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Age and Awareness as Predictors of Usage Frequency and Advocacy for Mobile Wallets in Nepal

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Abstract

Background: Adoption of mobile wallets is one of the most important features of financial digitization in Nepal. Understanding drivers of their use and promotion is important for long-term development.

Objectives: This study was undertaken to (1) investigate the relationship between the age of users and frequency of usage of mobile wallets, and (2) analyze the impact of functional awareness on the likelihood to recommend mobile wallets.

Methods: A quantitative cross-sectional study among 216 mobile wallet users in Kathmandu Valley was carried out through convenience sampling. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Kruskal-Wallis H Test on SPSS.

Results: The correlation between age and use frequency was statistically significant (p=.001), with the age bracket 21-25 being the most regular users (82.9% used it weekly or daily). A statistical variation in intent to recommend by awareness level was also determined (p=.001), as a hypothesis that a rise in awareness will lead to a higher intention to market the service.

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Conclusion: The findings confirm that the younger age groups are the key drivers of mobile wallet adoption in Nepal, and that educating users is a critical measure to attain loyalty and word-of-mouth expansion.
Implications: Implications of this study are that mobile wallet providers should adopt age-specific marketing strategies to increase adoption rates of their products among various demographic groups. Furthermore, there is a need to increase financial literacy to support national digitalization strategies.
Keywords: Mobile Wallets, Digital Payments, Customer Perception, Nepal, Technology Adoption, Awareness, Financial Technology (FinTech)

Introduction

The financial world is changing dramatically with the unprecedented adoption of digital payment systems (Putrevu & Mertzanis, 2024; Arner et al., 2020; Gomber et al., 2018). Mobile wallets, a software for storing financial instruments and executing electronic transactions using mobile devices such as smartphones, have been the bedrock of this financial revolution (Timedjeghdine & Djarmouni, 2025; Neupane et al., 2025). In developing economies, particularly in South Asia, such technologies are not only a convenience but also an efficient tool for financial inclusion, extending unbanked and underbanked segments formal financial services. Nepal, where there is a high mobile penetration rate and a government push for a digital economy, is fertile territory for the creation and uptake of fintech solutions of this nature (Shrestha, 2024). This study is set against this backdrop of technological change, attempting to understand the dynamics of the adoption of mobile wallets from the perspective of the Nepalese consumer.

The Nepalese market has witnessed the swift entry of several mobile wallet 167ervicee providers, such as eSewa, Khalti, and Fonepay, that have become integrated into the daily financial transactions of a growing segment of the population (Dangol, 2024; Mahat et al., 2024). They offer a broad range of services, such as utility bill payments and mobile top-ups, merchant payments, and fund transfers, effectively challenging the monopoly of traditional cash-based transactions (Swanton, 2023). This rapid growth necessitates an academic study to examine whether consumer attitude is matching this rapid adoption. It is necessary to know how customers perceive these tools utility, risks, and benefits—to ensure continued growth and to design easy-to-use services that cater to the specific needs of the Nepalese market.

Despite the increased awareness of mobile wallets, there often exists a wide gap between awareness and deep functionality-based knowledge (Park & Le, 2023; Mujeri & Azam, 2018). The users may use such apps for basic transactions while remaining unaware of their overall set of functionalities (Farrugia et al., 2020; Ali et al., 2018). This gap in knowledge has the potential to influence not only how often and with what confidence the technology is used, but whether or not a user becomes its champion. It is therefore worth investigating the relationship

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between a user's awareness level and his or her subsequent loyalty and promotion behavior, as this directly impacts organic growth through word-of-mouth recommendations, a viable marketing channel in a collective culture like Nepal.

Furthermore, the uptake of new technology is rarely uniform among every group within a population. Demographic characteristics, in particular age, are most frequently mentioned as significant predictors of technological adoption and usage patterns. Intergenerational differences in experience with digital technology, risk tolerance, and financial management can create distinct user profiles. Within the context of Nepal, where the population is relatively young, it is important for providers and policymakers to know how various age groups view and adopt mobile wallets in their lives so that they can design their strategies accordingly to make it more inclusive and achieve mass adoption beyond the tech-savvy young.

Therefore, this study is guided by two primary objectives: first, to study the relationship between the age of consumers and the frequency of their mobile wallet usage, and second, to establish the impact of functional awareness on the intention of users to recommend mobile wallets to others. Through these in-depth relationships, this research moves past generalized adoption surveys to uncover active use and advocacy drivers' subtle reasons, creating a deeper comprehension of the Nepalese consumer mentality within the nation's emerging digital payments ecosystem.

For mobile wallet service providers, the findings in this study have significant implications as they offer a strategic roadmap for targeted marketing, user education campaigns, and product feature enhancements. For policymakers, an understanding of adoption drivers and barriers is paramount to formulating regulations that protect consumers and foster innovation. For academia, the study contributes empirical evidence from the Nepalese context to the literature on fintech adoption in emerging economies. Lastly, this study aims to provide an overall picture of customer attitude, thereby contributing to the sustainable and inclusive growth of a digital payment system in Nepal**.**

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional research design under the positivist philosophy to empirically examine customer attitudes towards mobile wallets in Nepal. The study placed specific emphasis on the following two major research objectives: (1) examining the relationship between users' age and the frequency of use of mobile wallets, and (2) assessing the influence of functional awareness on the intention to recommend mobile wallets. A structured survey instrument was administered to 216 active mobile wallet users of Kathmandu Valley, selected through convenience sampling for the sake of practical accessibility without compromising on demographic variability across age, occupation, and

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education levels. The survey instrument captured demographic profiles, usage patterns, awareness levels, and perception-based questions on mobile wallet services.

Data was analyzed with IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and cross-tabulations, were used to summarize demographic and behavioral characteristics of the sample. To test the hypotheses, non-parametric inferential tests were used due to the categorical and ordinal nature of the data (Objective 1), and the Kruskal–Wallis H Test was used to determine if differences in recommendation likelihood were significant across awareness categories (Objective 2). A p-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant for all the tests. This is a way that allowed systematic and rigorous testing of the hypothesized relationships without manipulating variables, in accordance with the non-experimental and descriptive-analytical nature of the study.

Results and Analysis

Table 1: Age *usage frequency of mobile wallet: Crosstabulation

			How often do you use mobile wallet?				Total
			Daily	Monthly	Rarely	Weekly	
Age	21-25	Count	61	5	15	36	117
		% within Age	52.1%	4.3%	12.8%	30.8%	100.0%
		% within usage frequency of mobile wallet	65.6%	20.8%	57.7%	49.3%	54.2%
	26-30	Count	16	7	3	8	34
		% within Age	47.1%	20.6%	8.8%	23.5%	100.0%
		% within usage frequency of mobile wallet	17.2%	29.2%	11.5%	11.0%	15.7%
	31-35	Count	1	3	2	5	11
		% within Age	9.1%	27.3%	18.2%	45.5%	100.0%
		% within usage frequency of mobile wallet	1.1%	12.5%	7.7%	6.8%	5.1%
	36-above	Count	1	4	1	4	10
		% within Age	10.0%	40.0%	10.0%	40.0%	100.0%
		% within usage frequency of mobile wallet	1.1%	16.7%	3.8%	5.5%	4.6%
	Below 20	Count	14	5	5	20	44
		% within Age	31.8%	11.4%	11.4%	45.5%	100.0%
		% within usage frequency of mobile wallet	15.1%	20.8%	19.2%	27.4%	20.4%
Total		Count	93	24	26	73	216
		% within Age	43.1%	11.1%	12.0%	33.8%	100.0%
		% within usage frequency of mobile wallet	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Based on the strong statistical output shown, the study creates a clear and strong relationship between age and number of mobile wallet usage in Nepal. The Fisher's Exact Test, as the most accurate since more than half of the cells had an expected count of less than 5, provided a

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highly significant p-value of .001. This confirms that the null hypothesis—claiming there is no relationship—can be rejected with high confidence. So, we see that the user's age group is a statistically significant predictor of frequency of use of mobile wallets, with distinct patterns of behaviour by age group.

The most telling finding is dominance of the 21-25 group as the most frequent and active users. The majority of this group (52.1%) reported daily use, and they constitute an overwhelming majority (65.6%) of all daily users in the sample. Moreover, their mean weekly usage (30.8%) is significant, and thus to over 82% of young adults, mobile wallets are a part of their daily, if not daily, financial habit. This further strengthens this group as the most important forerunner in embracing mobile wallets and the mean weekly usage within the Nepali market.

There exists an evident trend of decreased daily usage with increasing age. While 47.1% of the 26-30s are daily users, the rate sharply declines to 9.1% and 10.0% for the 31-35s and 36-above, respectively. Conversely to that, irregular usage patterns become prevalent among the older respondents. For instance, combined monthly and hardly ever usage is highest in the 36-above group (50%) and the 31-35 group (45.5%). This suggests that older age groups comprehend mobile wallets more as an intermittent support for particular needs than as a default payment method for everyday transactions.

The Below 20 segment displays a unique intermediate behavior, between the intense interaction of the 21-25 group and the restraint of older groups. Their highest rate of use is weekly (45.5%), with a significant share also included under the daily user's category (31.8%). This pattern is likely responsible for their classification as lower-disposable-income or fewer-daily-transactions students, using wallets for specific, planned activities like weekly mobile recharge or internet shopping than for regular use.

The evidence thus paints a vivid image of a technology embraced most fervently by Nepalis when they are in their early twenties. The split is not merely statistically significant but is also operationally significant, and a pronounced generational split manifests itself. This matters to players in the mobile wallet space and to companies because it identifies the primary imperative of addressing the 21-25 category as core customers and developing focused strategies to induce increased levels of interaction within the enormous and value potential "Below 20" segment and counter the challenges in using the wallet more frequently among upper-age groups.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is a significant relationship between the age of respondents and their frequency of mobile wallet use.
Accepted: The 21-25 age group are the most frequent users, with 82.9% using mobile wallets daily or weekly, while usage frequency declines with age, with only 50% of the 36-above group reporting the same frequency of use.
Table 2: Exposition and Explanation of Hypothesis 2 (H2)

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Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
The distribution of "How likely are you to recommend to your friend to use mobile wallet?" is the same across categories of "Are you aware of functionality of mobile wallets?".	Independent Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.001	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

The result of the Kruskal-Wallis H test gives us strong statistical evidence in favor of Hypothesis 2. The test's significance value (p-value) was .001, which is way lower than the standard alpha value of .05. That is sufficient to reject the null hypothesis with strong confidence that the likelihood of recommending mobile wallets is equal for all three awareness levels (Fully aware, Partially aware, Unaware). Therefore, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between intention to recommend depending on whether or not the user is aware of mobile wallet features. That is, awareness level is a crucial factor in whether the user will become an advocate of the technology.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide robust empirical evidence that demographic and cognitive factors are key to driving mobile wallet usage behavior in Nepal. Its significant use correlation with age presents a high generational divide. The dominance of the 21-25 age group as daily and weekly users also shows that young adults, perhaps digital natives, have embraced this technology more readily into their daily money habits (Alexei et al., 2015). Conversely, the sharp decline in standard use among older age groups reflects an ongoing adoption barrier that may be technophobia-related, lower perceived ease of use for their lifestyle, or security concerns. This is aligned with global technology adoption paradigms, which place children as early adopters everywhere. For mobile wallet service providers, this emphasizes the need to develop targeted engagement campaigns for older segments, possibly around themes of simplicity, building trust, and demonstrating relevance to their specific financial situations.

Also, the findings clearly confirm that awareness of functionality is a central antecedent to customer advocacy (Safdar et al., 2025; Bhati & Verma, 2020). The rejection of the null hypothesis of the Kruskal-Wallis H test indicates that fully aware users of the features of a mobile wallet are more inclined to recommend the same to their friends. This transforms aware customers into marketing goldmines, in effect driving organic growth through word of mouth—a trusted tool in a collectivist society like Nepal. This is an observation that current marketing strategies are capable of acquiring users but not necessarily good enough at actually educating them. Therefore, abandoning awareness campaigns to education campaigns in totality—emphasizing advanced features, security features, and diverse use-cases—could be a

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strategic necessity for businesses to maximize user engagement, build loyalty, and facilitate market penetration.

Conclusion

Overall, this study successfully establishes the fact that both functional awareness and age are significant influencers of mobile wallet usage and promotion in Nepal. The research reaffirms the fact that the technology is predominantly youth-oriented, particularly among the 21-25 years group, and also successfully establishes the fact that a user's knowledge level directly impacts his or her willingness to serve as promoters. These results have operational significance for policy makers and mobile wallet service providers both: to ensure sustainable growth, strategies need to be two-pronged. One, they should cater to evolving requirements of the young user base to keep them interested. Two, and most crucially, they must implement education initiatives to promote functional knowledge among all segments of users, thereby converting one-time users into stubborn proponents and bridging the gap in adoption within older cohorts.

Transparency Statement: The authors confirm that this study has been conducted with honesty and in full adherence to ethical guidelines.
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Authors' Contributions: The authors conducted all research activities, i.e., concept, data collection, drafting, and final review of the manuscript.

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