

Digital marketing in Bhutan: Opportunities and challenges

Kinga Wangpo*
Sonam Wangmo

Gedu College of Business Studies

ABSTRACT

The use of the Internet, mobile devices, social media, search engines, and other platforms to attract and reach consumers is known as digital marketing. The objective of this study was to understand the scenarios of digital marketing in Bhutan: opportunities and challenges faced and the digital marketing channel/ tactics that are popular in the Bhutanese market from the perspective of the digital marketing service providers. A qualitative approach was used in this study. A total of three Bhutanese digital marketing service providers based in the capital city Thimphu participated in the study using semi-structured interviews conducted through the online Zoom application. Interview data were analyzed using direct content analysis techniques and the findings are presented. The findings revealed that opportunities for digital marketing in Bhutan are the Tourism Industry, support from the relevant agencies and the market, changing mindset of the consumers (Businesses), while the challenges associated with digital marketing are the lack of support from the relevant agencies and the market, the lack of required infrastructure, consumer (Business) mindset, employees and market size. The digital marketing strategies used by Bhutanese organizations are social media, Search engine optimization, websites, animations, and, Videography. The creation of digital infrastructure and raising awareness of the advantages of digital marketing are the study's primary suggestions.

KEYWORDS

Digital Marketing; Bhutan;
Opportunities; Challenges;
Tactics

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Introduction

The rapid advancement of technology, especially the high-speed internet, smartphones, and social media, has revolutionized the world in just a decade and this progress is seen as a blessing for improving businesses, governance, and creating jobs. (Rinzin, 2020). Technological advancement has also revolutionized the marketing platform, shifting from conventional marketing to digital marketing (Mishra, 2020). Digital marketing offers benefits such as a low-cost and efficient way of promoting services or goods, two-way communications between organizations and consumers, and a wider customer scope (Yasmin et al., 2015).

Bhutanese organizations over the years have become more interested in digital marketing and both commercial and government organizations have started to conduct their operations online. For instance, Bhutan launched an E-government master plan in 2014, and the Drukylul flagship program in 2019. According to Ramakrishna (2016), digitalization paves the way for the government to operate its overall governance machinery in a more effective and open manner, achieving good governance by leveraging ICT for the present and future. The government of Bhutan uses electronic portals such as G2C (Government to citizens), to provide a one-stop shop for more than 100 services such as procuring a passport (Ishihara, 2017). Commercial organizations like retailers now have a digital presence on social media like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and WeChat, which provided the retailers with new opportunities to reach and attract customers (Bala & Verma, 2018). E-commerce businesses are launched like Zala.bt and tshong.bt in Bhutan. As a result, the number of businesses (B2B) that offer digital marketing services to different organizations, such as website setup, content creation, and so on, has also grown. Currently, there are around 9 digital marketing service providers in Bhutan (Ghalley, personal communication, April 14, 2021). Digitalization is going to drive the future and it will bring changes in the ways organizations do their business/operations in Bhutan. However, currently, no studies are conducted to ascertain the actual opportunities that digital marketing has in Bhutan, along with the challenges it holds. Hence, this research intends to understand the scenarios of digital marketing in Bhutan: opportunities and challenges faced in digital marketing from the perspective of digital marketing service providers. This research aims to address three fundamental questions in order to achieve the objective stated above. Firstly, what are the opportunities of digital marketing? Secondly, which digital marketing channels/tactics are popular in the Bhutanese market? And thirdly, what are the challenges associated with digital marketing?

According to Wangchuk (2020), Bhutanese are familiar with social media sites like Facebook and messaging applications like WeChat and WhatsApp, besides, citizens also use Royal Government's online platform to access services. Digitalization not only enhances the service delivery for various service organizations but will also enable a business to participate in the global market. Hence, this study will help in firstly uncovering in-depth the current scenario of digital marketing in Bhutan, whereby the researchers will understand whether digital marketing is gaining

momentum. And, also what are the challenges associated with digital marketing. Secondly it will help in implementing strategies for improving digital literacy and skills by embedding digital curriculum within schools and higher educational institutions. For instance, providing digital marketing courses in Bhutanese Business colleges. Thirdly, it will help in initiating changes in the Government policy if any, based on the challenges and opportunities shared by the digital marketing service providers which will aid in creating a conducive environment where every organization can participate and take advantage of the power of digitalization.

Literature review

Digital marketing

Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating; communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (Kotler et al., 2013). This involves processes including need identification, product creation, customer reach and retention, loyalty-building, as well as need fulfillment (Mishra, 2020). The traditional model of marketing use mediums like print media, broadcast, direct mail, and telephone to connect and reach consumers (Yasmin et al., 2015). However, with the onset of the internet and technological advancement, the marketing platform has changed from conventional marketing to digital marketing (Mishra, 2020). Kemp (2021) reports, that there are 4.66 billion internet users worldwide, 5.22 billion phone users worldwide, and 4.20 billion social media users, and in Bhutan, there are 730.4 thousand mobile phone connections, 450.2 thousand internet users, and 430.0 thousand actives on social media. Digital marketing is the use of the Internet, mobile devices, social media, search engines, and other channels to reach consumers. Some marketing experts consider digital marketing to be an entirely new endeavor that requires a new way of approaching customers and new ways of understanding how customers behave compared to traditional marketing (Barone, 2020).

Digital marketing opportunities

Digital marketers are in charge of driving brand awareness and lead generation through all the digital channels both free and paid at the company's disposal (Desai, 2019). Digital marketing use methods such as Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Content Marketing, influencer marketing, content automation, campaign marketing, data-driven marketing, e-commerce marketing, social media marketing, social media optimization, e-mail direct marketing, display advertising, e-books, and optical disks and games are. Digital marketing now extends to non-Internet channels that provide digital media, such as mobile phones (SMS and MMS), call-back, and on-hold mobile ring tones (Desai, 2019). In the developed world, companies have realized the importance of digital marketing. For businesses to be successful they will have to merge online with traditional methods for meeting the needs of customers more precisely (Parsons et al., 1998).

According to Yonten (2017), Bhutanese shopkeepers' businesses are hurt due to the popularity of online shopping websites like Alibaba, Amazon, eBay, Myntra, and other local sites on social media. Customers are now hesitant to go and shop from stores as alternative shopping mode provided by the digital platform is more convenient, time-saving, offers more choices and prices are cheaper. Government agencies, like commercial businesses, use digital platforms to deliver services and exchange information with their clients i.e. citizens. The government of Bhutan uses electronic portals such as G2C (Government to citizens), launched in 2010, to provide a one-stop shop for more than 100 services such as procuring a passport (Ishihara, 2017).

Digital marketing challenges

The challenges associated with digital marketing, according to Ramakrishna (2016), are ICT demand from the domestic sector, as well as weaknesses in existing ICT manpower capability and ICT business capabilities. Enabling online commerce in Bhutan will necessitate the establishment of an e-payment system with the Royal Monetary Authority, which will entail the establishment of payment gateways, aggregation, and intermediaries that will allow e-transactions, as well as the enactment of appropriate and supporting policies and legislation. In both the public and private sectors, there is a lack of ICT creativity, as well as project partnerships between industry and academic institutions.

Connectivity, establishing a legal and regulatory framework to promote e-commerce, creating a seamless marketplace for ICT products and services, and improving human capacities are all challenges for digital marketing (Dem, 2020). Lazovic and Durickovic (2014) have outlined some of the obstacles that poor countries encounter while establishing a digital economy, including limited access to the newest technology, complicated telecommunications infrastructure, and low computer literacy. Similarly, Samara and Terzian (2020) indicated that digital-based entrepreneurship is hindered in poor countries by a lack of supportive legislation and regulations, a limited digital infrastructure, and a shortage of skilled and knowledgeable workers. Gebretsadik (2020) pointed out that the challenges of using digital marketing strategies in developing countries include low internet connectivity speeds and cybercrime, whereas the opportunities include untapped markets that are new and unserved because there is little competition and attractive government incentives.

Methods

The study has adopted a qualitative research design as qualitative methods are especially useful in discovering the meaning that people give to events/phenomena that they experience (Merriam, 1998; Cresswell, 2014) which in this study was to understand the scenario of Digital marketing in Bhutan with in-depth coverage of

opportunities and challenges faced by the service provider. And, a qualitative approach will help the researcher gain these insights.

Participants

The intended participants for this study were all the nine digital marketing service providers, to understand the scenario of Digital marketing in Bhutan as they have been providing services to the various clients in Bhutan in their capacity for several years, thereby making use of census sampling. This form of sampling is essentially strategic and necessitates an attempt to establish a good correspondence between research questions and sampling (Bryman & Bell, 2019). Census sampling is a technique of collecting data from the entire population thereby ensuring the highest accuracy and depth of information collected as the views of all the elements/population are covered (Kothari, 2004). The researchers contacted the nine identified and selected digital marketing service providers by email first, ensued by a telephonic correspondence to schedule an interview. However, only three participants consented and participated in the study.

Data collection tools

To collect the data from the participants, researchers made use of semi-structured interviews. This method allows the participants to elaborate and with that provides more flexibility, range, and therefore the capacity to elicit more information from the participant (May, 2021). A semi-structured interview allows both the interviewer and the interviewee to discuss topics in more detail by probing (Mathers et al., 1998). The interview questions were based on some pre-identified variables from the reviewed literature, for which in-depth information/experiences were sought from the participants, as well as possibly new pieces of information that the researchers had not come across during the literature study were sought through probing. Due to the Covid-19 lockdown in Bhutan, the three participants were interviewed online through the Zoom application.

Data analysis

Firstly, the Qualitative interview data were transcribed into written data, organized, coded, and then interpreted to meaningfully answer the research questions (Creswell, 2014). Semi-structured interview data were analyzed using content analysis techniques. Leedy et al. (2019) define content analysis as a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of materials to identify patterns, themes, or biases. Content analysis is a method of analyzing written, verbal, or visual communication messages (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Out of the different approaches to content analysis, this study has employed the technique of direct content analysis/ deductive analysis. Direct content analysis confirms or extends a theoretical framework or theory conceptually, where existing theory or research can help focus the research questions, and the results of a directed content analysis provide supporting and non-supporting evidence for a theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

The theoretical background for the study was drawn out from the various literature referred to and it stands for the opportunities of digital marketing are measured in terms of 1. Changing government policies promoting digital marketing. 2. Changing consumer behavior 3. Advancement in telecommunication technologies. The challenges of digital marketing will be measured via variables like 1. The gap in government set policies and the actual practices (e-payments, ICT infrastructures, internet speed, etc...), 2. Lack of skilled ICT personnel 3. Lack of understanding of the consumer's behavior (needs of the consumers), 4. Organization's strategy (digital platform used, marketing strategies used, etc...) 5. Security.

Reliability

To ensure the study's approach is reliable, all of the researchers read and double-checked the transcribed data against the video interview to ensure there were no transcribing errors and the codes (whether pre-determined based on literature or newly formed based on information gathered during the interview) were defined in unison to guarantee that it carries the same meaning (Creswell, 2014).

Results

In accordance with the research questions, analyses of the interview transcriptions are presented here in three sections.

Opportunities of Digital Marketing in Bhutan

This section answers the first research question: what are the opportunities for digital Marketing in Bhutan? The responses of the participants are categorized into three segments.

1. Tourism industry (Viable sector of the Bhutanese Economy)

The tourism sector is one of the lucrative industries of the Bhutanese economy, and the various players in this sector are those who have been largely availing and creating prospects for digital marketing services both in the past and in the future. For example, the creation of websites and advertisements for travel agents and hotels. The participants shared the following responses:

I ran another company prior to this, and with that company, I made around 150 different websites from tourism to hotels. So, with that company, I provided a lot of digital services for the tourism sector. (Participant A)

The basic digital marketing I did for my travel company was having a very good website, that all I had, the site I had for my company and that is one form of digital marketing, that's the main i.e. your website, you have to have a website for Digital Marketing. I was active on social media platforms such as Facebook course Instagram and LinkedIn so these were the only platforms I was active in (Participant B)

General opportunity, this business is largely driven by the tourism sector and then when there is no tourism then essentially the business is not there. Though we are getting small jobs otherwise I believe in the Bhutanese market there is no demand for art like in other places, not a lot of money to make in art. So mostly the opportunity is provided by the tourism sector (Participant C)

2. *Support from the relevant agencies and the market*

Digital marketing can develop in accordance with the participants with the support that can be provided by relevant governmental organizations, corporations, and businesses in terms of using services from service providers within Bhutan as opposed to services from firms outside of Bhutan. For instance, the participants remarked:

There are a lot of opportunities in a country like Bhutan, with anything that is happening right now, anything new because Bhutan we are always more in a reactive state which is good it has an advantage about it. In Bhutan, everything is an opportunity. we have to also keep ourselves updated on what's happening with the public-private partnerships that sorts of things with the government.... with the news.... what is happening within the corporation or private sector government so we have to keep in touch with all these things and when the time is right, we will approach of course and the hundred percent there is an opportunity (Participant B)

When I joined this business, my seniors shared a couple of years ago, two to three years back, all these websites were made by firms from India and Nepal. It was sourced to them, but within four to five years everyone started hiring Bhutanese firms and with regard to websites I think now nobody makes it from outside as it is much cheaper and convenient to make it from firms within the country (Participant C)

3. *Changing mindset of the Consumers (Businesses)*

The firms and businesses that use the services of Bhutan's digital marketing service providers are the consumers in this context. Consumer mindset refers to how well customers comprehend the value of digital marketing, the many tools and tactics used, and the expectations consumers have from the service provider for using digital marketing. There would be tremendous prospects for digital marketing in Bhutan if this mindset could be changed or improved. Some of the excerpts from the interview are as follows:

In our local market...I think the market also needs to be ready...it's not just about making videos, it's not just about likes...consistency is not there...but it has picked far better than 5 years back...because of all these ...FDI companies and foreign agencies and now government started creating their own pages...but still, they need to learn a lot in writing captions....writing a caption should be very human nature caption, personalized....it should not be order or codifications like.... and so confusing to understand what they are trying to do. So they don't follow frameworks, they just upload pictures and write them.... I think that is not the way...but now I think each agency has their own graphic team providing the same thing and at the same time yes a lot of video market is there like ads but...hard for them to understand the importance of content (Participant A)

so, opportunities are there...but ...skills set zero right now...their concentration is more towards Instagram and Facebook.... but there are 100 other platforms and make sure people need to know and understand the engines. The purpose we use.... then opportunities can be created (Participant A)

Clients if they have invested 10 bucks today...next day want 100 bucks. Quite an issue, I think it will take some time for them to understand and then move ahead ...and then...especially the head of the departments really needs to understand how we really calculate the metrics, why do we really want to do an ad on Facebook and not on Instagram...you will hardly see people sponsoring a page on Instagram...they will always say Instagram is a picture story.... but Instagram is more costly than Facebook. Then linked-in is very powerful.... Google ad is very powerful...so it will take some time.... but it is a good market (Participant A)

Most of our clients have no idea about what they want, we have to teach them and make them understand, for instance, "how about if we do it like this and then they are like okay, we need it." Yes, but some are very difficult, but mostly around 80% of the clients accept especially with regard to websites saying "whatever you do is fine, we don't know anything about it." (Participant C)

Challenges of Digital Marketing

This section answers the second research question: what are the challenges associated with digital marketing in Bhutan? The participants' views are presented in five different headings.

1. *Lack of support from the relevant agencies and the market*

One of the participants remarked that support was lacking from various organizations and the industry because Bhutanese service providers were not used for digital marketing:

Opportunities... there are lots...but I feel sad ... presently, lot and a lot of freelancer guys are there...young guys... doing all these minor jobs at a very low cost and it doesn't last...but big projects are going to the big companies outside. So, the big money project does not stay with the local guys (Participant A)

2. *Lack of Required Infrastructure*

The term "infrastructure" in this context refers to the accessibility of the fundamental infrastructure, which includes anything from simple resources like computers and the internet to sophisticated infrastructures like data centers and payment gateways for digital marketing to operate and flourish. One respondent shared:

The first issue is the payment gateway, if that is solved, then the whole of Bhutan will change into a digital world ...it's a very basic problem. For example, PayPal ...PayPal takes a huge cut on transactions like ...10 % on the first transaction...but if this PayPal can solve an issue and whole the whole world is using it...we are not using it...I don't know the reason why we aren't using it.... when the whole world is using it.... in our field we need a lot of software...like video making software so, all these have grown to the next level...we might need a lens.... but at the end of the day, you can't buy...so we have to request someone from outside to buy for us... (Participant A)

In addition to the payment gateway, two participants have shared challenges related to the speed and cost of the internet in Bhutan. For instance,

The internet is very costly...of course, they are buying it from outside they have to sell it...very costly...so people won't mind it to pay it to use this costly stuff....and then followed by it look at how erratic it is.... you use it at morning 9 o'clock, you use it in evening o'clock...the reason is very simple...they say it there is a lot of traffic.... when you open a shop, customer can come in and use it...right...I shouldn't be saying don't use it at 9 o'clock please use it at 10 o'clock...you can't say that to the internet world. (Participant A)

Challenges that we face are like the internet. Internet is very expensive...like my boss said the internet is so expensive like it is half the speed compared to other countries and twice the price (Participant B)

One participant also added,

we don't have a data Center... you might be thinking about starting your own business and let's take you might have started making a website for tourism... to make a website you need to buy a domain and a hosting...if you buy a hosting from Bhutanese telecommunication service provider...it costs 1500 bucks, an extra 500 something they will charge you...and then comes the hosting...now the question comes over here is you might be paying around 5000 bucks for hosting. Now over here you make it but where are they storing it...even though we have a data Center in our country but we are not storing it in our own country.... we might be either storing it in Singapore I have my own server ...I have a big data Center in Netherland...so I have big data where I keep all my data outside the country because it is very cheap. When you invest 7000 bucks you get more than 100 GB of data. So, think more than 100 GB of data you get for 7000 bucks and if you had to buy 600 MB of data storage in Bhutan it will cost you 3500...so think I have thousands of GB and 600 Mb.so infrastructure is the biggest hurdle... (Participant A)

However, with regard to basic resources like computers and office spaces, one participant shared:

So infrastructure as such...for digital marketing you just need a laptop...you just need a good functioning laptop...so I can't say much on infrastructure...so far we haven't had any issue because we provide our team with a laptop and make sure it's a well-functioning laptop with the latest software and all that can open multiple tabs....20-30 tabs....you can work simultaneously and they can work from their homes which is an advantage and we have an office also at the IT park (Participant B)

3. *Consumer (Business) mindset*

Regarding the challenges posed by the mindset of the businesses who avail/ are the consumers of the digital marketing services provider, Participant A shared:

Take an example of a social media framework. Nobody over here uses a framework. It just.... for them, social media means Facebook. Just putting some pictures and that all...it is over. But in social media we have a framework called STDC...see, think, do and ...know...control yourself... like what you want to do. So especially for the local market, people have a very short-term way of doing work. For them any post that you put, if there is no income generated from it...does not make sense to them. So, they think they can just use their phone, and just click some pictures and put it over there.

We do a lot of branding for international clients. So Branding is more about creating value to your goodwill...like you know.... the logo has a branding...color has a branding. So over here right now for international clients, we are maintaining more than 100 pages for them...starting from Instagram stories...so everything is well planned...everything we create a strategy and how it has to go on...but right now in the local market if you really look into it...who really cares for the branding.... nobody cares about branding...if people visit the shops and buy that's all...

So we can easily see from these social media pages that they don't follow any branding kits...for them, social media is just to give information or to disseminate information. But that's not how it goes.

Excerpts from Participant B's interview noted:

Most of the people here don't know what digital marketing is and they don't know the right tactics or the right strategies. Step one, step two... how to do it.... they don't have a campaign; they don't have a quarterly plan like a marketing plan. They don't have anything; they just do it randomly on a day-to-day basis. I guess depending on their mood, depending on what the other businesses doing, they see and they just copy...and no analysis is done.

Google Analytics is what we are focusing on and so for example the clients that we take on...we take on websites, we give them quarterly reports from Google and we show them what we have done so far...this is what it looked like last month ...this is what it looks like this month and then and then so on but right now

we need a lot of ...we need to educate brands, big business, anyone from big to small we need to educate people on digital marketing

To execute digital marketing.... you need a big team who can run a digital marketing campaign... but if it's a small company they are probably doing it for one day.... handling only the website or they won't be doing Instagram but that's just 1% of the hundred percent because if you really going to Depth next time there's a lot of back ends and you have to do it consistently. Marketing as you know is not just one day, the same thing applies to digital marketing marketing you just can' do today and say I am done and tomorrow takes a break and day after tomorrow again do marketingit's a continuous process

4. *Employees*

According to the study's participants, the challenges with employees have less to do with their skills and more to do with having the correct attitude and drive and also retention of the employees. The participants shared:

So skilled labor is a big problem, whereby there are good people working on it but passion and drive are not there. They do all drag and drop...you don't learn anything. So skilled labor is a problem and issue over here. No matter how much training you give, it is difficult to find. The third one comes is the retention of employees...so difficult...once you learn something they try to move on within a short period of time (Participant A)

Skill is okay, skills can be taught. It is just the mindset of the ones who are looking for a job. They are not committed to doing this because to be an expert in digital marketing, need time at least 2-3 years, you should immerse yourself so then you can stay with us, I can train you, and then after two to three years once you are confident you can take your skills aboard or to other organizations. But the thing is they don't want to stay, I really push them to stay for a year at least, because staying for 3 months 6 months you are not going to learn anything, and you are just dabbling and by dabbling you won't know anything. I tell them at least stay for a year and most of them have been here since the beginning, 80% of our staff but some of them are not just mentally there...we need people who are open, have the right mindset, the right attitude, the right psychology.... (Participant B)

Financial resources are another issue that limits us from hiring talented people because we cannot pay them. In digital marketing, the key asset is having skilled people, because they will do everything. There are talented people but we don't have the money to pay them because we are only getting small projects with small incomes and if we want to hire professionals then we have to pay them more. (Participant C)

5. *Market Size*

Market size captures the number of business clients and the end consumers within the Bhutanese market. The respondents shared:

Competition is also another challenge; Bhutan is a very small market with many companies targeting the same clients... (Participant A)

The problem maybe we face is we don't have much population right...we probably targeting the same people over and over again.... our first campaign.... successful, the second campaign, and now the third we are again retargeting but who do we target now because now we have to retarget the same people because we don't have the population. maybe that's the issue right now we're facing because of the number of for the local market but if a business has a bigger plan and they want to target regional that's even better...they can target regional clients... (Participant B)

The set of consumers is very less in Bhutan...who really cares about digital marketing (Participant C)

Digital marketing channel/ tactics popular in the Bhutanese market

The question was posed to gain an understanding of the digital marketing services used and favored by Bhutanese business clients. The respondent shared:

Over here the most selling service is to make an ad...to promote their page on Facebook... (Participant A)

The number one service that we provide is one of the components of digital marketing is SEO. Search engine optimization is our number one product or service as you called it.... that is where we handle or take over the websites... we run campaigns we develop content and of course.... social media. We create Instagram posts and stories, and we take over your Instagram handles, the company's Instagram handles. And we do Google ads, content marketing, etc... (Participant B)

We also do videography, Animation, websites, and social media marketing (Participant C)

Discussion

The two common findings in both opportunities and problems were: support from the relevant agencies and the mindset of the consumers (business). According to the participants, relevant agencies' support or lack thereof included the market, the government, and other firms/businesses. According to Lazovic and Durickovic (2014), the use of e-commerce has largely come to define the digital economy, and further development/improvement will call for enabling legislation and governmental incentives, efficient knowledge workers, education and training, as well as the creation of public and private sector initiatives that support digital democracy. Samara and Terzian (2020), also noted e-commerce adoption and initiatives in developing countries are influenced by the readiness of the market i.e. the willingness of the company's customers and suppliers to transact business electronically, as well as the cost of supporting institutions including IT, telecommunications, and financial institutions' activities. According to the

participants in the current study, the firms and businesses that use the services of Bhutan's digital marketing service providers represent the mindset of the consumers (Business), who can either be a barrier to digital marketing by failing to recognize the benefits it can provide or a supporter by altering their mindset. In developing nations, digital marketing education and awareness are still very low (Gebretsadik, 2020). Companies and organizations need to have a thorough understanding of online marketing campaigns and programs, as well as how to do it effectively with a performance measurement indicator (Bala & Verma, 2018). An organization should have a clear picture of how each digital marketing campaign supports its overarching goals and depending on the goals of the organization, the right channels or campaigns can be employed. Digital marketing allows marketers/ organizations to see accurate results in real-time, however as digital marketing provides only information to prospects, it is doubtful that it will translate into actual sales volume, which may deter businesses from using digital platforms (Desai, 2019). The results of the interview also showed that Bhutan's tourism business is what drives and promotes digital marketing and that this opportunity for digital marketing will continue as long as the country's tourism industry is active.

One of the challenges has also been identified as the lack of required infrastructure i.e. internet, payment gateway, etc... According to Desai (2019), digital marketing is highly dependent on the internet. The speed and fee of the internet can be a challenge (Samara & Terzian, 2020). So, access to more affordable and faster internet is a prerequisite for the growth of information economies, yet telecommunications in developing nations are very weak, which slows broadband growth and presents a hurdle (Lazovic & Durickovic, 2014). Followed by the internet, the lack of an online payment system that hinders payment for the services/ products purchased along with an expensive internet server is yet another component of the infrastructural challenge (Samara & Terzian, 2020). The availability of capable employees is the next set of challenges. For e-commerce projects to be completed effectively, a qualified workforce that can offer digital firms the necessary human capital assistance is necessary. Employees should possess a specific set of abilities, knowledge, and competencies in the field of digital marketing (Samara & Terzian, 2020). Lazovic and Durickovic (2014) further mentioned that human factors can prevent organizations from going digital in developing nations because of their low level of IT proficiency. However, the results of the current study's interview found that employees' abilities can be taught and developed and that issues with employees are more closely tied to their attitudes and mindsets. The next challenge was related to the size of the market. According to the interview results, Bhutan has a relatively small market, which comprises its population as the consumers, and there is fierce competition among the firm to attract customers.

Conclusion

The industrial revolution has increased the demand for quick and effective marketing, while technological development has changed how consumers can be reached. Digital platforms are prominent platforms in developed markets and are used by various advertisers and industries to promote their brands and constitute 75-80% share of total marketing compared with developing economies (Mishra, 2020). Thus, the purpose of this study was to understand the opportunities and challenges associated with digital marketing in Bhutan, followed by the digital marketing channel employed by Bhutanese firms. The main opportunities for digital marketing in Bhutan are the Tourism Industry, support from the relevant agencies and the market, changing mindset of the consumers (Businesses), while the challenges associated with digital marketing are the lack of support from the relevant agencies and the market, the lack of required infrastructure, consumer (Business) mindset, employees and market size. The digital marketing strategies used by Bhutanese organizations are social media, Search engine optimization, websites, animations, and, Videography.

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers would like to propose the following recommendations which can be the implication of this study:

1. The prospective Bhutanese Business/Organizational clients' level of awareness of the benefits and reach of digital marketing can be improved or deepened by the Bhutanese digital marketing service providers. A deeper understanding of these will have an impact on and spur the expansion of digital marketing in Bhutan because it enables businesses of all sizes to reach consumers at the lowest possible cost.
2. The government, the telecommunication service provider, and the financial institutions, which make up the supporting sectors, can strengthen the infrastructure discussed in the previous section to address the infrastructure-related issues and thereby create an environment that is favorable for digitalization to grow and prosper in Bhutan.
3. To overcome issues related to the attitude and mindset of the Human capital in Bhutan, recruiting the right human capital with the right skill set and mindset is very essential. Additionally, having a good working environment in the organization can also help in attracting and retaining capable employees.
4. The current study sought opinions from those who offer digital marketing services in Bhutan to better understand the opportunities and challenges of the industry. Future researchers interested in this topic may decide to focus on companies or organizations that use digital marketing in their operations to understand the opportunities and challenges from their perspective.

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