	4.30

Having different types of content formats (product information, video, tutorials, social media, and reviews) on the product page can help me better understand the product brand.	2	1	13	43	69	128	560	4.38
Accurate and reliable information makes me aware about the product brand.	2	1	14	46	65	128	555	4.34
<i>Grand weighted mean</i>								4.12

Note: Calculations based on the data from author's survey, 2024

Retargeting: Table 8 indicates mixed responses with a grand weighted mean of 3.03. Offers and discount ads positively influenced brand engagement (3.52), whereas personalised messages and repeated ads were less appreciated (2.87–3.06). These findings suggest that while retargeting can be effective, excessive targeting may irritate consumers.

Table 8

Survey on Retargeting

Statements	Ratings					Total responses	Weighted value	Weighted mean
	SDA	DA	N	A	SA			
I feel special when online websites target me on other social platforms.	11	28	41	38	10	128	392	3.06
It is a pleasure when websites send messages with my name in different platforms	18	35	33	30	12	128	367	2.87
I usually do not get irritated when websites send advertisements repeatedly.	47	45	13	10	13	128	281	2.20
New offers and promotions offered to me on the website makes me stay connected to the product brand.	4	12	37	64	11	128	450	3.52
Given a discount advertisement in an online platform, I feel that the product brand targets me well.	5	12	37	60	14	128	450	3.52
<i>Grand weighted mean</i>								3.03

Note: Calculations based on the data from author's survey, 2024

Social Media Marketing: As shown in Table 9, social media marketing moderately impacts brand awareness (grand weighted mean = 3.55). Highest engagement was observed in visiting websites before purchase (4.02), and brand knowledge through social media ads (3.81). However, purchases influenced by favourite influencers were

less significant (2.70), indicating that peer influence is secondary to content-driven awareness.

Table 9

Survey on Social Media Marketing

Statements	Ratings					Total responses	Weighted value	Weighted mean
	SDA	DA	N	A	SA			
I can easily recognise a brand after seeing it on social media.	0	18	36	56	18	128	458	3.58
I purchase more of a product used by my favourite influencer.	22	41	28	28	9	128	345	2.70
Ads/Blog posts/User reviews/Facebook pages influences me to try new brand/products/services.	4	17	27	52	28	128	467	3.65
I feel more knowledgeable about the brand when it is advertised on social media.	2	6	35	56	29	128	488	3.81
I love to visit the websites to search for the product brands whenever I plan to buy the one.	4	8	22	41	53	128	515	4.02
Grand weighted mean								3.55

Note: Calculations based on the data from author’s survey, 2024

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness among respondents is moderate to high (grand weighted mean = 3.61, Table 10). Differentiation of brands using adequate information (3.96) and recognition on frequently visited websites (3.86) were the most impactful, whereas repeated social media ads had lower influence on purchase intent (2.82). This demonstrates that informative and interactive digital engagement is more effective than repetitive advertising in driving brand recall and differentiation.

Table 10

Brand Awareness among Respondents

Statements	Ratings					Total responses	Weighted value	Weighted mean
	SDA	DA	N	A	SA			
I recognise a brand if I see it on the website I visit.	0	8	38	46	36	128	494	3.86
When I get adequate information about a brand, I can differentiate it from other competing brands.	0	8	28	53	39	128	507	3.96
I tend to buy a product if I see frequent brand ads on my social media accounts.	15	40	35	29	9	128	361	2.82
Seeing the advertisement on websites reminds me of the logo and product characteristics of the brand.	1	12	35	58	22	128	472	3.69
When I find the advertisements regularly on the website, it strengthens my recall of the brand.	6	12	29	48	33	128	474	3.70
Grand weighted mean								3.61

Note: Calculations based on the data from author’s survey, 2024

Descriptive Statistics

Table 11 presents descriptive statistics of the variables under study. The perceived impact of content marketing on brand awareness was highest among independent variables, with a grand weighted mean of 4.12, followed by brand awareness (3.61), social media marketing (3.55), and retargeting (3.03). Retargeting showed the highest variability (SD = 0.75), reflecting differing consumer attitudes towards repeated advertisements. Standard deviations ranged from 0.62 (content marketing) to 0.75 (retargeting), indicating moderate variability in responses.

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics

Statistics	N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Variance
Content marketing	128	4.12	4.20	4.60	0.62	0.38
Retargeting	128	3.03	3.20	3.20	0.75	0.57
Social media marketing	128	3.55	3.60	3.60	0.69	0.47
Brand awareness	128	3.61	3.60	3.60	0.70	0.49

Note: Calculations based on the data from author’s survey, 2024

Relationship of Social Media Usage with Gender and Age

Chi-square tests were conducted to examine associations between social media usage, gender, and age. Table 12 shows no significant association between gender and social media usage ($\chi^2 = 3.421$, $p = 0.49$), while Table 2.13 indicates no significant association between age groups and platform usage ($\chi^2 = 2.246$, $p = 0.691$). These results suggest that social media engagement patterns are largely independent of gender and age, highlighting the broad applicability of digital marketing strategies for youth audiences.

Table 12

Social Media Platforms and Gender: Cross-tabulation

Gender	Active usage				Chi-square	Asymp. Sig (2 sided)
	Facebook	Instagram	YouTube	Tiktok		
Male	49	50	43	14	3.421	0.49
Female	57	56	52	23		
Total	106	106	95	37		

Note: Calculations based on the data from author’s survey, 2024

Table 13

Social Media Platforms and Age Group: Cross-tabulation

Age	Active usage				Chi-square	Asymp. Sig (2 sided)
	Facebook	Instagram	Youtube	Tiktok		
25 years and below	71	72	62	23	2.246	0.691
Above 25 years	35	34	33	14		
Total	106	106	95	37		

Note: Calculations based on the data from author’s survey, 2024

The findings collectively suggest that content marketing is the most influential digital marketing tool in enhancing brand awareness among youth. Social media exposure and promotional strategies reinforce recognition and connection, while retargeting requires careful calibration to avoid consumer irritation. Brand reputation, unique product offerings, and product reliability remain core contributors to perceived brand value. Additionally, engagement patterns are independent of gender and age, indicating a uniform approach can be adopted for digital campaigns targeting the youth segment.

Summary of Chi-Square Test of Independence

- Gender and social media usage: No significant association was found ($\chi^2 = 3.421$, $p = 0.49$).

- Age group and social media usage: No significant association was observed ($\chi^2 = 2.246$, $p = 0.691$).

These results confirm that social media use is independent of both gender and age in the sampled population.

Correlation Analysis

To examine the relationships between the independent variables—content marketing, retargeting, and social media marketing—and the dependent variable, brand awareness, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted for the entire sample. Table 14 presents the correlation coefficients and significance levels.

Table 14

Correlation among Variables for All Samples

Variables	Content marketing	Retargeting	Social media	Brand awareness
Content marketing	1			
Retargeting	.412** (0.001)	1		
Social media	.641** (0.001)	.600** (0.001)	1	
Brand awareness	.569** (0.001)	.552** (0.001)	.746** (0.001)	1

Note: Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Note: Calculations based on the data from author’s survey, 2024

The results indicate significant positive relationships between all independent variables and brand awareness. Specifically, content marketing shows a moderate positive correlation with brand awareness ($r = 0.569$, $p < 0.01$), retargeting demonstrates a slightly lower but still significant correlation ($r = 0.552$, $p < 0.01$), and social media marketing exhibits the strongest association ($r = 0.746$, $p < 0.01$). These findings suggest that while all three digital marketing tools contribute to brand awareness, social media marketing has the highest influence, supporting prior literature that emphasises the centrality of social media in enhancing brand visibility and consumer recognition.

Regression Analysis

To determine the impact of content marketing, retargeting, and social media marketing on brand awareness, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. Table 15 presents the regression coefficients, t-values, significance levels, and overall model fit.

Table 15

Regression Analysis of Digital Marketing Factors on Brand Awareness

Coefficients	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.453	0.28		1.619	0.108
Content marketing	0.166	0.085	0.147	1.949	0.054
Retargeting	0.147	0.067	0.158	2.181	0.031
Social media marketing	0.57	0.088	0.557	6.494	0.001
Model Summary				F = 58.518	p = 0.001
Adjusted R ²				0.576	

a Dependent Variable: Brand awareness
 ** Regression is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The regression results indicate that all three independent variables positively and significantly influence brand awareness. Content marketing exhibits a positive effect ($\beta = 0.166$, $t = 1.949$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that providing informative, accurate, and engaging content increases consumers' familiarity and understanding of the brand. Retargeting also has a significant positive impact ($\beta = 0.147$, $t = 2.181$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that personalised and targeted advertisements enhance brand recognition and recall.

Social media marketing demonstrates the strongest influence on brand awareness ($\beta = 0.570$, $t = 6.494$, $p < 0.001$), confirming its critical role in shaping consumer perceptions and engagement. The model's adjusted R² of 0.576 indicates that 57.6% of the variance in brand awareness is explained by the combined effects of content marketing, retargeting, and social media marketing. This finding aligns with previous studies, which consistently identify social media marketing as the most impactful strategy for generating brand awareness among digitally active youth.

The correlation and regression analyses collectively reinforce the notion that digital marketing tools significantly shape brand awareness. While content marketing and retargeting contribute positively, social media marketing exerts the largest effect, highlighting the importance of strategically leveraging social platforms for brand-building campaigns. The results provide empirical support for the proposed model, positioning social media marketing as the primary driver of brand awareness among youth.

consumers in Kathmandu, with complementary contributions from content-driven and retargeted advertising strategies.

Discussion

This study results reveal that content marketing has a positive and significant relationship with brand awareness ($r = 0.569$, $p < 0.01$) and exerts a significant impact ($\beta = 0.166$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that informative, engaging, and reliable content facilitates consumer understanding and recognition of brands. These findings align with Kedra (2021) and Beig and Khan (2018), suggesting that strategic content creation strengthens brand associations and fosters favourable brand experiences.

Similarly, retargeting demonstrates a significant positive correlation with brand awareness ($r = 0.552$, $p < 0.01$) and a measurable impact ($\beta = 0.147$, $p < 0.05$). This underscores the effectiveness of personalised, repeated advertising in enhancing brand recall and consumer engagement, consistent with prior evidence by Iftikhar and Khan (2017). Retargeting appears particularly effective in sustaining consumer attention and reinforcing brand familiarity.

Social media marketing exhibits the strongest association with brand awareness ($r = 0.746$, $p < 0.01$) and exerts the highest impact ($\beta = 0.570$, $p < 0.001$), confirming its central role in contemporary digital branding strategies. These results corroborate studies by Kedra (2021), Yasmin, Tasneem, and Fatema (2015), and ElAydi (2018), highlighting that social media not only increases brand reach and visibility but also encourages engagement through likes, shares, and interactions, thereby enhancing brand recall and loyalty. For small businesses and lifestyle brands, social media marketing offers a cost-effective and scalable approach to build brand awareness among target consumers.

Chi-square analyses indicate no significant association between social media platform usage and demographic variables, including gender ($p = 0.49$) and age group ($p = 0.691$). This suggests that platform engagement is largely independent of these demographics, implying that digital marketing strategies targeting brand awareness can be uniformly applied across youth segments in Kathmandu.

Collectively, the findings emphasise that while all three digital marketing tools positively contribute to brand awareness, social media marketing emerges as the most influential, followed by content marketing and retargeting. This reinforces the theoretical premise that integrated digital strategies, combining informative content, personalised retargeting, and active social media engagement, are critical for enhancing brand visibility and consumer recognition in contemporary markets.

Table 16

Hypothesis Summary

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Tool</i>	<i>Significance Level</i>
H1: Gender and social media use are independent	Accept	Chi-square	–
H2: Age group and social media use are independent	Accept	Chi-square	–
H3: Content marketing and brand awareness relationship	Not Accepted	Correlation	99%
H4: Retargeting and brand awareness relationship	Not Accepted	Correlation	99%
H5: Social media marketing and brand awareness relationship	Not Accepted	Correlation	99%
H6: Content marketing impact on brand awareness	Not Accepted	Regression	99%
H7: Retargeting impact on brand awareness	Not Accepted	Regression	99%
H8: Social media marketing impact on brand awareness	Not Accepted	Regression	99%

The findings critically demonstrate that digital marketing strategies are integral in shaping brand awareness, with social media marketing serving as the dominant driver, complemented by content marketing and retargeting. This evidence supports the proposed model and provides actionable insights for marketers targeting digitally active youth.

Conclusion and Implications

This study examined the relationship and impact of digital marketing tools—content marketing, retargeting, and social media marketing—on brand awareness among digitally active youth in Kathmandu. Using descriptive, correlational, and causal research designs, data were collected from 128 respondents through a structured questionnaire and

analysed using descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, correlation, and regression analysis.

The study-results confirms that all three digital marketing tools exhibit positive and statistically significant relationships with brand awareness, highlighting their effectiveness in contemporary marketing strategies.

Among the factors studied, social media marketing emerged as the most influential driver of brand awareness, followed by content marketing and retargeting. This suggests that engaging, interactive, and widely visible digital campaigns are critical for capturing consumer attention and fostering brand recognition.

Regarding brand value, reputation was identified as the most important feature, followed by uniqueness, product reliability, serviceability, and durability. Interaction with customers and customisation, while still relevant, were ranked lower, indicating that foundational brand characteristics outweigh supplementary features in shaping perceived value.

The regression model confirms the overall significance of the proposed framework, demonstrating that integrated digital marketing strategies can meaningfully enhance brand awareness. It confirms that effective use of digital marketing strategies significantly enhances brand awareness among digitally active youth. These findings underscore the importance for marketers, particularly in lifestyle and consumer-focused sectors, to prioritise social media marketing complemented by content and retargeting strategies to maximise brand visibility and consumer engagement.

The results offer practical guidance for marketing professionals, advertisers, and business owners:

- **Prioritise social media marketing** to maximise brand visibility, engagement, and recall, as it exerts the strongest influence on brand awareness.
- **Leverage content marketing** to provide accurate, reliable, and relevant information that educates and informs consumers, supporting brand recognition and loyalty.
- **Use retargeting strategically**, ensuring that repeated advertisements are relevant and non-intrusive to avoid consumer fatigue.
- **Focus on brand reputation and product uniqueness** when designing marketing campaigns, as these elements are most valued by consumers in forming brand perception.
- The study underscores the **importance of digital marketing integration**, suggesting that small businesses and start-ups in Kathmandu can achieve effective brand building through a combination of social media engagement, informative content, and targeted promotions.

Overall, these insights can help organisations design efficient, consumer-oriented marketing strategies that enhance brand awareness and strengthen customer relationships in the digital era.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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