

**Social Media Marketing and Brand Awareness of Customers:  
Evidence from Nepal**

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## **Abstract**

**Background:** Social media marketing is an essential promotional approach for businesses that enhances brand recognition among consumers. The outcome factors include client brand awareness behavior, whereas the influencer variables consist of advertising, electronic word of mouth, and social media engagement.

**Objective:** This research discovers the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness. Thus, the variables of the study comprise advertising, electronic word of mouth, and social media interaction as independent factors, with brand awareness as the dependent variable.

**Methods:** The descriptive and casual research design was used in this study. The study discovers the complex interactions between several facets of brand awareness and social media marketing. Out of 204 questionnaires that were disseminated to target respondents, only 119 (58.33 percent) were deemed suitable for the study.

**Findings:** The finding of the study revealed that advertisements had a substantial and favorable influence on brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.677$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Electronic word-of-mouth also had a favourable and significant effect on brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.067$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Ultimately, the findings showed that media interaction had a favorable and substantial influence on brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.649$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** The study investigated the interrelated aspects of social media marketing, suggesting that a synergistic or flexible strategy may provide the most successful outcomes in improving entire brand awareness. It can be concluded that recognizing the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness is essential. Manufacturers, distributors of goods and services, and other commercial organizations may include these insights when formulating sales and marketing strategies.

**Novelty:** The study provides empirical evidence of social media marketing on brand awareness. Despite the several previous studies conducted in social media marketing, inconsistent findings exist, and rare evidence is explored in the Nepalese context.

**Keywords:** Brand awareness, information management, marketing, social media

**JEL Classification:** M<sub>3</sub>, M<sub>19</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>,

## **Introduction**

Consumer awareness in the modern market needs to be enhanced through the organizational endeavour to capitalize on competitive advantage by sketching the path of sustainable growth. However, constructing a business atmosphere for patron attachment to a brand, spreading awareness, and obtaining proactive involvement with the brand became ambiguous and challenging. Thus, businesses have initiated several social media-based marketing to promote the product and services creating brand awareness (Kozinet, 2002). Moreover, marketing communications channels are the means for companies to notify, remind, and convince customers about their brands, products, or services (Kotler, 2009), but choosing efficient means to carry the message is difficult. A significant part of people's lives and businesses is played by social media platforms. It is reasonable to anticipate that businesses will get more engaged in

the use of social media in light of the widespread adoption of social media and the number of users who are expected to be active in the future (Kichatov & Mihajlovski, 2010). Additionally, social media allows quick responses to customer service issues by giving a chance to hear good or bad news quickly (Brown, 2010), facilitating interactions, and sharing content quickly, widely, viral, and cheaply. Since the advent of social media, the marketing funnel has been drastically transformed from simple to highly complicated form (Haven et al., 2007).

Brands may be considered as names, phrases, symbols, pictures, or combinations of these elements that are used to validate the seller's product and set it apart from those of rivals (Kotler, 1997). Moreover, the sum of brand recall and brand awareness is known as brand awareness (Keller, 1993). Brand awareness is the ability of a consumer to recall a brand and differentiate it from competitors if they hear or see it once and then again. For any promotional strategy, it serves as the overarching communication goal (Peter & Olson, 2013). Therefore, brand awareness refers to a prospective customer's capacity to identify or remember that a brand belongs to a certain product category (Aaker, 1996). Additionally, advertising is also crucial in today's social media-driven world for brand promotion and consumer awareness. Next, the influence of advertising on the marketing program as a whole is shown in two ways. First, providers to businesses must continuously remind prospective customers of their offerings or inform them of the company's new services or goods. Advertising may also increase the effectiveness of sales activities (Hutt & Speh, 2004). Advertising is the practice of promoting goods and services to both attract new clients and boost current demand (Durmaz, 2011).

Furthermore, social media has more credibility than conventional media due to the great openness of information which is a result of electronic word-of-mouth (Bickart & Schindler, 2001). With exponential advancement, electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) is simpler, quicker, and more widespread than traditional forms of marketing communication mix (Thackeray et al., 2008). EWOM helps consumers spread the word about the product and the marketers. Thus, social media has created more favourable conditions for interacting with clients (Gallaughier & Ransbotham, 2010). Social media offers a wider audience and promotes user involvement via tagging, messaging, online chat, likes, comments, and more (Ma & Chan, 2014). Thus, reviews and customer engagement provide businesses with a better understanding of what consumers want and need (Ansari et al., 2019).

Additionally, it is shown that boosting user engagement with certain subjects and discussions on social media platforms helps businesses build and maintain relationships with their clientele (Jamali & Khan, 2018).

Subsequently, social media platforms become an integral component of marketing interactions with consumers in the online marketplace. E-marketing technologies facilitate a business's ability to augment its efficacy in elevating brand recognition, particularly within a short timeframe and with little financial investment. Conventional marketing tactics tend to be costlier, rendering them unsuitable for small businesses due to their diminished return on investment (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010).

In addition, the return on investment from social media marketing may be assessed by consumer reactions in the online marketplace and by evaluating their desire to use social media platforms while interacting with the promoted companies (Castronovo & Huang, 2012).

Therefore, this primarily aims to examine the influence and correlation of social media marketing methods on brand awareness enhancement.

## **Literature Review**

### **Theoretical Review**

It is essential to comprehend and illustrate the applicable ideas that constitute the study's theoretical framework prior to doing any investigation. Theories are useful for several reasons, including coming up with research questions, picking the right data to study, interpreting that data, and explaining why certain things happen the way they do. Mere Exposure Theory (MET) and Use-and-Gratification Theory (UGT) are therefore the theories considered in the research.

### **Mere Exposure Theory (MET)**

The Mere Exposure Theory, developed by (Zajonc, 1968), suggests that repeated exposure to stimuli enhances preference for it or the familiarity effect. This phenomenon, also known as the familiarity effect, can occur even without cognitive knowledge, as subliminal exposure can augment preferences. The theory suggests that comfort and simplicity of processing familiar stimuli elicit favourable emotions, diminishing ambiguity and fostering a sense of safety. This theory is significant for marketing tactics related to advertising, particularly when a business or product is new and unknown. However, excessive media exposure can deteriorate a company's reputation. The theory suggests that earlier exposure improves processing fluency during consumer assessment, leading to the misattribution of pleasant emotions to the commercial or brand. This idea has been applied to various aspects of human behaviour, including commercial choices, interpersonal attraction, and cultural views, highlighting the significant impact of familiarity on our perceptions and inclinations.

### **Use-and-Gratification Theory (UGT)**

The Use-and-gratification theory, introduced by Katz et al. (1973), is a communication theory that explains why people use media to meet specific needs. It focuses on the media consumer rather than the media itself and assumes people are active and motivated in their media choices. The theory suggests that media consumption is driven by four main factors: (1) the need for information, (2) personal identity and integration, (3) social interaction, and (4) entertainment. Information needs are met through various media channels, such as news programs, documentaries, and online resources. Social needs are fulfilled by media by facilitating interaction and communication among individuals, fostering relationships, and sharing experiences. Entertainment media, such as movies, television shows, video games, and sports broadcasts, provide opportunities for emotional gratification and enjoyment, offering temporary relief from daily stressors and mundane routines. Overall, the Use-and-gratification theory highlights the importance of media in shaping individuals' identities, fostering social cohesion, and providing temporary relief from daily stressors.

### **Empirical Review**

The research investigates the determinants of brand awareness and their interconnections. It recognizes that brand recognition is affected by advertising, electronic word-of-mouth, and engagement. Thus, the empirical evidence derived from the previous study comprising 288 respondents' consumers at a US institution investigated brand recognition levels in sports broadcasts. The results revealed that numerous exposures to virtual advertising boosted brand awareness, while baseball engagement diminished it. Team identification raised awareness, but animation did not. The research looks at the elements that influence brand awareness and how they are linked. It outlines three factors that affect brand awareness: advertising, electronic word-of-mouth, and interaction (Tsuji et al., 2009). Similarly, another study explores the influence of social media on brand awareness in Malaysia, focusing on the relationship between brand exposure, customer engagement, and electronic word-of-mouth. It suggests that marketers should synchronize messages across all media channels to attract customers, and social media can enhance brand awareness through interactive features (Shojace & Zman, 2013).

In addition, the next study explored the influence of social media marketing on Facebook brand awareness, considering demographics like age and gender. It reveals that firms primarily utilize six dimensions: online communities, interaction, content sharing, accessibility, and credibility. The results suggest that these dimensions significantly enhance brand awareness in Egypt's mobile network services, urging marketers to implement effective Facebook marketing strategies (Elaydi, 2018). Moreover, the study conducted in Vietnam investigated the effects of viral marketing aspects on brand recognition. The research explored several settings, factors of brand awareness, and their impact on brand awareness (Nyugen & Nyugen, 2020). Next, a study on Honda Matic Scoopy in Banda Aceh City, Indonesia, found that product quality, price, and promotion significantly impact brand awareness, emphasizing the importance of considering these elements in marketing strategies (Yunus & Yusuf, 2020).

Furthermore, another study conducted on the Kosovo fashion industry found that advertising and interaction significantly impact brand awareness, while entertainment, influencers, and sharing have no influence. This research advocated that marketers can create successful promotions through social media activities, but should consider challenges and make informed decisions to navigate the dynamic landscape (Rrustemi & Baca, 2021). Evidence was explored through a study on brand awareness in Ethiopian domestic leather footwear industries, focusing on perception, advertising, perceived quality, and product innovation. The study found that brand perception significantly influences brand awareness, with customers often recognizing the corporate brand name but judging domestically produced products as low in quality, style, design, fashion, and price (Muzevin et. al., 2022).

Moreover, a study was conducted on the influence of social media marketing on brand awareness in medium and small-sized enterprises. The study findings revealed that entertainment, interaction, informativeness, advertisement, and electronic word-of-mouth significantly influence brand awareness on social media platforms. These factors drive

behaviour, follow-up, and decision-making, while advertisements help customers understand the brand's image and influence Facebook's adoption of social media marketing for influential products (Supartiwi et al. (2022)). Additionally, a study held on the impact of digital marketing on brand awareness in the Riau Islands found a significant positive relationship between advertising and websites and brand awareness. It advocated that advertising and websites provide essential information for understanding a brand's identity (Karen & Zai, 2022). Similarly, another study explored the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness in Vietnam's real estate industry. The study found that customization is the most significant factor, while interaction moderately affects brand awareness (Thuy & Cui, 2023). Based on the review of empirical studies, the following hypotheses have been developed:

### **Hypotheses of the study**

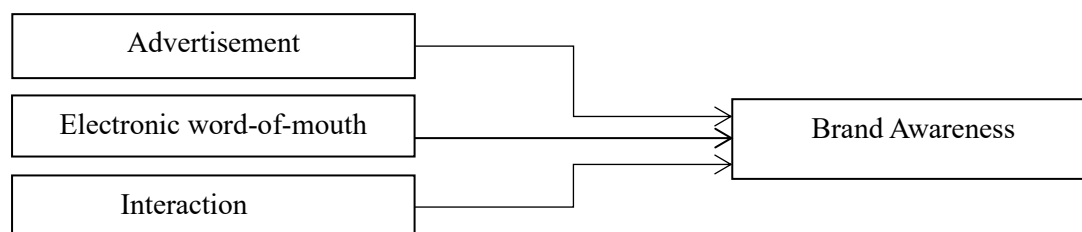
*AH<sub>1</sub>: There is a positive influence of advertisement on brand awareness.*

*AH<sub>2</sub>: There is a positive effect of Electronic word-of-mouth on brand awareness.*

*AH<sub>3</sub>: There is a positive influence of interaction on brand awareness.*

### **Research Framework**

The study used a research framework to examine the influence of social media marketing on brand awareness. Brand awareness functions as a dependent variable, while advertising, electronic word-of-mouth, and interaction serve as independent factors. Advertisements endorse items or services, while electronic word-of-mouth feedback on products and interactions enables content dissemination. The research seeks to ascertain the impact of these factors on brand awareness.



**Figure 1: Research Framework of the Study**

Source: (Tsuji et al., 2009; Shojae & Azman, 2013; Rustemi & Baca, 2021)

### **Methodology**

This study mainly aims to examine the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness, using advertising, electronic word-of-mouth, and interaction as predictors and brand awareness as the outcome variable. This study used descriptive and causal research designs. The descriptive study approach methodically illustrates the phenomena, highlighting the qualities and trends of the respondents' general background knowledge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Similarly, A casual research design was used to demonstrate the causal relationship between the study variables and to examine the impact of predictors on the outcome variable (Bryman, 2016). The research population consists of respondents from the Tokha area of Kathmandu. Moreover, this research used primary sources of cross-sectional data. Similarly, the research used convenience sampling, since this approach facilitates rapid and straightforward access to



survey respondents capable of providing the necessary information (Etiken et al., 2016). A total of 204 structured questionnaires were disseminated to the target respondents, yielding 119 (58.33 percent) completed questionnaires deemed relevant. A sample size of 100-200 is deemed sufficient for examining moderate to large effect sizes in social science research if the sampling procedure is systematic and data quality is guaranteed. Likewise, this sample size aligns with the suggestion for acquiring dependable results in research using correlation and regression analysis (Kline, 2023). The research questionnaire for the study had two segments: the first section included background information of the survey participants, while the second segment contained an opinion-based questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. The Likert scale ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The Likert scale items for the research variables were derived from prior studies by paraphrase. The advertisement construct was adopted from the previous study as utilized by (Karen & Zai, 2022). Similarly, other constructs consisting of electronic word-of-mouth (EWM), interaction (INT), and brand awareness (BA) were adopted from the previous study (Thuy & Cuu, 2023). In addition, this research used descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, variance, skewness, and kurtosis. Similarly, correlation analyses were used to examine the degree and direction of the relationship between the variables (Field, 2018). Measurement of the influence of predictor factors on outcome variables was the purpose of the regression analysis that was carried out (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). This study has developed the following research model:

$$BA = \alpha + \beta_1ADV + \beta_2EWM + \beta_3INT + ei \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where,

BA = Brand Awareness (BA),  $\alpha$  = Intercept, ADV = Advertisement (ADV), EWM = Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWM), INT = Interaction (INT), and ei = Error term

## Results

This section is bifurcated into two parts. The introductory segment emphasizes the presentation and analysis of the core data, including findings from the questionnaire survey and a comprehensive evaluation of the regression model. This entails doing correlation analysis with a particular focus on brand awareness.

### Respondents' Profiles

**Table 1: Profile of Respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	67	56.3
Female	52	43.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100</b>
Age	Frequency	Percent
18-22	82	68.9
23-27	27	22.7
28-32	10	8.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100</b>

Education	Frequency	Percent
Bachelors	99	83.2
Master	20	16.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 shows the profile of the individuals who participated in the survey and provided their responses. There were 67 male participants, which is (56.30 percent) of the total, and there were 52 female participants, which is (43.70 percent) of the total. The age group that consisted of individuals between the ages of 18 and 22 years old remained a large group of 82 (68.90 percent). Following that, the group of participants, who accounted for 99 (83.20 percent), had a bachelor's degree or above in their educational background.

**Table 2:** *Post Advertisement Buying Behaviour*

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	102	85.7
No	17	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 presents the purchasing patterns of respondents in relation to social media marketing after respondents have been exposed to advertisements. In all, there were 119 replies, with 102 (85.70 percent) of them indicating that they agreed with the statement, and 17 (14.30 percent) of them indicating that they did not have any status.

**Table 3:** *Brand Preferences through Electronic Word of Mouth Behaviour*

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	88	73.9
No	31	26.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 presents the Brand Preferences via Electronic Word of Mouth Behaviour of respondents. The results indicate that 88 participants (73.90 percent) revealed that they accepted the statement, whereas 31 participants (26.10 percent) declared that they did not accept the statement.

**Table 4:** *Brand Awareness through Social Media Interaction*

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	100	84
No	19	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 illustrates the level of brand awareness achieved via engagement on social media. The number of respondents who expressed a yes opinion was 100 (84 percent), whereas the number of respondents who stated a no statement was 19 (16 percent).



**Descriptive Statistics for All Sample**

**Table 5:** *Descriptive Statistics for Constructs*

Variables/Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Advertisement	3.66	0.909	0.827	-1.38	1.38
Electronic word-of-mouth	3.32	0.853	0.727	-0.36	-0.06
Interaction	3.41	0.888	0.788	-0.24	-0.44
Brand awareness	3.55	0.891	0.794	-0.93	0.70

Table 5 summarizes the result of the descriptive statistics of the variable under the study. The table displays the mean, median, standard deviation, variance, skewness, and kurtosis for all sample respondents in the survey. The mean value for the independent variable, advertisement, is ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = 0.909$ ) the highest among all the variables. The mean value of electronic word of mouth shows ( $M = 3.32$ ,  $SD = 0.853$ ). Similarly, the mean and standard deviation of social media interaction remained ( $M = 3.41$ ,  $SD = 0.888$ ). Finally, the mean and standard deviation value for brand awareness remained ( $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = 0.891$ ).

**Correlation Analysis**

**Table 6:** *Correlation Matrix*

Variables		AD	EWOM	INT	BA
AD	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
EWOM	Pearson Correlation	.485**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001			
INT	Pearson Correlation	.611**	.658**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.001		
BA	Pearson Correlation	.690**	.429**	.647**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.001	0.001	

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 delineates the correlation analysis of the variables examined in the whole sample. The correlation study reveals a robust positive association between advertising and brand awareness, with a significance level of ( $p < 0.001$ ) and a correlation value of ( $r = 0.690$ ). This indicates that a rise in marketing positively influences brand awareness and vice versa. A notable and affirmative association exists between electronic word-of-mouth and brand awareness, with a correlation value of ( $r = 0.429$ ) at a significance level of ( $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that a rise in electronic word-of-mouth positively influences brand recognition, and conversely. A substantial and affirmative association exists between interaction and brand awareness, with a significance level of ( $p < 0.001$ ) and a correlation value of ( $r = 0.647$ ).

**Regression analysis**

Regression analysis assesses the influence of an independent variable on a dependent variable. This analysis encompasses the whole sample of the research. This research does regression analysis on the determinants of brand awareness. This research identifies advertising,

electronic word-of-mouth, and interaction as elements influencing brand awareness. The following tables provide the regression analysis for all aspects influencing brand awareness.

**Table 7: Regression Coefficient**

Coefficient	Intercept	Unstandardized		t	Sig.	F	Sig	Adj.
		Coefficients						R
		B	Std. Error					Square
AD	1.076	0.677	0.066	10.326	0.001	106.62	.001b	0.472
EWOM	2.064	0.449	0.087	5.143	0.001	26.45	.001b	0.177
INT	1.341	0.649	0.071	9.167	0.001	84.03	.001b	0.413

a Dependent Variable: Brand awareness

Table 7 presents the regression coefficient. The research indicates that advertisements substantially influence brand awareness, shown by a regression coefficient of ( $\beta = 0.677$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). It demonstrates the beneficial impact of advertising on brand recognition. A one percent rise in commercials results in a 0.677 percent increase in brand awareness. The data demonstrates that electronic word-of-mouth constitutes 17.7 percent of the variation in brand awareness. The beta value ( $\beta = 0.449$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) indicates a positive and substantial effect of electronic word of mouth on brand awareness. An increase in electronic word of mouth enhances brand recognition among consumers. An increase of one percent in electronic word of mouth results in a 0.449 percent rise in brand awareness. The beta value for social media contact indicates a positive and substantial effect on brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.649$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Increased participation on social media enhances brand recognition among customers. A one percent increase in social media contact elevate brand awareness among consumers by 0.649 percent.

**Table 8: Summary of Hypotheses**

Hypotheses	Results
<i>AH<sub>1</sub>: There is a positive influence of advertisement on brand awareness.</i>	Accepted
<i>AH<sub>2</sub>: There is a positive effect of Electronic word-of-mouth on brand awareness.</i>	Accepted
<i>AH<sub>3</sub>: There is a positive influence of interaction on brand awareness.</i>	Accepted

Table 8 shows the summary of the hypothesis. Hypothesis one stating there is a positive influence of advertisement on brand awareness was found compatible with the theory confirming the research hypothesis. Similarly, the second hypothesis stating there is a positive effect of Electronic word-of-mouth on brand awareness was also found consistent with existing theory confirming the formulated hypothesis. Finally, the third hypothesis stating there is a positive influence of interaction on brand awareness was also matched with the existing hypothesis confirming the formulated hypothesis.

## Discussion

The primary objective of the research was to investigate the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness, using information from Tokha, Kathmandu. The research performed descriptive and inferential analyses to get the study's results. The investigation indicated a

substantial and beneficial impact of advertisement on brand awareness. The growth in marketing volume on social media enhances brand awareness among consumers. This study aligns with prior research by Karen and Zai (2022), which indicated that advertising that comprehends and addresses client demands ultimately generates imagination, attention, and awareness. The results correspond with the findings of Rrustemi and Baca (2021), which identify a positive and substantial correlation between advertising and brand awareness. Similarly, the findings depict a positive and significant influence of electronic social media on brand awareness. It further manifests that as electronic word of mouth through social media increases regarding the brand of products or services that enhances to build the brand awareness and company reputation. These findings move in the same direction as previous studies (Thuy & Cuu, 2023) which conclude electronic word-of-mouth helps customers to recommend the brand to other consumers if it offers good features and qualities. Also based on (Supartiwi et al., 2022) electronic word-of-mouth has a positive and significant impact on brand awareness which concludes that electronic word-of-mouth could influence other people, the images, thoughts, and decisions. Finally, the results depicted a positive and significant effect of social media interaction on brand awareness revealing the evidence that as a proportion of interaction and discussion in social media platforms rises that boosts the level of awareness of brands of goods and services in the market. This finding remained in the same line with the earlier empirical findings where (Thuy & Cuu, 2023) observed that the interaction variable has a moderate effect on brand awareness.

## **Conclusion**

The main aim of the study was to evaluate the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness. The research gathered data from clients located in the Tokha area of Kathmandu. The results were obtained by frequency, percentage, correlation, and regression analysis. The findings of the results indicated a substantial and favourable impact of advertising on brand awareness. It demonstrates that augmenting social media advertising positively affects brand awareness. It may be argued that contemporary marketing initiatives aimed at introducing and expanding the brand must engage in social media advertising. The finding of the study indicated a positive effect of electronic word of mouth on brand awareness, highlighting the significance of word of mouth in digital marketing for enhancing brand recognition. A company entity striving to enhance brand recognition must use electronic word-of-mouth social media marketing to disseminate information about its businesses. The findings indicated a positive and substantial interaction effect of social media on brand awareness, demonstrating that more engagement on social media platforms elevates brand awareness levels. Consequently, it can be inferred that commercial organizations requiring product and service marketing should prioritize social media engagement as a means to cultivate brand recognition among consumers. Consequently, focusing on social media marketing is a crucial technique for establishing brand recognition in today's digitally driven marketplace.

### **Practical Implications and Limitations**

The results of this research are significant for any organization aiming to improve its brand recognition. Brands strategically utilize the essential relationship between brand awareness and various aspects of social media marketing, such as advertising, electronic word-of-mouth, and interactive engagement, to enhance brand commitment, cultivate loyalty, and instill consumer trust. This strategic strategy significantly influences customer behaviour and is crucial in building the brand-consumer connection. The results generated from this research positively influence consumer brand awareness among the respondents of the Tokha area through social media marketing and provide significant information for brand enthusiasts. Consequently, the study's results enhance the current theory and serve as a standard for commercial organizations, legislators, regulators, and other stakeholders. This research is constrained by its coverage regions, including small sample size, restricted variables, and reliance on cross-sectional data confined to Tokha, Kathmandu. Future research can take place including more influencing factors, longitudinal studies, larger sample sizes, and a broader range of leading variables across various geographic locations.

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