Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Buying Behavior in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1310000057

Received: 13 October 2026; Accepted: 18 October 2026; Published: 31 October 2026

ABSTRACT

Digital marketing has changed how companies talk to customers give information about products and help people decide to buy. This research looks at how five parts of marketing – search engine marketing, content marketing, social media marketing, affiliate marketing and email marketing – affect consumer buying behavior in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. The study used a cross-sectional survey. We gathered data through a structured questionnaire that used a five-point Likert scale and we analyzed 384 replies in SPSS. The analysis used statistics Cronbach's alpha, Pearson correlation and multiple regression. All six measurement scales showed internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha values between.766 and.806. Every one of the five marketing parts was positively linked to consumer buying behavior (r =.517 to.698 p <.01). The regression model was significant, F(5, 378) = 110.404, p <.001. It explained 59.4 % of the change in consumer buying behavior (R^2 =.594; adjusted R^2 =.588). When all five parts were entered together email marketing (β =.453 p <.001) and social media marketing (β =.375 p <.001) were positive predictors. Search engine marketing, content marketing and affiliate marketing did not show significance in the model. The results show that companies in Kathmandu Valley should focus on permission-based email messages and lively social media interaction while looking at other digital channels as part of a joint plan. Because this study is cross-sectional and relies on people's answers the results show only links, not clear cause-and-effect.

Keywords: digital marketing, consumer buying behaviour, email marketing, social media marketing, Kathmandu Valley, Nepal

BACKGROUND

Digital marketing lets companies reach customers using search engines, websites, social networks, email and digital referral links. Unlike one-way mass messages digital channels give information let customers talk back and help send more focused messages. These aspects can change how consumers see their needs look for data compare choices and decide if they will buy. Digital marketing must be seen not as one task but as a mix of channels that can play different parts in the consumer decision journey (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019; Kannan & Li 2017).

People's reactions to marketing depend on more than just seeing a message. How a person feels about a product what friends and family think, how useful and easy a digital tool feels, how trust they have and how good the information is can all change the consumer's reply. The Theory of Reasoned Action says that feelings and social pressure shape people's intention to act (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975) and the Technology Acceptance Model says that perceived usefulness and ease of use drive adoption of technology (Davis, 1989). These ideas explain why not all parts of marketing have the same link to consumer buying behavior.

In Nepal, Kathmandu Valley is a place to study how customers use digital media because they meet many online facts and ads. Still local data that looks at parts of digital marketing in one study is helpful for managers who want to decide how to spend money on each channel. Dr. Gopal Thapa's work on what Nepali people like in media and ads and how they see advertising in Nepal gives background for seeing how channels and

messages affect consumer responses (Thapa, 2015). His study on how people judge green products shows why it matters to look at how Nepali customers evaluate marketing claims and product details (Thapa, 2019). Those studies look at advertising and consumer views in a sense not at the five-channel model used in this research.

Statement of Problem

Companies are using search engine marketing, content marketing, social media marketing, affiliate marketing and email marketing. However how much each part helps consumer buying behavior can be different. A channel might show a link to buying behavior when looked at alone but may not show a clear independent effect when all channels are looked, at together. This study looks at how each part of marketing relates to consumer buying behavior and also how each part predicts buying behavior when all parts are used at the same time in a multiple-regression model.

Research Objectives

The study has following objectives:

i. to explain respondents' views of the selected marketing dimensions and consumer buying behavior

ii. to look at how search engine marketing, content marketing, social media marketing, affiliate marketing, email marketing and consumer buying behavior are connected; and

iii. to determine how much each digital marketing dimension contributes on its own to consumer buying behavior.

Formulation of Hypotheses

Based on the above objectives, following hypotheses were formulated

H1: Search engine marketing is significantly related to consumer buying behavior.

H2: Content marketing is significantly related to consumer buying behavior.

H3: Social media marketing is significantly related to consumer buying behavior.

H4: Affiliate marketing is significantly related to consumer buying behavior.

H5: Email marketing is significantly related to consumer buying behavior.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Theory of Reasoned Action says that how a person behaves depends on his or her attitude and what others think they should do (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975). In settings a shopper's attitude can be shaped by how relevant a message feels how much value a product seems to hold, online reviews and brand information. What people think others do can be shown through recommendations and social-media interactions. This theory helps us see how marketing messages and social cues can be linked to consumer buying behavior.

The Technology Acceptance Model says that if people think a technology is useful and easy to use they are more likely to adopt it (Davis, 1989). In marketing this means shoppers may prefer channels that are easy to use, convenient and helpful when they look for or buy a product.

The stimulus–organism–response framework explains how outside marketing signals can shape a shopper's thoughts and the actions that follow (Mehrabian & Russell 1974). Together these ideas show that just seeing a channel is not enough to explain buying behavior. How relevant, easy to use and how shoppers evaluate a channel also matter.

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XIII Issue X October 2026

Digital Marketing and Consumer Behavior

Search engine marketing helps shoppers find products when they are actively looking for information. Its success may depend on how relevant the search results how well the keywords match the shopper's needs and how trustworthy the landing page looks.

Content marketing aims to give informative or entertaining material that helps shoppers understand products and brands. Kannan and Li (2017) describe marketing as a constantly changing, data-rich environment where customers move through many touchpoints and these journeys help us learn about marketing results.

Social media marketing lets companies share content answer questions and help shoppers talk with each other and with brands. These interactions can build awareness give information and support shoppers in evaluating a product.

Affiliate marketing uses third-party referrals. Tracked links to send shoppers toward products or services. Its success may depend on how trustworthy the referrer's how relevant the recommendation is.

Email marketing sends messages through newsletters, product updates, reminders and special offers. It can be useful when messages feel relevant arrive at the time and are welcomed by the shopper. Many or irrelevant emails can make shoppers leave.

The digital channels may work together of separately. A shopper might first find a product via a search engine then see reviews on media read more details on a website and later receive an email. Because of this overlap a simple positive link does not automatically mean a channel alone has an effect when other channels are taken into account. Understanding the difference between correlation and independent prediction is key for this study.

Nepalese Context

Thapa (2015) studied media and advertising preferences among audiences using a survey of 80 respondents. The article showed that people preferred television, television advertising and musical messages showing that how people react to marketing communication varies by medium and message.

Thapa (2013) based on a survey of 150 customers in Kathmandu Valley talked about advertising as both a business investment that can create demand and a practice that can raise consumer-protection concerns when messages are misleading or push people to buy more than they need.

Thapa (2019) looked at how Nepalese shoppers see products using 192 respondents in Kathmandu. The study found that most shoppers had a positive view of some green-product attributes but had worries, about how promotions were handled.

Although these studies do not test the digital marketing variables as the present research they give local context for looking at consumer response, advertising effectiveness and the credibility of marketing communication.

International literature gives a view for looking at digital channels. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) talk about adding channels to marketing plans. Kannan and Li (2017) give a framework and research plan that focuses on touchpoints and data-based customer journeys. This study adds evidence by looking at five digital marketing dimensions at the same time in a sample from Kathmandu Valley.

Research. Conceptual Model

The study looks at a local missing piece. It asks how five common digital marketing dimensions link to consumer buying behavior in Kathmandu Valley and which of those dimensions keep a predictive role when

all are considered together. The conceptual model views search engine marketing, content marketing, social media marketing, affiliate marketing and email marketing as predictors while consumer buying behavior is the result.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study says the study is descriptive and causal-comparative using a self-administered questionnaire. In this article the design is described as a cross-sectional survey. Since the data were gathered once and the design observes without manipulating variables the regression results show only statistical prediction or association not proof of cause and effect.

Population, Sample and Data Collection

The study looked at 384 answers from consumers in Kathmandu Valley. Primary data came from a questionnaire. The questionnaire had a five-point Likert scale to assess search engine marketing, content marketing, social media marketing, affiliate marketing, email marketing and consumer buying behavior. The dissertation says the respondents were consumers who know marketing and that the questionnaire was filled out by them alone. The author should give details about the sampling frame, how participants were recruited, when the survey was run the response rate and who was allowed to participate before the paper is sent to a journal if those details exist in the original records.

The five predictor constructs are search engine marketing, content marketing, social media marketing, affiliate marketing and email marketing. Consumer buying behavior is the outcome construct. Each construct was measured by questionnaire statements. The dissertation says there are five items for consumer buying behaviour and four items for media marketing, affiliate marketing and email marketing; the number of items for search engine marketing and content marketing should be checked against the final questionnaire and reported the same way in the submission.

Data Analysis

Data were processed with SPSS. Descriptive statistics gave an overview of the scores for each construct. Cronbach's alpha checked how consistent the items were. Pearson's correlation looked at pairwise relationships. Multiple linear regression estimated how each predictor linked to consumer buying behavior while accounting for the four predictors. Significance was judged at the 0.05 level. Results that were listed as.000 in the report are shown here as $p < .001$ following reporting rules.

RESULTS

Reliability of the Measures

All six constructs scored Cronbach's alpha above.70 from.766 to.806. These numbers show that the scales are internally consistent as follows:

S.no	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
1.	Search Engine Marketing	.783
2.	Content marketing	.766
3.	Social media marketing	.794
4.	Affiliate marketing	.806
5.	Email marketing	.792
6.	Consumer buying behavior	.795

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XIII Issue X October 2026

Descriptive Statistics

All study constructs had mean scores, above the point of the scale. Email marketing had the mean among the five digital marketing dimensions (M = 3.781 SD = 0.758) followed by search engine marketing (M = 3.633 SD = 0.866) affiliate marketing (M = 3.608 SD = 0.845) content marketing (M = 3.567 SD = 0.823) and social media marketing (M = 3.552 SD = 0.821). Consumer buying behavior had a mean of 3.698 (SD = 0.768).

	Mean	Std. D
Search Engine Marketing	3.633	.8660
Content Marketing	3.567	.8230
Social Media Marketing	3.552	.8211
Affiliate marketing	3.608	.8445
Email Marketing	3.781	.7584
Consumer Buying Behavior	3.698	.7681
N = 384		

Scores are measured on a five-point response scale.

Correlation Analysis

All five digital marketing dimensions had a correlation with consumer buying behavior at the.01 significance level. Email marketing had the bivariate association (r =.698) followed by social media marketing (r =.658) affiliate marketing (r =.627) content marketing (r =.524) and search engine marketing (r =.517). These results show that higher scores on each marketing dimension go hand in hand with higher consumer buying behavior scores in the sample.

Pearson	SEM	CM	SMM	AM	EM	CB
SMM	1					
CM	.719**	1				
SMM	.681**	.643**	1			
AM	.609**	.627**	.682**	1		
EM	.576**	.559**	.564**	.691**	1	
CBB	.517**	.524**	.658**	.627**	.698**	1

Multiple Regression Analysis

The five-predictor regression model was statistically significant, F(5, 378) = 110.404, p <.001. The model summary reported R =.770, R^2 =.594 and adjusted R^2 =.588. Thus the five predictors together explain 59.4% of the observed variance in consumer buying behavior in this sample.

Model		Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		

1	Constant	.577	.139		4.144	.000
	Search Engine Marketing	-.062	.047	-.070	-1.317	.188
	Content Marketing	.024	.048	.026	.505	.614
	Social Media Marketing	.351	.048	.375	7.324	.000
	Affiliate Marketing	.077	.049	.085	1.585	.114
	Email Marketing	.459	.048	.453	9.563	.000

Email marketing was the statistically significant predictor (β =.453 B =.459 p <.001) followed by social media marketing (β =.375 B =.351 p <.001). Search engine marketing was negative and not significant (β = −.070, p =.188) while content marketing (β =.026 p =.614) and affiliate marketing (β =.085 p =.114) were positive but not significant after the other predictors were taken into account.

Hypothesis Summary

Hypothesis	Accepted/Rejected
H1: Search Engine Marketing → Consumer Buying Behaviour	Rejected
H2: Content Marketing → Consumer Buying Behaviour	Rejected
H3: Social Media Marketing → Consumer Buying Behaviour	Accepted
H4: Affiliate Marketing → Consumer Buying Behaviour	Rejected
H5: Email Marketing → Consumer Buying Behaviour	Accepted

DISCUSSION

The results show a distinction between the broad association of digital marketing with consumer buying behavior and the unique contribution of each channel. All five digital marketing dimensions were positively correlated with consumer buying behavior. Only email marketing and social media marketing were statistically significant predictors in the joint regression model. This pattern suggests that the channels share some variance so a channel's positive bivariate correlation does not automatically mean it adds unique predictive information once other channels are considered.

Email marketing had both the mean score among the five digital marketing dimensions and the strongest correlation with consumer buying behavior. It also had the standardized regression coefficient. This result aligns with the idea that direct messages can be powerful when they give product information timely reminders or tailored offers. However the survey does not show whether the emails were permission-based, how often respondents received them or whether the reported consumer buying behaviour matched purchases. Those aspects need investigation.

Social media marketing was also a positive predictor. Social platforms give chances for communication, user comments, sharing and social recommendations. This view fits with the Theory of Reasoned Action, which notes that attitudes and subjective norms influence intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975) and with the broader digital marketing framework described by Kannan and Li (2017). The current study measures perceived marketing practices and consumer buying behavior through self-report so it cannot pinpoint which specific social media mechanism—such, as reviews, influencer recommendations or brand interaction—drives the association.

Search engine marketing, content marketing and affiliate marketing showed a correlation with buying behavior yet they were not significant when all five digital marketing dimensions were analyzed together. That does not mean that search engine marketing, content marketing or affiliate marketing are useless. Their effects may overlap with marketing activities may differ for different product categories or may depend on factors that were not measured in this study, such as consumer trust, purchase involvement, channel exposure and perceived risk. Additionally search engine marketing had a not statistically significant coefficient after the other predictors were controlled. This does not prove that search engine marketing has an effect in the overall population.

The Nepalese context is important for how we read these results. Thapa's research on media and advertising preferences shows that preferences for communication media are a question that must be answered by data, not a fixed rule (Thapa, 2015). His discussion of advertising in Nepal also stresses the need to balance success with honest communication and consumer protection (Thapa, 2013). When we apply these ideas to channels they support the need for clear disclosure, accurate claims, respectful targeting and careful handling of consumer privacy. This study adds to the conversation by comparing several digital marketing dimensions though it does not directly measure advertising ethics or privacy concerns.

his study looked at five marketing dimensions and how they relate to consumer buying behavior among 384 respondents in Kathmandu Valley. All five dimensions had simple relationships with buying behavior. The regression model explained 59.4 percent of the variation. Email marketing and social media marketing were the dimensions that were statistically significant positive predictors when all five were analyzed together. These results suggest that businesses could gain from focusing on email communication and engaging social media use while still watching search, content and affiliate activities as parts of a coordinated customer journey.

The findings should be seen as signs of association and prediction not proof of cause and effect. They come from self-reported survey data taken in Kathmandu Valley. Therefore they should not be automatically applied to all consumers or to regions of Nepal.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

• Develop permission-based email campaigns that send information, personalized offers and useful reminders. Monitor unsubscribes and engagement to avoid over-messaging.

• Use media for two-way interaction customer support, useful content and transparent answers to questions instead of relying only on promotional posts.

• Evaluate all channels with defined metrics such as qualified traffic, conversion rate, repeat purchase and customer acquisition cost. Do not judge a channel by clicks or reach.

• Coordinate search, content, affiliate, email and social activities across the customer journey because channel effects may overlap.

• Maintain claims, transparent sponsorships and responsible handling of consumer data in line with the consumer-protection concerns highlighted in Nepalese advertising research.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study is limited to Kathmandu Valley and relies on self-reported, data. The dissertation text that is available does not give detail to fully evaluate the sampling frame, response rate, nonresponse bias or the psychometric validity of the scales beyond internal consistency. The study also does not report control variables such as age, income, product category, digital literacy, trust or purchase involvement in the regression model. Future studies could use probability-based or stratified samples include consumers from provinces measure actual purchase outcomes, test mediation by trust or purchase intention and examine

whether effects differ across demographic groups or product categories. Longitudinal or experimental designs would be needed to strengthen inference.

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