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Factors Affecting Digital Marketing in Tourism: An Empirical Analysis of the Nepal Tourism Sector

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this analysis is to examine the various factors influencing the adoption of digital marketing (E-Marketing) by the tourism industry in Nepal. The research validates a methodological framework for the application of TAM and IDT models to clarify E-marketing acceptance using a qualitative methodology in which information is gathered on the basis of a survey method by questionnaires to answer various rates of the study. Advanced statistical methods and Structural equation models were used to examine the data collected. The results showed that the internal and external influences of the Nepalese tourism institutions have a significant impact on the implementation of E-Marketing by these organizations. Similarly, the results have verified that IT hypotheses (that is, TAM and IDT) are true in the example of e-Marketing adoption by the tourism sector in Nepal. The findings highlight the relevance of environmental conditions for the implementation of E-Marketing and contribute to the extremely limited number of empirical studies that have been performed to examine the acceptance of E-Marketing in emerging markets.

KEYWORDS: *E-Marketing, Digital, Tourism, and Hospitality*

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INTRODUCTION

E-marketing can be seen as a new approach to incorporate business practice concerning the selling of products, services, information, and opinions via the Internet and other electronic means. Strauss and Frost describe it as The use of electronic data and technologies for the planning, delivery, and marketing of concepts, goods, and services in order to create markets that fulfill individual and corporate objectives Strauss and Frost [1]. The implementation of information technology (IT), emerging technologies and the Internet has drawn a great deal of interest from scholars, decision-makers, and professionals over the last two decades. Thus, a variety of agreed theoretical frameworks are often used by scholars to examine the introduction and application of IT and innovations by the corporate sector. Likewise, current research into the implementation and use of IT has been driven by a desire to anticipate variables that can contribute to successful implementation in the marketing sense. El-Gohary; Lynn et al. Rose and Straub [2-4]. Nonetheless, digital marketing (e-marketing) is still a fairly new concept, specifically for companies located in developing economies that have scarce resources, lack of infrastructure and fierce competition and thus cannot afford to make inappropriate investments. There is also a need for a much better understanding of the issues of E-marketing organizations including its benefits for such entities; and why these tools may be used to carry out advertising campaigns and operations in a much more effective and efficient way than depends on outmoded marketing practices.

The tourism industry is among the most significant income sources for most countries Baran [5] and generates a significant proportion of the country's employment prospects. It is important to establish new ways to support the tourism sector in developing economies, especially Nepal, to function in an efficient and reliable manner. To accomplish this goal, the purpose of this study is to investigate, evaluate and gain a clear idea of the factors involved influencing e-marketing in the tourism sector in Nepal that will draw on the modern knowledge base in the area of e-marketing.

Tourism is projected to be the driver of growth in the economy in Nepal as well as in every economy is expected to generate the employment needed by its ever-growing inhabitants. The tourism sector is an important stepping stone for the development of the Nepal economy. In 2009, tourism revenue significantly contributed 2.5% to GDP, which translated to $213.2 million in 2009. Specific employment from travel, tourism (i.e. conventional hotels, including housing, transport, etc., including supply chain and tourism-based investment) amounts to 202,000 or 2.1 percent of employment growth. Tourism generates 5.2 percent of gross foreign exchange earnings. Private and

international investment in the tourism sector accounted for 10.6% of total investment [6].

In 2009, Nepal had a total of 736 licensed hotels (Tourist Standard) with 8,813 room, approximately 60% of which were in Kathmandu. A study carried out in 2010 shows that the three trekking areas, Annapurna, Sagarmatha, and Langtang, together have 1,386 accommodation and food shops, of which 60 percent are in the Annapurna trekking zone. Quality human resources are essential to the survival of tourism. There are currently 1,750 licensed travel companies, 1,240 trekking agencies, 2,663 tour guides, 6,747 trekking guides and 57 river guides under the MOTCA. Major tourism events in Nepal include trekking, hiking, mountain climbing, rafting, jungle safari, rock climbing, skydiving, mountain biking, bird watching, paragliding, hot air ballooning, etc. Human resources are important for the reliability of support for these activities. There is a gap between the demands for human resources and the form and value of supply. Nearly 70 percent of visitors arrive by air in Nepal. There are currently 22 international airlines (scheduled, non-scheduled or chartered) linking Nepal to the outside world, 7 of which are from South Asia. Direct flights to Nepal are scheduled from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, China, Bhutan, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan and a host of Middle East countries [7]. The most important obstacle is the limited number of links during the tourist season and reservation concerns.

Nepal's dominance in the tourism sector is its natural beauty, cultural diversity, and individuality, which underpins continued international demand. Among the shortcomings is the image of Nepal as a low-cost destination, rivalry from its neighbors due to their sheer scale and range, limited air and road connectivity, low quality of human resources, unmotivated, comparatively risk-averse participants in the tourism industry and poor marketing. After years of instability, the stabilizing political situation within the country can itself be an added attraction for tourists. The largely untapped mid-and far-western mountains and tourism focused on niche products and the diversity of rural encounters in the various regions of Nepal provide more prospects for the growth and development of tourism.

As a result of the increasing tourism activity in Nepal, the government's efforts to encourage Nepalese tourism have grown significantly, with a significant increase in the government's spending in all tourism sectors between 2003 and 2011. The introduction and application of e-marketing by the Nepalese tourism association can be a very valuable tool to address the existing issues associated with the tourism sector in Nepal as a result of political instability.

This research seeks to understand the basic drivers that may have an impact on the introduction of e-marketing in the Nepalese tourism sector. In the meantime, as the theory in the field of e-marketing is still in its inception and yet not well-established, there is a need for well-established research that can be seen as a path towards developing the theory in the field of e-marketing.

Thus, the study aims to establish a strong and profound understanding of the various factors that influence the adoption of e-marketing in the Nepalese tourism sector. Investigating the major factors impacting the adoption of e-marketing, and explaining and clarifying the significance of these causes, and thereby examining the various e-marketing tools and types used by the Nepalese tourism sector in the introduction of e-marketing.

Brief Literature Review

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) introduced by Davis [8] offered a very clear basis for understanding the adoption and use of new innovations. The model has been examined in many various technologies for more than two decades and has been acknowledged as a great model for forecasting and describing activity across a wide range of spheres [9-11]. In studying the evidence, it is recognized that there is very little research consulted to implement the technology acceptance model (TAM) in the area of E-Marketing. Some of these findings were [2,12]. Vijayasarathy [13] sought to explain the desire of consumers to use internet shopping by extending the TAM model to provide: compatibility, privacy, security, normative beliefs, and self-efficacy. He discovered that compatibility usefulness ease of use and safety were important indicators of internet shopping activity. In the same way, El-Gohary [2] conducted a survey to explore the various factors impacting the acceptance of E-Marketing by UK small company enterprises. The results suggest that compatibility ease of use, the relative advantage had a beneficial impact on the adoption of e-marketing by UK small firms. In fact, Ha and Stoel [14] showed that the utility and mind-set of e-shopping had a significant impact on college students ' decision to shop online. Such results were confirmed by Taylor and Strutton [12] who observed that expected ease of use and expected usefulness had a major impact on buying decisions in the post-adoption digital sense.

In addition, Venkatesh et al. [15] studied eight innovation recognition and use models (Innovation Recognition Model-TAM, Reasoned Action Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, Planned Behavior Theory, Planned Behavior Theory/Technology Acceptance Model, Invention Diffusion Theory). Although TAM2, TAM3, and UTAUT were examined and assumed to be successful in investigating the embrace of technology, these models (as can be seen in their designs) are more suited for exploring the adoption of technology by individuals. Similarly, the Technology Diffusion Theory (IDT) proposed by Rogers (1983) is among the most interesting findings in the diffusion of new technology and tends to be the most commonly accepted framework for researchers and is often linked with technology innovation research. Interestingly, a significant growing body of research has examined the model since it was first introduced in 1983[16-18]. In fact, a number of studies have tested the IDT framework for the adoption and distribution of online commercial transactions. Cheung et al.; Al-Qirim (a,b) [19-21] are examples of these studies. The study discovered a limited number of work on the adoption of IDT in the field of E-Marketing [13,22,23]. Further work is therefore required to analyze the model from an E-Marketing viewpoint. Even though the model has included relevant factors to explain the introduction of new technologies, it lacks some other significant factors, both within and outside the enterprise that may have an effect on the implementation of E-Marketing. In effect, when applying the framework to research the acceptance of E-Marketing, the model needs to be extended to include some other considerations.

In addition, a number of studies have used TAM and IDT as a joint tool to examine the various factors influencing the adoption of new technologies [2,24-26]. However, a relatively small number of experiments have been performed in other less developed countries (LDCs). In this perspective, [27,28] conducted studies in Ghana; [29-32] conducted studies in Taiwan; [33,34] conducted studies in South Africa; [35]conducted a study in Thailand; [36,37] and [37] conducted studies in Turkey; [26,38,39] conducted studies in Brunei Darussalam; [39,40] conducted studies in China and [41,42] conducted studies in India.

In spite of the growing trend towards E-Marketing related studies in the LDCs, it is noted that minimal studies have been conducted in Nepal. Thus, representing a gap in the field of e-Marketing in particular and e-Marketing in small enterprises in general. In an effort to partially fill this void, there is a strong need for research studies to explore the various aspects of e-Marketing in the Nepalese tourism industry.

To summarise, a number of studies have been undertaken to explore various issues related to E-Marketing and methods such as online marketing, E-Mail Marketing, Intranet Marketing, Extranet Marketing, and Mobile Marketing. But, most of these studies have focused on studying every E-Marketing tool as a single tool without incorporating it into other methods. In particular, it seems there are a limited number of studies analyzing E-Marketing from a small business viewpoint, but even more, studies have studied the use of E-Marketing by small firms. Likewise, the literature review did not identify any research that explored or studied the adoption of Intranet Marketing, Extranet Marketing or Mobile Marketing by small tourism organizations in Nepal or the effect of such adoption and use on the marketing success of these businesses. This illustrates the differences in the field of e-Marketing in general and e-Marketing in small tourism organizations in particular.

Given the outcome of the literature, the paper expands the TAM and IDT models to also include the following factors for the purposes of this study: competitive pressures policy factors, market trends, social attitude towards e-marketing, ownership and support capabilities, organizational culture, institutional capital (financial, human and technical) and firm size.

Research Hypotheses

Derived from the research framework, the following hypotheses were formed:

Ha: Adopting E-marketing by the tourism industry in Nepal is dependent on the external related factors.

Hb: Adopting E-marketing by the tourism industry in Nepal is dependent on the organization's internal related factors.

Hc: The internal related factors have a positive impact on E-marketing perceived ease of use.

Hd: The internal related factors have a positive impact on E-marketing perceived relative advantage (usefulness).

He: The internal related factors have a positive impact on E-marketing perceived compatibility.

Hf: E-marketing perceived ease of use is dependent on the industry's external related factors.

Hg: E-marketing perceived relative advantage (usefulness) is dependent on the industry's external related factors.

Hh: E-marketing perceived compatibility is dependent on the industry's external related factors.

Hi: Adopting E-marketing by the tourism industry in Nepal is dependent on E-marketing perceived ease of use.

Hj: Adopting E-marketing by the tourism industry in Nepal is dependent on E-marketing perceived relative advantage (usefulness).

Hk: Adopting E-marketing by the tourism industry in Nepal is dependent on E-marketing perceived compatibility.

Hl: When implementing E-marketing, the industry depends on more than one E-marketing tool.

Hm: When implementing E-marketing, the industry depends on more than one E-marketing form.

Data and Methodology

A constructive research methodology with a qualitative approach was used to evaluate the research conceptual framework, in which quantitative results were gathered on the basis of a survey technique by questionnaires to answer the various levels of the sample. A significant survey was taken to test the experimental hypotheses using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and other advanced statistical methods were used to analyze the data gathered. The survey questionnaire targeted a list of 375 tourist sites and companies from the tourism sector in Nepal.

The sample size was intended to be calculated on the basis of the Aaker and Day [43] sample size formula, which is widely agreed by social science scholars, taking into account the level of confidence required, the sample bias, the proportion of population characteristics present in the survey (50% in social sciences) and the size of the population. As shown by Aaker and Day [43], the volume of the sample can be calculated by the appropriate formula stated below:

$$S = Z\sqrt{\frac{P(1-P)}{N}}\sqrt{\frac{N-n}{N-1}}$$

In this case, Z is the level of confidence required (95 percent), S is the error of the sample, P is the proportion of population attributes available in the sample (50 percent), N is the size of the population and n is the value of the sample. Since the sample size produced by the Aaker and Day [43] formula is relatively small, the sample was chosen to represent 20% of the population not only as agreed by most field researchers but also to improve the reliability of the sample and the error of the test. At least one of the E-marketing techniques had been adopted by all the listed organizations within the last five years. A survey envelope containing a personal statement and a confidential (self-administering) questionnaire was sent to the leaders of the marketing department (375 in total). This method generated a response rate of 62.99 percent (223). Based on the approach recommended by DeVaus [44] the response rate was estimated (Table 1).

$$\frac{\text{Number of usable questionnaires}}{\text{Total sample} - (\text{an unusable or unreachable member of the sample})} \times 100$$

Table 1 Summary of Survey Response

Total number of questionnaires	375
Number of completed and returned questionnaire	223
Unreachable tourism firms or companies	10
Number of tourism firms that declined participation	5
Uncompleted number of questionnaires	6
Response rate	62.99%

The design of the survey instrument was primarily based on new measurements that were recently established as the study found limited research specifically addressing the anomalies under investigation. Nonetheless, and where possible, proven methods that have historically been applied have been used (such as the calculation of TAM and associated IDT variables introduced by [45]. The model has been pre-tested more than once to ensure that the survey subject can readily understand all the metric scales used in the analysis. Subsequently, the experimental survey tool was piloted using a small subset of the research population framework. In accordance with the outcome obtained, the instrument was adjusted to represent completely the phenomenon under investigation. Much attention has been paid to the planning of this study, as well as the development of the research questionnaire, in order to allow for reliable findings.

In the survey questionnaire, several reversed questions are used to test various styles of the research, to improve the accuracy of the tests and to avoid any acceptance bias in accordance with the recommendations proposed by [46]. All of these questions were modified and their reciprocal comparisons were tested before any data analysis was carried out to allow for clear conclusions.

Building on a detailed analysis of the data gathered through the survey, it was found that the majority of organizations with a proportion of 65.3 percent of the total number of companies involved in the research are regional entities, while 21.5 percent were international organizations and 13.2 percent were joint ventures. The survey sample was spread between 15 different tourism industries with the highest number of organizations (30) in restaurants and related sectors. This study, firms are categorized under three main business classifications, including Market to Business (B2B), Business to Customer (B2C) and both (B2B and B2C). With respect to the number of staff, the outcome indicates that the majority of companies (65 businesses with a percentage of 39.2% of the overall number of businesses) fit into the category of firms with 20 and 29 employees, followed by the category of enterprises with between 30 and 9 employees (38 businesses with a percentage of 22.92%).

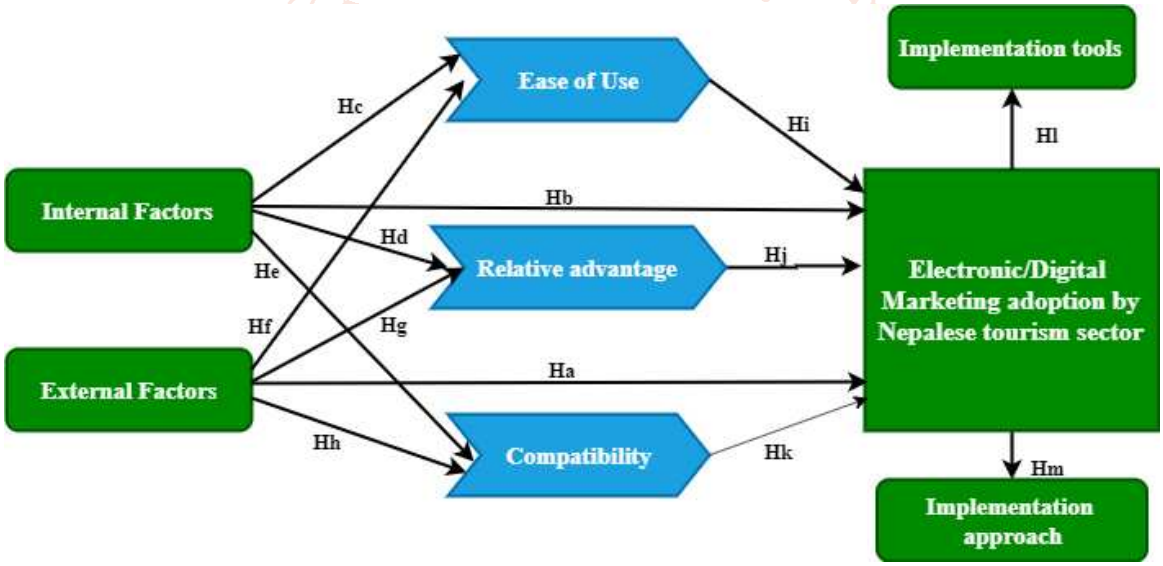

Fig. 1 represents the conceptual framework of the study.

In addition, the significant proportion of study institutions (45.2 percent) had a marketing budget of between 10 and 20 percent of the total corporate budget (78 organizations) but most research firms (35.8 percent) had been in business for more than 20 years (61 organizations). Also, it was noticed that the majority of the research institutes (40.1%) had a capital of 500 and 10,000 dollars. With regards to the study of individual respondents, it was showed that the majority of individual respondents were advertising directors for companies (68.5% of the total), aged between 30 and 40 years (45.3% of the total), worked in their firms for 5-10 years (48 percent of the total), engaged and involved in the introduction of E-Marketing and university graduates (68% of the total). The study also found that Nepalese small tourism organizations used two basic E-Marketing types (namely; B2C, and B2B) and five basic E-Marketing tools (namely; Internet Marketing; E-Mail Marketing; Mobile Marketing; Intranet Marketing; and Extranet Marketing) to carry out their E-Marketing operations. The outcome showed that although a considerable number of Nepalese tourism agencies used a variety of E-Marketing methods when applying E-Marketing (58 organizations with a percentage of 36.32 percent), the majority of participants (80 organizations with a percentage of 61.35 percent) used a single E-Marketing method. Similarly, most survey participants 84.75 percent (189 organizations) used Internet Marketing as an E-Marketing tool. In fact, 89.68 percent of participants (200 organizations) used E-Mail Marketing, 31.39 percent (70 organizations) used Mobile Marketing, 13.45 percent (30 organizations) used Intranet

Marketing and 17.94 percent (40 organizations) used Extranet Marketing as an E-Marketing tool. Consequently, almost all survey participants used Internet Marketing as an E-Marketing tool, and a substantial number of such companies employed one or more E-Marketing tools.

Result and Discussions

In this study, the performance evaluation was carried out on the basis of the estimation of the item-to-total correlation and the alpha coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) for the testing measurements and designs. The findings revealed that all the testing parameters had very strong item-to-total correlation values ranging from 0.452 to 0.771 and a high consistency factor ranging from 0.915 to 0.931 for Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items equal to 0.934 (Table 2). The estimate of item-to-total correlation and Cronbach's Alpha are greater than those indicated by [47,48]. Therefore, the testing procedures are suitable for further analysis of data by way of inferential statistics to evaluate study hypotheses.

Next, in order to determine and preserve the accuracy of the data collected, an investigative factor analysis (Table 3) was carried out on the basis of the Varimax rotation approach and the own values extract to examine the data and to ensure that the experimental frameworks share similar basic factors. Under the advice of Hair et al. [49], any item(s) with a dominant load of less than 0.5 and/or with a cross-loading of more than 0.35 would be removed. A two-factor model was proposed using an own value greater than 1 and the derived variables accounted for 69.442 percent of the total variance. Both factor loadings are reasonably appropriate with the lowest loading factor equal to 0.524 and the maximum loading factor equal to 0.932. Both research objects were loaded into its expected variable and all of them had a superior load greater than 0.5, as suggested (Hair et al., 1998), which supports the differential reliability of research systems. While the findings revealed that 69,442 percent of the total variance was explained by the two-factor model suggested by this study, it also demonstrated that certain other variables could be absent and may have an effect on the e-Marketing of small tourism organizations in Nepal (explaining 32.08 percent of the total variance).

Table 2 Research measures and constructs reliability

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha if item is deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Owner skills	0.923	0.632	4.114	0.5421
Organizational Structure	0.931	0.675	4.032	0.5603
Organizational resources	0.915	0.722	3.972	0.5288
Cost	0.918	0.745	4.211	0.5003
Size	0.920	0.612	3.903	0.6324
Ease of use	0.930	0.699	4.054	0.6571
Compatibility	0.923	0.733	4.030	0.6133
Relative advantage	0.919	0.676	4.157	0.6811
Competitive pressures	0.910	0.600	4.268	0.6952
Government influences	0.927	0.751	3.970	0.6423
Cultural orientation	0.926	0.690	3.951	0.6450
Market trends	0.921	0.651	3.896	0.5147
National infrastructure	0.917	0.622	4.009	0.6685
Internal factors	0.930	0.771	3.879	0.6912
External factors	0.927	0.754	4.112	0.5781
E-marketing adoption	0.928	0.452	3.958	0.4132

Such considerations may include (based on the literature review): information intensity [20,21], product characteristics [50,51], security [52,53], consumer readiness [50,51,54], support from technology vendors [51,55], and product characteristics [50,51,56]. As these considerations are beyond the reach of this study, it provides a basis for future research to explore its effect on the implementation of e-Marketing by small tourism agencies. Throughout the context of the favorable results of the observational factor analysis, a confirmatory variable study was conducted to check the unidimensionality of the scales of study. A range of fit statistics have been developed and used to determine the adequacy, suitability and consistency of each of the variable models resulting from the properly conducted factor analysis as shown in (Table 4). The performance of the confirmatory factor study of the prototype designs was considered to be reasonably acceptable as all the experimental models surpassed the required fitness levels.

In addition, to evaluate the theoretical interaction between the constructions within the study framework, Structure Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to check the study hypotheses relevant to the overall effect of the institution's internal and external factors related to its E-Marketing adoption. While Bartlett et al. [57] argued that usually 10 observations per marker (independent variable) are suggested for the determination of sample size for SEM testing, Westland [58] has shown that the necessary sample size is not really a linear function primarily of predictor list. Because the sample size of 223 cases is not adequate to endorse an (SEM) at the point of full disaggregation of the measured factors (using several measured variables as markers of every construct), the study used the variable scores as single-item measures and carried out a path study, using the Maximum Likelihood Estimates (MLE) approach, implementing the recommendations proposed by Jöreskog and Sörbom [59] and endorsed by El-Gohary [2]. Nonetheless, some general recommendations have been suggested by some scholars about the correct sample size to be used during structural equation modeling in statistical analysis. For instance, Hair et al. [60] claim that a study of less than 100 is known to be a small sample, and therefore suggested a sample size between 100 and 200.

In addition, several researchers used a sample size of around 100 to perform structural equation modeling analysis [61]. Consequently, the current size of the study sample is basically appropriate for the use of SEM. Data was evaluated using a path examination, which is a multivariate statistical technique for the empirical observation of interaction structures in the form of linear causal models Garson [62]. The goal of the path study is to analyze the direct and indirect results of each hypothesis on the premise of expertise and theoretical constructs Kenny[2]. As mentioned above, (Fig. 1) shows the conceptual model (path diagram) which represents the interaction between the various selection parameters. The structural equation simulation software is used to determine the value of the path coefficient linked with each direction which measures the frequency of each linear effect. AMOS V18 was used to evaluate the hypotheses established in the context of the Maximum Likelihood Estimates (MLE) process, adopting the recommendations proposed [59] and [63].

Table 3 Results of the exploratory factor analysis

Items (Constructs)	Component	
	a	b
Owner skills	0.742	
Organizational Culture	0.830	
Organization resources	0.700	
Cost	0.785	
Size	0.524	
Ease of Use	0.819	
Compatibility	0.867	
Relative advantage	0.835	
Competitive pressures		0.689
Government influences		0.903
Culture orientation		0.875
Market trends		0.911
National infrastructure		0.932
Initial eigenvalues	6.528	2.451
Percentage of variance	51.115	19.042
Cumulative percentage	51.115	69.442

Results of hypotheses testing

In order to meet the research criteria, the multivariate normality of the results was tested by performing the Skewness Normality Test (Garson, 2009) and examining the histograms of the variables involved. The system (Fig. 1) suggested a very good fit for the data (Table 5) and the findings collected demonstrated that the model had a very good fit.

Table 4 Confirmatory factor analysis of the model constructs

Construct	Chi-square	P-value	GFI	IFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
Internal factors	16.132	0.0000	0.978	0.913	0.989	0.919	0.0427
External factors	10.264	0.0000	0.988	0.920	0.923	0.907	0.0687

Test	Conditions
The goodness of fit index (GFI)	≥ 0.90
Adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI)	≥ 0.80
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	≥ 0.90
Root mean square residual (RMSEA)	≤ 0.10
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	≥ 0.80
Chi-Square Significant	≥ 0.05

Table 5 Fit Indices for the path model

GFI	CFI	IFI	RMSEA
0.932	0.997	0.901	0.0231

Testing the hypothesized causal relationships

The framework in (Fig. 2) displays the Research System Path diagram representing the approximate uniform parameters for the paths, their degree of importance and the square multiple comparisons for each model. (Table 6) displays the regression value of all causal pathways and the importance of each pathway. In the meantime, in order to support the results of the model, the total impact of the study parameters within the model was estimated in order to retain the direct and indirect impact of the relationship between the study variables. Since the impact of the testing variables on the acceptance of E-Marketing may be direct or indirect (i.e. influenced by the influence of other variables) or both, the estimation of the direct and indirect effect of each factor would be useful (Table 7). The outcome suggests that the tourism sectors in Nepal internal factors positively an the organization perceived ease of use, that is, Standardized Estimate (SE) = 0.758 and is significant at 1%, relative advantage (SE = 0.642, significant at 1%0, compatibility (SE = 0.673, significant at 1%), and E-Marketing adoption (SE = 0.035, significant at 5%). In a similar manner, the outcomes also indicate that the external factors have an insignificant impact on the organization's

perceived ease of use, perceived relative advantage and perceived compatibility with a standard estimate of (0.221, 0.267, and 0.354), respectively. With respect to the effects of the company's perceived ease of use, perceived relative advantage and perceived accessibility on e-Marketing, these three aspects have a positive impact on e-Marketing acceptance by Nepalese tourism. The largest influence on E-Marketing approval was perceived compatibility (SE = 0.271) and the least influence of perceived ease of use was (SE = 0.139). Whereas, the expected relative benefit was observed to have a negligible positive influence on the acceptance of E-Marketing.

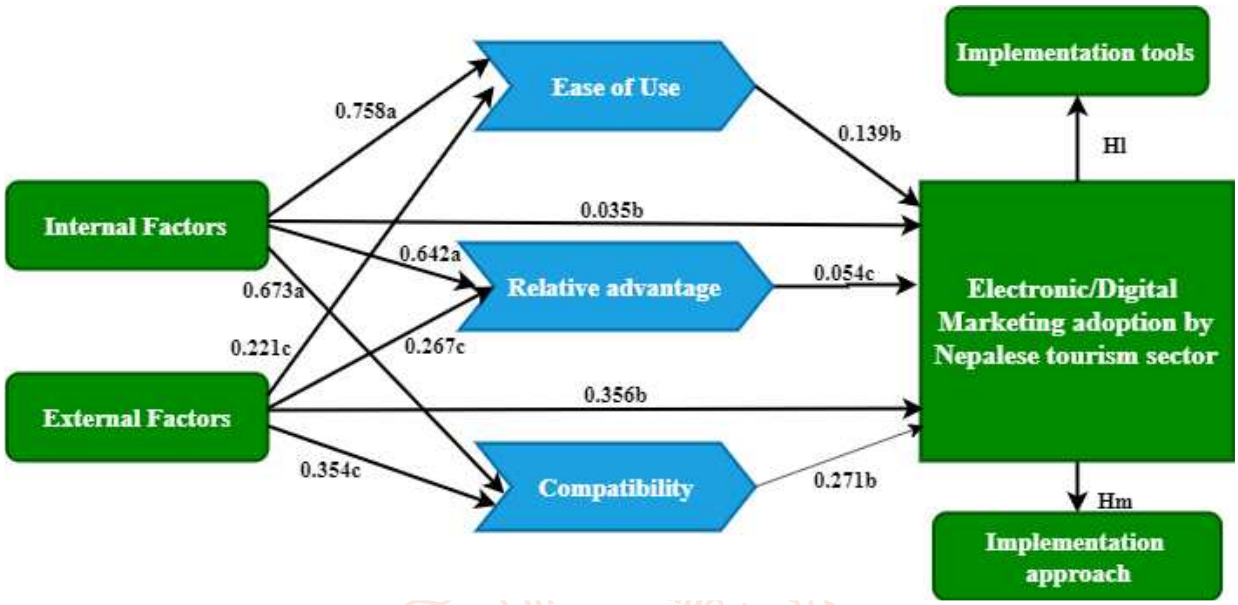

Fig. 2 represents outcomes of the SEM analysis, where a, and b indicates (1%, and 5% significance level), whiles c indicates insignificance.

Eventually, as previously mentioned, numerical frequencies were used to evaluate the two hypotheses relevant to modes and methods for the application of e-Marketing by the tourism industry in Nepal. In this case, the frequency assessment was used to assign the relevant groups on the basis of the E-Marketing methods and resources adopted by these institutions. The analysis showed that, while a large number of tourism companies used a variety of e-Marketing methods to incorporate e-Marketing, the majority of participants (63.51 percent) used a single e-Marketing method. Whereas nearly all survey participants used Internet Marketing as an E-Marketing tool, and a significant proportion of such companies utilized one or more E-Marketing tools or instruments.

Table 6 Regression estimates of all the causal paths and the significance of each path within the model.

Hypothesized relationship		Standardized estimate	Significance level
From	To		
Internal factors	Ease of use	0.758	***
Internal factors	Relative advantage	0.642	***
Internal factors	Compatibility	0.673	***
External factors	Compatibility	0.354	0.1031
External factors	Relative advantage	0.267	0.1312
External factors	Ease of use	0.221	0.3242
Internal factors	E-Marketing adoption	0.035	**
External factors	E-Marketing adoption	0.356	**
Compatibility	E-Marketing adoption	0.271	**
Relative advantage	E-Marketing adoption	0.054	0.1157
Ease of use	E-Marketing adoption	0.139	**

Note: ***, ** represents (1% and 5%) significant level

Discussions

The study's results indicate that the internal factors of the Nepalese tourism industry, such as ownership capabilities, available resources, organizational culture, size of the company, price of E-Marketing, perceived ease of use of E-Marketing, and perceived usability of e-Marketing, are the most important factors affecting the acceptance of E-Marketing by these institutions. Such results are consistent with the conclusions of El-Gohary [2], which showed that internal factors had a high positive effect on the acceptance of E-Marketing by UK companies. It is also consistent with the observations of Grandon and Pearson [64] and Moon and Kim [65], which showed that perceived ease of use had a stronger effect on Internet penetration and on the acceptance of e-commerce. In particular, the use of E-Marketing by these entities was found to be directly and indirectly influenced by internal operational factors E-Marketing compatibility and ease of use. In this sense, the outcomes showed that although internal factors had a strong positive direct influence on E-Marketing compatibility they had a relative advantage and ease of use; external factors had a very poor direct impact on the same factors. In the meantime, the perceived relative advantage had an insignificant positive impact on the E-Marketing acceptance by these organisations. This conclusion differs

from that of Eid [61], which showed that the perceived relative advantage had the greatest impact on the use of the Internet by B2B firms, as well as the results of [21,66], nevertheless, it is consistent with the results of Fenech [67], which showed that the expected relative advantage was insufficient as a measure of the approval of World Wide Web use. In addition, external factors (competitive pressures, government interference, market dynamics, public infrastructure and social attitude towards e-Marketing) have been identified as having a significant impact on the acceptance of e-Marketing by these organizations. Based on the outcome, the study fails to reject the null hypothesis of (Ha, Hb, Hc, Hd, He, Hi, Hk and Hm) but cannot accept the null hypothesis of (Hf, Hg, Hg, Hj, and Hl).

Table 7 Direction and total effects of all the study variables

Dependent Variables	Electronic Marketing adoption	Indirect effect	Total effect
	Direct effect		
Compatibility	0.189	0.000	0.189
Relative advantage	0.372	0.000	0.372
Ease of use	0.152	0.000	0.152
Internal factors	0.112	0.089	0.201
External factors	0.243	0.102	0.345

Conclusion and Policy implications

This work has both scholarly and administrative (practical) ramifications. In terms of academic ramifications, research can be viewed as groundbreaking research in the field of E-Marketing in general and E-Marketing in the Nepalese tourism sector in general. The research has not only made a significant contribution to the accumulation of knowledge in its particular area but also has some consequences for the wider body of literature. A major impact of this study in the field of E-Marketing is based not only on the justification of TAM and IDT in the setting of E-Marketing in emerging economies but also on the expansion of the two models to improve their ability to demonstrate this adoption. The results of this study support the conclusions of other researchers in the field [68,69] and demonstrate that the expansion of TAM and IDT improves the potential of the two models to explain the growth of E-Marketing. This work further leads to the concept of E-Marketing by exploring the phenomena understudy in the tourism sector in Nepal. The effect of internal factors on the adoption of E-Marketing by tourism companies in Nepal was close to its influence on other types of organizations in industrialized and emerging economies. On the other hand, the effect of external factors and perceived relative advantage at E-Marketing adoption by organizations in Nepal varied from its influence on other types of institutions in industrialized and emerging economies. The study further leads to the growth of E-Marketing initiatives to local tourism organizations. In addition, the study empirically analyzed the most significant measures or factors affecting the acceptance of E-Marketing by the Nepalese tourism industry, as well as the relevance of such variables or indicators. The results suggested that internal factors, e-Marketing accessibility and ease of use had a positive influence on the adoption of E-Marketing by small tourism entities in Nepal. On the basis of the significance of these factors found in the results, government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other bodies will have a better understanding of small tourism organizations to aid them in the formulation and implementation of policies. Likewise, government bodies may also implement such programs to provide small tourism companies with the necessary resources. For instance, financial and technological resources, etc. to embrace E-Marketing. By doing so, these government agencies should work to reduce the costs associated with the use of E-Marketing. In effect, this would improve the diffusion of e-Marketing practices among tourism companies and could have a positive economic impact.

Generally, the results of this work follow the study model and support most of the hypotheses. The findings aid to comprehend the impact of the various environmental influences on the implementation of the E-Marketing by the Nepalese tourism institutions. The study concluded that Nepalese tourism organizations had internal and external factors: (such as: owner skills, the available resources of the organization, the organization organizational culture, E-Marketing adoption cost, size of the organization, ease of use, compatibility, competitive pressures, government influence, market trends, national infrastructure, and cultural orientation towards E-Marketing by the organization customers) have a significant positive effect on the acceptance of E-Marketing. Much attention has been paid and dedicated to the preparation of this research as well as to the design of research methods, data collection, and data analysis. Accordingly, it is expected that the study will contribute significantly to the accumulative awareness of e-Marketing in general and E-Marketing adoption by the tourism industry in Nepal.

Notwithstanding that, as is the case with other scientific studies, this analysis also has a range of drawbacks, which may be of interest for future work. Most of the drawbacks are mainly related to the scope of the topic under study and lack of tests, as E-Marketing is still a fairly new field of research where the concept is still in its development. It inspired the study to adopt an empirical methodology in this analysis to establish a systematic and comprehensive view of E-Marketing. This included an expansion in the scope of the research by evaluating a large body of relevant literature and gathering a large array of relevant information. Nevertheless, while the study sought to meet this requirement by examining various studies in the area, it could not be argued that the methodological analysis of this research was focused on all the different subjects relevant to this viewpoint. An additional drawback of this analysis is its focus on personal, self-reporting and judgmental measures for the calculation of testing concepts in the survey questionnaire.

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