The Role of Social Media, Electronic Word-of-Mouth, and Sponsorship in Building Brand Awareness for Goldstar Shoes

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Received on: 07th July, 2024 1st Revised: 15th October, 2024 2nd Revised: 12th November, 2024 Accepted on: 30th November, 2024 Published on: 18th December, 2024

Cite this paper

Manandhar, R.B., Chalise, M., & Dahal, A. (2024). The Role of Social Media, Electronic Word-of-Mouth, and Sponsorship in Building Brand Awareness for Goldstar Shoes. *The International Research Management Science*, Vol. 9 (1), 201-212.

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Abstract

Purpose: In today's competitive marketplace, brand awareness is crucial for a company's success. It reflects the degree to which consumers recognize a brand's unique characteristics and image, influencing customer acquisition, loyalty, and market presence. This study aims to identify factors affecting the brand awareness of Goldstar shoes in Nepal.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Using a descriptive and causal-comparative research design, the study targeted 204 Goldstar customers from different occupations in Kathmandu Valley, selected through convenience sampling. Data was collected via a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using correlation and regression techniques.

Findings: The study found a positive relationship between social media marketing, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and sponsorships with brand awareness. These factors significantly influence Goldstar's brand awareness.

Conclusion: Socialmediamarketing, eWOM, andsponsorships are key drivers of brand awareness for Goldstar shoes. Investing in dynamic social media campaigns, encouraging online reviews, and leveraging strategic sponsorships can enhance brand visibility and market presence. An integrated approach combining these strategies is recommended.

Limitations/Implications: The study utilized only three independent variables: social media marketing, electronic word-of-mouth, and sponsorship, to examine their impact on brand awareness of Goldstar shoes within Kathmandu Valley. Hence, future researchers can study other factors impacting brand awareness of other brands in other cities with a larger sample size and with new analytical tools.

Originality/Value: This study applies the AIDAS Model (Lewis, 1898) to understand customer buying behavior for Goldstar shoes.

Keywords: : Brand awareness, electronic word-of-mouth, social media marketing, and sponsorship.

https://doi.org/10.3126/irjms.v9i1.72722

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Introduction

In today's digital landscape, brand awareness is an essential part of any successful marketing campaign. The capacity of a consumer to recognize or recall a brand within its product category is known as brand awareness (Elaydi, 2018). This is crucial in consumer-decision making, market performance, marketing mix, and brand equity (Zhang, 2020). Generally speaking, firms must prioritize branding which can be used as a gauge for their marketing initiatives (Dameh & Ghadeer, 2019).

Bahi and Pratikto (2020) state that a valuable component of a brand is brand awareness. According to Latif, Islam, and Noor (2014), the primary objective of brand awareness, which is founded on brand recognition and brand recall performance, is to produce thorough brand knowledge that aids in fostering a favorable customer's view of brands and the company in the contemporary marketing environment. Brand awareness plays a vital role in establishing a perception of a brand in the customer's mind. Shahid, Hussain, and Zafar (2017) define brand awareness as a basic degree of brand knowledge that consists of knowing a brand's that has been created based on certain details.

The key point in the brand's success is held by creating its positive image and ensuring its recognizability and awareness. Establishing profitable and enduring relationships with customers is of the utmost importance to businesses in the current dynamic and demanding environment (Rehman, Rasool, Ramzan, Iftikhar, & Ahmad, 2023). When a consumer is satisfied with using concrete brands, little by little she/he becomes a loyal buyer. With the widespread use of social media and the current global communication boom, the business environment has grown increasingly complex (Shojaee & Azman, 2013). One of the difficulties marketers face is raising brand recognition, as reflected in the complexity of the marketing funnel. Prayudi and Nugraha (2022) assert that the business world, particularly in the service sector, is developing in a more inventive way. Digitalization has changed individuals' behavior toward receiving information (Putri, 2022). The whole process of buying a product or service has changed, with conventional advertising gradually turning into digital platforms, specifically social media. Businesses raise consumer awareness through marketing initiatives and install a positive perception of the brand in the customers' minds (Azadi, Yousefi, & Eydi, 2016).

In an era where digitalization has reshaped consumer behavior and advertising strategies, understanding how social media marketing, eWOM, and sponsorship influence brand awareness is crucial. The present research not only aids businesses in adjusting to the digital marketing landscape but also helps them establish more profitable and enduring customer relationships. By identifying effective strategies for enhancing brand awareness, businesses can improve customer loyalty and achieve long-term corporate success.

Although extensive research exists on the role of brand awareness, there remains limited exploration of how specific digital tools, like social media marketing, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and sponsorship impact brand awareness. Furthermore, with the rapid evolution of information technology and the shift from traditional to digital advertising, the need for deeper insights into how digital platforms influence brand awareness remains underexplored. Businesses compete to offer innovative concepts for their goods and services to enhance consumers' perceptions of their brand (Randabunga, Hudayah, & Indriastuti, 2021). While businesses increasingly rely on digital channels to create a brand's positive

image and recognizability, there's a need to explore how these channels contribute to brand loyalty and long-term corporate success in the modern context.

The objective of this study is to identify the factors affecting brand awareness and examine the impact of social media marketing, electronic word-of-mouth, and sponsorship on the brand awareness of Goldstar shoes

Literature Review

The AIDAS model establishes a framework that guides customers through the process of becoming aware of a product or service, developing an interest in it, desiring it, and ultimately taking action to purchase it (Lewis, 1898). The model is particularly useful for content strategists in constructing the marketing funnel and understanding the consumer decision-making process. A brand is an intangible asset that includes elements such as name, logo, packaging, advertising message, and reputation. Shahid, Hussain, and Zafar (2017) state that when a customer is purchasing a product and can easily recall the brand name, it indicates that they are well aware of that specific brand. A competitive advantage in the market, driven by high brand awareness, enhances a brand's credibility and overall reputation (Latif, Islam, & Noor, 2014). Since there is a direct link between brand awareness and product quality, a well-known brand has a big impact on consumer perception (Hamid, Rasool, Kiyani, & Ali, 2012). Establishing an emotional connection with customers is the goal of institutions; by identifying the right techniques, they can raise brand awareness (Gündüzyeli, 2021). Brand awareness enables a company to differentiate itself from competitors' products and services (Baidhya, 2022).

Lilembalemba and Phiri (2024) contend that brand promotion and building relationships with target customers have changed dramatically as a result of the use of social media marketing by businesses. The Internet has opened new channels for locating and retaining clients, particularly through social media platforms (Shojaee & Azman, 2013). Social media's impact on consumer behavior encompasses a broad range of actions, such as educating, exchanging ideas and viewpoints to gain knowledge and understanding, and shaping behavior through post-purchase interactions, such as discussing or visualizing purchases without necessarily completing the transaction (Tatar & Erdogmus, 2016). Actions that motivate customers to select brands and products as well as those that direct marketing messages toward other customers on the Internet are examples of the techniques, that represent social media marketing activities (Biglin, 2018).

Bahi, Pratikto, and Dhewi (2020) maintain that e-WOM messages and information can lower risks and uncertainties while serving as a resource for customers. Referral marketing leverages the social concept of word-of-mouth communication to profit from interpersonal relationships (Manandhar, 2022). Competition between products is a complex issue in service-oriented businesses because services immediately impact customers and shape their perceptions (Randabunga, Hudayah, & Indriastuti, 2021). (Severi, Ling, & Nasermoadeli, 2014) state that companies can build and improve the brand equity of their goods and services through electronic word-of-mouth via social media, which will ultimately draw in customers. Through sponsorship, a specific brand and its product become more well-known to consumers (Chahar, Kumar, Tiwari, & Savitha, 2024). Establishing the right impression in the customer's head is crucial to winning their loyalty to the business (Azadi, Yousefi, & Eydi, 2016).

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Because of the widespread use and appeal of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, influencer marketing has become a potent tool for marketers across the globe (Bonus, Raghani, Visitacion, & Castano, 2022).

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Most of the previous studies supported that brand awareness depends on numerous factors such as social media, messages, credibility, spread, attractiveness, electronic word of mouth, sponsorship, entertainment, and other factors. As has been reviewed, existing literature lacks an in-depth study of the factors affecting brand awareness in the context of an authentic Nepali brand. Thus, there exists a gap in understanding how to make people aware of the particular brand and leave an impact on the consumers' minds. This research aims to bridge the gap by providing a detailed analysis of how to build up brand awareness, enabling businesses to foster favorable consumer perceptions and build lasting customer relationships.

Conceptual framework

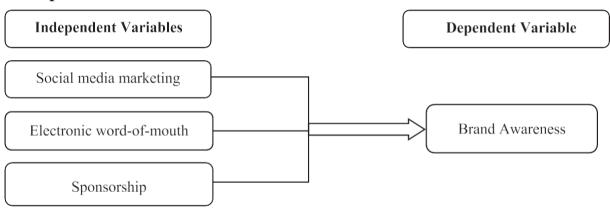


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Research Hypotheses

The following are some alternative hypotheses:

H1: There is an impact of social media marketing on brand awareness of Goldstar shoes.

H2: There is an impact of electronic word of mouth on brand awareness of Goldstar shoes.

H3: There is an impact of sponsorship on brand awareness of Goldstar shoes.

Brand awareness: Brand awareness is a basic understanding of a brand's name or structure based on thorough information (Rao, 2018). It is a key consideration in consumer behavior, advertising management, and brand management.

Social media marketing: Social media refers to software programs that let users communicate with each other by creating personal profiles, inviting friends, and sending direct messages to strangers or coworkers (Elaydi, 2018). Social media marketing is a key component of digital marketing and e-marketing strategies, leveraging the power of social media to influence consumer behavior and build customer relationships.

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Electronic word-of-mouth: E-wom is the term for remarks made by people or previous clients regarding a good, service, or company that circulates information online and can quickly change and adjust a company's reputation as technology develops (Dharmawan, Judijanto, Rahmi, Abdurohim, & Lotte, 2023). It has the power to rapidly transform and modify a business's image as technology advances. Sponsorship: (Cornwell, 2008) defines sponsorship as a communication medium that complements an organization's marketing, promotion, and advertising efforts. It is an act of providing financial support or resources to a person, organization, or project in exchange for various benefits, such as advertising, brand recognition, or access to a specific audience. Research Methodology

December 2024

This study utilized a research design that combined descriptive and analytical approaches to examine the demographic distribution of participants, assess the relationship between independent variables (social media marketing, electronic word-of-mouth, and sponsorship) and brand awareness, and examine their impact on brand awareness. Primary data was collected through direct engagement with participants to address the research objectives. The study used a convenience sampling method to select 250 individuals who were customers of Goldstar shoes within Kathmandu Valley. The data were collected using a well-structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale in April 2024. Out of 250 distributed questionnaires, 209 were returned, out of which 204 were valid. A range of statistical techniques, such as cross-tabulation, mean, standard deviation, independent t-test, correlation, and regression, were utilized to analyze and interpret the gathered data.

Reliability Analysis

According to Gliem and Gliem (2003), Crobach's Alpha is used to assess the reliability and validity of each question in the presented dataset. The reliability of the items is shown below:

Table 1 Reliability results of study variables

S.N.	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	
1	Social media marketing	0.709	
2	Electronic word-of-mouth	0.76	
3	Sponsorship	0.7	
4	Brand awareness	0.736	

Source: Questionnaire survey, 2024

Table 1 presents the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient values for four variables. The value ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values suggesting stronger reliability. In this case, the Cronbach's alpha Coefficient for social media marketing is 0.709, indicating good internal consistency. Electronic word-of-mouth has a higher value of 0.76, suggesting even stronger reliability. Sponsorship has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.7, indicating good internal consistency. Finally, brand awareness has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.736, which is considered a good level of reliability. Overall, these values suggest that the items within each variable are closely related and measure the same underlying construct.

Results

Table 2 Profile of gender

	Frequency	Percent	
Female	99	48.5	
Male	105	51.5	
Total	204	100	

Source: Questionnaire survey, 2024

The table clearly explains the profile of respondents based on their gender category strata. In terms of gender, as evident from Table 2, there is no equal participation. The majority of respondents (51.5 percent) were male, followed by 48.5 percent of female respondents. The table shows that the male population is more inclined towards the Goldstar shoes than the female population.

Table 3 Occupation of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent	
Business	73	35.8	
Household	13	6.4	
Others	23	11.3	
Student	95	46.6	
Total	204	100	

Source: Questionnaire survey, 2024

Table 3 explains the occupations of the respondents. It can be seen that students are more inclined towards Goldstar shoes with a total of 46.6 percent followed by businesses and others with 35.4 percent and 11.3 percent respectively. Here, people engaged in the household are seen to be least interested in Goldstar shoes. In this way, the table describes the popularity of Goldstar shoes among students.

Table 4 Factors influencing the purchase of Goldstar shoes

	Frequency	Percent
Comfort	126	31.30
Price	113	28.10
Brand	62	15.40
Style/fashion	51	12.70
Peer influence	50	12.40

Source: Questionnaire survey, 2024

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Several factors are important in influencing buyers to purchase Goldstar shoes. From Table 3, it is observed that the level of comfort is the main driving factor for customers to buy Goldstar shoes, accounting for 31.30%, followed by price, brand, style/fashion, and peer influence. The least driving factor for customers to buy Goldstar shoes is peer influence, accounting for 12.40%.

Table 5 Descriptive statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social media marketing	3.32	0.92
Electronic word-of-mouth	3.59	0.77
Sponsorship	3.61	0.77
Brand awareness	3.48	0.75

Source: Questionnaire survey, 2024

Table 3 shows the value of social media marketing (mean=3.32, standard deviation=0.92), electronic word of mouth (mean=3.59, standard deviation=0.77), sponsorship (mean=3.61, standard deviation=0.77), and brand awareness (mean=3.48, standard deviation=0.75). Sponsorship received the highest rating, followed by electronic word of mouth and brand awareness. However, perceptions of social media marketing showed greater variability. Overall, all variables were rated favorably, indicating generally positive perceptions, with sponsorship and electronic word of mouth ranked somewhat higher than social media marketing and brand awareness.

Table 6 Independent sample t-test

	Gender	N Mean	SD	P-value
Social media marketing	Male	105	3.29	0.92
	Female	99 3.35	0.92	0.617
Electronic word-of-mouth	Male	105	3.53	0.75
	Female	99 3.65	0.79	0.269
Sponsorship	Male	105	3.54	0.77
	Female	99 3.68	0.77	0.185
Brand awareness	Male	105	3.40	0.75
	Female	99 3.57	0.75	0.111

Source: Questionnaire survey, 2024

Table 5 shows no difference in social media marketing across males and females as the p-value is 0.617, which is greater than 0.05. Likewise, it shows no difference in electronic word of mouth across males and females because the p-value is greater than 0.05, i.e., 0.269. Further, the table detects no difference in sponsorship across males and females as its p-value is also greater than 0.05, i.e., 0.185. There is also no difference in brand awareness across males and females as the p-value is 0.111, which is greater than 0.05.

Correlation analysis

The study focuses on brand awareness as the dependent variable, with the independent variables being social media marketing, electronic word of mouth, and sponsorship. The utilization of Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient unveiled the association between brand awareness in social media marketing, electronic word of mouth, and sponsorship.

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Table 7 Relation between variables

	SMM	EWOM	SP	BA	
Social media marketing	1				
Electronic word-of-mouth	.548**	1			
Sponsorship	.388**	.521**	1		
Brand awareness	.698**	.787**	.378**	1	

Source: Questionnaire survey, 2024

Table 6 presents the correlation coefficient of 0.698, which signifies the relationship between social media marketing and brand awareness. The findings suggest a positive association between brand awareness and social media marketing. The correlation coefficient between brand awareness and electronic word of mouth is 0.787, while the correlation coefficient between brand awareness and sponsorship is 0.387. This relation suggests a positive association between both electronic word of mouth and sponsorship with brand awareness.

Regression analysis

The regression equation presented here is employed to ascertain the impact of social media marketing, electronic word of mouth, and sponsorship on brand awareness.

Table 8 Model summary

	Coefficient	Sig	
(Constant)	0.058	<.001	
Social media marketing	0.324	<.001	
Electronic word-of-mouth	0.608	<.001	
Sponsorship	-0.097	0.023	
R2	0.728		
F-value	178.52		
P-value	< 0.001		

Source: Questionnaire survey, 2024

Y=0.058+0.324X1+0.608X2+(-0.097) X3+er

Where, Y=Brandawareness, X1=Socialmediamarketing, X2=Electronicwordofmouth, X3=Sponsorship and er = error terms

Table 7 reports the R2 value of 0.728, the F statistics value of 178.52, and the p-value less than 0.001. Based on the statistical analysis conducted at a significance level of 5%, the findings suggest that the model exhibits a significant level of effectiveness. The result shows that social media marketing and electronic word-of-mouth exhibit statistical significance at a 99 percent confidence level, as their p-values are less than 0.001. Meanwhile, sponsorship shows statistical significance at a 95 percent confidence level, as its p-value is 0.023, which is less than 5 percent. Hence, the effects of social media marketing, electronic word-of-mouth, and sponsorship on brand awareness play a significant role.

Table 9 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

	Effect	Result	
H1	Social media marketing - Brand awareness	Supported	
H2	Electronic word of mouth - Brand awareness	Supported	
H3	Sponsorship - Brand awareness	Supported	

In Table 10, the result of H1 shows that there is a significant impact of social media marketing on brand awareness of Goldstar shoes. Similarly, H2 also presents a significant impact of electronic word of mouth on brand awareness. Finally, H3, too, demonstrates a significant impact of sponsorship on brand awareness.

Findings and Discussion

In the present research, different factors are directly linked with brand awareness. The result obtained from the data analysis for social media showed a significant impact on brand awareness. The results align with those made by Nguyen and Nguyen (2020), who found that social media positively promotes brand awareness in the viral marketing context. According to Lilembalemba and Phiri (2024), social media marketing is an essential instrument for market communication in different sectors, helping to raise brand awareness. Further, (Bonus, Raghani, Visitacion, and Castano (2022) concluded that online presence, influencers' expertise, and content attractiveness are significant to consumers when purchasing. The result obtained from the data analysis for electronic word of mouth showed a positive and significant impact on brand awareness. The findings are consistent with Severi, Ling, and Nasermoadeli (2014) who concluded that there is an indirect inter-relationship between electronic word of mouth and the dimensions of brand equity, mediated by the respective various brand equity constructs (brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand association, and perceived quality). Supartiwi, Ariyanti, and Trianasar (2022) further concluded that electronic word of mouth could influence other people, the images by their, thoughts, and decisions.

There is a positive and significant impact of sponsorship on brand awareness. This result is supported by Bouazza, Negra, and Mzoughi (2013) who concluded that products associated with sponsored events are the most purchased because people see them every time they attend any cultural or sportive event. Further, sponsorship supports events, causes, or organizations and has a powerful impact on brand awareness (Chahar, Kumar, Tiwari, & Savitha, 2024).

Conclusion and Implication

The findings show that social media marketing, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and sponsorships significantly contribute to brand awareness for Goldstar shoes. These are key drivers of brand awareness to increase brand recognition. Social media platforms, like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, which engage broad audiences, are particularly effective in enhancing brand awareness and customer interaction. Consequently, companies should invest in dynamic social media campaigns to maintain and grow this awareness. The role of eWOM is equally influential, as consumer reviews and online recommendations extend Goldstar's reach and foster trust among new customers. Additionally, sponsorships aligned with events or causes serve as strategic tools for increasing brand visibility in target markets, reinforcing brand identity, and fostering long-term consumer connections. Thus, Goldstar should adopt an integrated approach, combining social media marketing, incentivizing e-WOM, and leveraging sponsorships to maximize brand awareness and market presence.

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