

Effect of Loyalty, Awareness, Social Media Platforms, and Social Influencers on the Growth of the Fashion Industry in Nepal

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Abstract

This research paper investigates the various factors contributing to the overall growth of the Nepalese fashion industry, focusing on the roles of customer loyalty, brand awareness, social media platforms, and social influencers. A quantitative analysis was conducted using data collected from 100 respondents residing in the Kathmandu Valley. The respondents, primarily fashion consumers and social media users, completed a set of questionnaires utilizing a 5-point Likert Scale. The data was analyzed using ANOVA, regression analysis, and correlation analysis to identify the specific factors driving the expansion of the fashion sector in Nepal. The findings reveal that brand awareness, the use of social media platforms, and the influence of social influencers significantly contribute to the growth of the Nepalese fashion industry. In contrast, customer loyalty was found to have no significant effect on this growth. Understanding these contributing factors allows brands and retailers to better comprehend consumer behavior and formulate effective strategies to enhance their market presence in the fashion industry. The study suggests that fashion brands should focus on increasing brand awareness and leveraging social media platforms and influencers to engage consumers effectively. Future research could explore the long-term effects of these factors on consumer behavior and industry growth.

Keywords: brand awareness, customer loyalty, fashion, social influencer, social media platform

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Introduction

The fashion industry is ever changing and continuously evolving due to new trends and consumer preferences (Gockeln, 2014). Nepal's consumer market has been booming where several new products are being introduced every other day (Shrestha & Shrestha, 2019). As the consumer product market expands, introducing new products daily, marketers face increasing challenges in capturing and retaining customers' attention (Abbas et al., 2018). In such a diverse and vast market, customer loyalty plays a crucial role in guaranteeing a committed client base that regularly purchases product in this ever-evolving

fashion market, which in turn adds to brands stability (Bilgin, 2018). Similarly, brand awareness is important as it helps consumers to remember a product through their brand name, logo or symbol that encourages them to purchase due to familiarity (Kuncoro & Windyasari, 2021). Mishra's work underscores the need for marketers to adopt a more strategic and consumer-centric approach to celebrity endorsements in the digital age. By understanding the evolving dynamics of consumer behavior and leveraging the power of social media and influencer marketing, brands can create more effective and impactful endorsement campaigns that drive business growth and consumer loyalty



(Mishra, 2024). This is very important in the fashion industry as brand awareness increases purchases as consumers can easily recognize the product (Irshad & Irshad, 2012).

Social media platforms have become indispensable tools for studying trends, anticipating fashion behaviours, and amplifying brand reach (Ahmad et al., 2015). In the Nepalese market as well, Social media has become a marketing platform and tool in influencing the perception, opinion and attitude of common people towards a brand (Neupane, 2019). This digitalization has boosted Nepal's fashion industry, with e-commerce and social media responsible for marketing and sales, and also online shopping encouraging traditional stores to expand online in major platforms such as Facebook, Instagram (Shrestha, 2023).

Social media users have increased, thus enhancing the availability of social media influencers who now form a crucial part for people involved in the fashion industry (Abdullah et al., 2020). Social Media Influencers have begun to attract greater attention in recent years, mostly due to their increased persuasiveness, professionalism, and credibility in producing positive and helpful content that will influence customers' purchases (Boateng & Okoe, 2015).

As the fashion industry has evolved exponentially and keeps changing due to changes in the business environment (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010), it is important to understand various factors that impact the fashion industry of Nepal in order to fulfil the consumers changing taste and needs for fashion brands to retain their consumers, influence purchase intention and gain market share in such a competitive environment through increased brand reach.

Problem Statement

The fashion industry is like a diverse ecology, always changing due to external social, environmental and technological influences (Gockeln, 2014). The competition in the fashion retail industry is reaching new heights due to various demands of the fashion consumers (Thilina, 2021). Similarly the Nepalese fashion industry has also

witnessed significant growth and transformation in recent years, due to which fashion brands and retailers in Nepal face difficulties in sustaining growth due to high competition, rapidly changing consumer preferences, and the evolving digital landscape. Key factors such as customer loyalty, brand awareness, social media platforms, and social influencers are critical to navigating these challenges and capitalising on market opportunities.

Prior research papers have found that such factors significantly encourage consumers to buy a fashion product by influencing them to make purchases. However, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the direct link between these factors and the growth of the Nepalese fashion industry.

Therefore, this research paper aims to fill this gap by examining the influence of customer loyalty, brand awareness, social media platforms, and social influencers on the growth of Nepal's fashion sector. Understanding these dynamics is essential for fashion brands to develop effective strategies that enhance customer engagement, brand recognition, and market competitiveness.

Research Objective

This research aims to explore the specific factors that drive the expansion of the fashion sector in Nepal, with a particular focus on the roles of customer loyalty, brand awareness, social media platforms, and social influencers.

Literature Review

Li & Huang (2016) have studied how consumer's learning motivation impacts their brand cognition and loyalty. The findings of their study revealed that brand loyalty contributes in generating sales and profit as it helps to guarantee a fixed future customer group.

Mwangi (2020) examined how customer loyalty results in customer retention in the fashion apparel industry, focusing on a case study of Jade Collection clothing store in Nairobi. The study showed that through efforts made in customer satisfaction, customer reward programs by the company helped with customer retention through increased customer loyalty.

Khan et al. (2017) investigated the effect of product advantage and brand recognition on the buying intentions of affluent Muslim clients. The research found that brand recognition has a significant effect on purchasing intentions because it allows customers to remember or recognize a certain brand while increasing knowledge could help in placing the image of a particular product in the consumer's mind leading to more frequent buying.

Tsabitah and Anggraeni (2021) have researched the effects of brand awareness on buying intentions of local fashion brand "This Is April." According to their findings, increased brand awareness has helped boost customers' intention to purchase which in turn positively impacted growth of the fashion brand.

Ahmad et al. (2015) examined how the use of social media has impacted the fashion sector with a keen focus on Karachi's customers. Through their research they found that customer engagement and brand recognition has increased through the use of social media and has improved relationships between brands and consumers which in turn led to improved sales of the clothing industry, hence contributing to its growth.

Muturi (2024) conducted a study to investigate the impact of social media on fashion trends and consumer behaviour in Kenya. According to their research, social media platforms like Instagram and Tiktok play a pivotal role in setting the trends in the fashion industry and also influences consumers to be active participants due to more exposure to fashion products and shapes their preferences.

Legeay (2023) studied the impact of fashion influencer's credibility in influencing their purchase decisions. The findings of this research revealed that influencers who are attractive and prestigious are able to encourage consumers to buy the product that they recommend.

Chun et al. (2018) examined how social media influencers on Instagram affect the buying decisions of users interested in fashion. Their research has revealed that influencers who are trustworthy, and liable play a crucial role in encouraging customers

to buy fashion products and have analysed that these factors help to boost customer interaction and positively influence purchase intention.

Dahl and Diebel (2021) explored the success of influencer marketing particularly through Instagram in the fashion industry has helped fashion brands to achieve greater customer engagement and traffic and has helped many companies to increase their sales because it's very effective for selling retail and lifestyle products.

Ahmad et al. (2016) studied the impact of social media on brand health. This study displays the interconnection between the variables like social media platform, content marketing and brand awareness. The findings of this study revealed that Social media content marketing directly affects brand health through increased brand awareness which helps in maintaining the long term growth of the industry. Mishra and Aithal (2021) conducted an analysis of laptop users' purchase behavior in Kathmandu, identifying key determinants that affect consumer decisions. Their research highlights the importance of brand reputation, product features, and pricing strategies in shaping consumer preferences.

In a related study, Mishra and Aithal (2021) further explored the factors and features influencing laptop users, emphasizing that consumers are increasingly prioritizing specifications such as performance, battery life, and design aesthetics when making purchasing decisions.

Additionally, Sah and Mishra (2020) examined brand preferences among consumers, noting that brand loyalty and marketing strategies play crucial roles in influencing consumer choices in the competitive laptop market.

These studies collectively underscore the necessity for brands to adopt effective marketing strategies and enhance product offerings to meet the evolving preferences of consumers in Nepal's dynamic technology landscape. Moreover, Mishra (2019) discusses influential marketing strategies in other sectors, such as cement, indicating that understanding consumer behavior is pivotal across

various industries in Nepal. Though we are not having specific study of fashion industry in Nepal.

Variable Propositions

Independent Variables

Customer Loyalty. Customer loyalty is the intention to repurchase goods and services, which is the industry's desired outcome (Khan, 2013).

Brand Awareness. Brand awareness is a customer's ability to recall, or remember brand information through their logo, symbol, and offering (Irshad & Irshad, 2012).

Social Media Platform. Social media can be observed as an interactive media where mutual

communication occurs between brands and consumers, or users to users (Nguyen, 2020).

Social Influencers. Social media influencers are opinion leaders who have the potential to influence a significant number of followers through their recommendations and endorsements (Freberg et al., 2011)

Dependent Variable

Growth of Fashion Industry: Growth of fashion industry in this study has been correlated with increase in purchase intention and sales growth operationally.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework

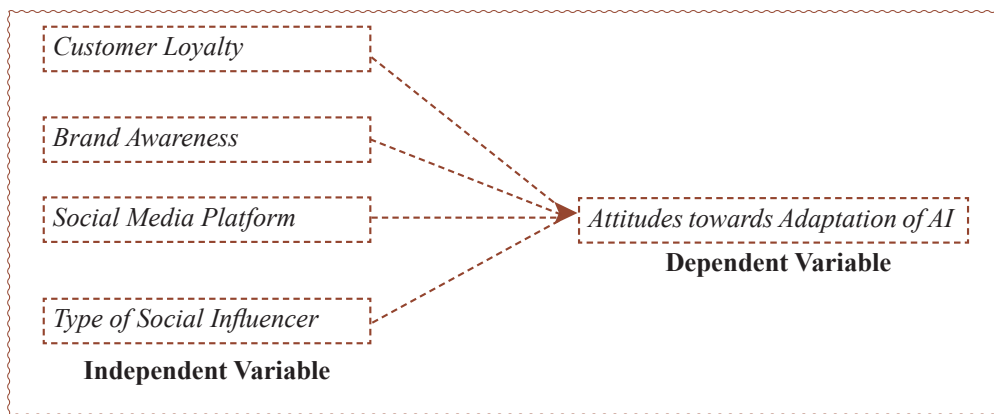


Figure 1 illustrates the interconnectedness of these independent variables and their collective influence on the growth of the fashion industry. The study aims to explore how these factors interact and contribute to shaping consumer behaviour within Nepal's fashion market.

Hypothesis

- H1:** Customer loyalty has a significant impact on the growth of Nepalese fashion industry
- H2:** Brand awareness has a significant impact on the growth of Nepalese fashion industry
- H3:** Social media platforms have a significant impact on the growth of Nepalese fashion industry

- H4:** Social influencers have a significant impact on the growth of Nepalese fashion industry

Methodology

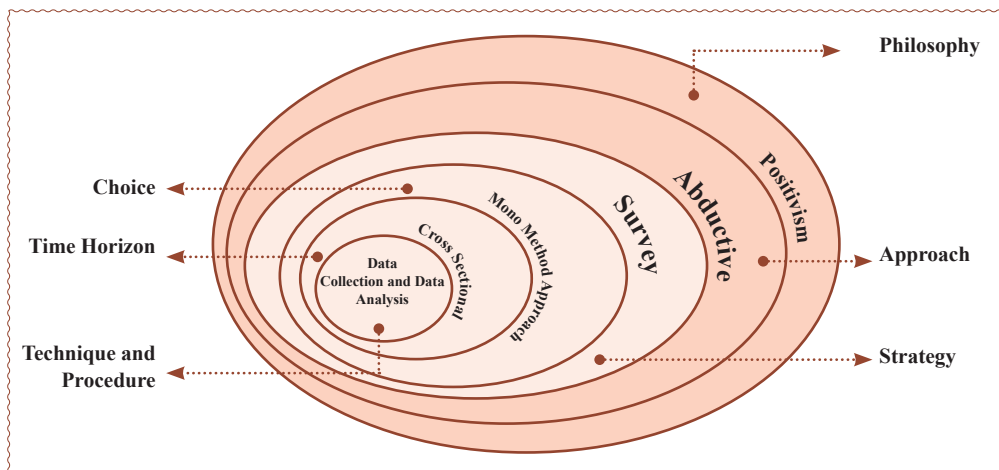
The study conducted a descriptive observational research to analyse the factors affecting the growth of the fashion industry in Nepal. Data were gathered using quantitative research methods, specifically through surveys. The primary data collection was executed via questionnaires created in Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of 5 questions for each variable measured on a 5-point Likert Scale.

The study utilised a convenience sampling technique to select participants. The sample size comprised 100 respondents. The study targeted

individuals who were active on social media pages of fashion brands who frequently liked and commented on the posts of the brand. This technique involved selecting individuals who were easily accessible and willing to participate, primarily targeting those who were active social media users and fashion consumers.

After collecting data, the reliability of the collected data was tested to see if it was internally consistent. The test resulted in Cronbach's Alpha as 0.699, a number that shows that the internal consistency of the data is moderate.

Figure 2
Research Design



The philosophical assumptions of realism are in alignment with the qualitative nature of this study. The study takes a positivist stance, concentrating on observable occurrences and testing correlations between variables through statistical analysis.

The study begins with hypotheses based on existing theories and literature, and then conducts empirical testing to confirm or refute these hypotheses. Hence the study is abductive in nature.

The survey approach, which includes distributing a structured questionnaire to gather primary data, is the tactic used in this study. The purpose of the survey is to collect quantifiable data on the perspectives, attitudes, and behaviours of

The data had been analysed using SPSS software (25, IBM Corp). Analysis in this study was conducted by looking at different aspects within the Nepalese Fashion Industry such as: correlation analysis, regression analysis together with hypothesis testing.

Prior research papers have also used quantitative research design. The study conducted by Ahmad et al. (2015) conducted their research through a convenience sampling method on 130 participants. The data was collected through questionnaires and regression analysis along with hypothesis testing was conducted.

particular groups, including fashion consumers, and social media users.

While the primary data collection method is quantitative through surveys, The research exclusively uses quantitative methods, specifically statistical analysis, to examine the data therefore the choice of this study is Mono Method Approach.

The research employs a cross-sectional design, collecting data from a sample of respondents at a single point in time to provide a snapshot of consumer attitudes and behaviours regarding purchase intention of consumers in the fashion industry of Nepal.

Analysis and Findings

Table 1 (a)

Demographic

Particular		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	47	47%
	Female	53	53%
	Others	0	0.0%
Total		100	
Age	Below 25	82	82%
	25 - 35	17	17%
	36 - 45	1	1%
	Above 45	0	0%
Total		100	

Note. Field Survey

According to Table 1(a), 53 females of the 100 respondents make up 53%. That implies 47% of the total number of interviewees is men i.e., 47 adult males. Another demographic factor that defines individuals within this study is the age group of participants involved. The majority at

82% are below 25 years; that means 82 people fall below this threshold as shown by age table above. Furthermore, 1 respondent is between the ages of 36 and 45, no respondent is beyond 45, and 17 respondents, or 17% of the total, are between the ages of 25 and 35.

Table 1 (b)

Frequency

Frequency	Every Hour	73	73%
	Every other day	26	26%
	Every two days	1	1%
	Never	0	0%
	Once a week	0	0%
Total		100	

Note. Field Survey

According to Table 1(b), 73 which equates to 73% of the sample utilising social media platforms at least once an hour. Social media platforms are

used by 1 individual respondent on a bi-weekly basis, and the rest 26 use them once each day.

Table 2

Correlation

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.619	0.383	0.357	0.56451

Note. Field Survey

The R value correlation coefficient as shown in table 2 is how much two variables are related. An R of 0.5 up to 0.9 means there are good relationships between them. With an R equal to 0.619 in this study it can be deduced that there is a significant positive association between the fashion industry's growth and brand awareness, social media platforms, consumer loyalty, and social influencers.

R square value displays the coefficient of correlation between two variables. The estimation of the percentage explanation by independent variable is done. Adjusted R-squared is considered as more precise statistics because it adjusts for degrees of freedom. A value of 0.357 implies that

in the fashion industry account for 35.7%, social media platforms, brand awareness, consumer loyalty and social influencers

On the other hand, the standard error of estimate shows how the estimated and actual values differ from one another. The standard error in this case is 0.5645. A larger value denotes a larger discrepancy between the estimated and actual values, and it also suggests a less representative forecasting model. This can be the result of varied customer tastes and preferences as well as the small sample size of 100 respondents from the Kathmandu Valley.

Table 3

Correlation

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	18.797	4	4.699	14.746	0.000
Residual	30.273	95	0.319		
Total	49.07	99			

Note. Field Survey

ANOVA assesses how well the model used in the study matches the data. It determines whether the model is appropriate for the study.

If the p-value is 0.000 (often written as < 0.001), the regression model is considered statistically significant because the significance

value is less than 0.05. The null hypothesis is thus disproved. This implies that the overall regression model is suitable for the study. It follows that there is a substantial correlation between the independent and dependent variables.

Table 4

Regression Analysis-Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized		Standardised Coefficients Beta	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	-0.238	0.553		-0.430	0.668
Avg_CL	0.096	0.116	0.075	0.830	0.409
Avg_BA	0.389	0.125	0.293	3.105	0.003
Avg_SMP	0.413	0.125	0.300	3.309	0.001
Avg_SI	0.211	0.086	0.210	2.435	0.017

Note. Field Survey

Significant insight into the relationships between the dependent variable and the independent variables—brand awareness, customer loyalty,

social media platform, and social influencer—is provided by the correlation table.

From table 4, the concluding framework can be drawn for each dependent variable

$$Y = -0.238 + 0.096 * X_1 + 0.389 * X_2 + 0.413 * X_3 + 0.211 * X_4$$

Where,

Y = Growth of Fashion Industry In Nepal

X₁ = Consumer loyalty (CL)

X₂ = Brand Awareness (BA)

X₃ = Social Media Platform (SMP)

X₄ = Social Influencer (SI)

Regression analysis produced a number of important conclusions. First, it was discovered that the intercept, which was -0.238 with a standard error of 0.553, was statistically insignificant (p = 0.668), meaning that there was no discernible departure from zero.

Table 4 presents data on Brand Awareness (Avg_BA), which showed a coefficient of 0.389 with a standard error of 0.125. This indicates a moderately positive impact on the growth of the fashion business, and is statistically significant (p = 0.003).

In a similar vein, the significant positive influences that Social Media Platform (Avg_SMP) and Social Influencer (Avg_SI) had on the dependent variable were highlighted by their respective significant coefficients of 0.211 and 0.413, with p-values of 0.001 and 0.017

Brand Awareness

In table 4, we can analyse that brand awareness (BA) has the Sig. Value of 0.003 Hence, the null hypothesis should be rejected suggesting that brand awareness has a significant impact on the growth of the fashion industry. The findings of this study aligns with previous research conducted by Khan et al. (2017) which stated that brand awareness significantly influences purchase intentions as it enables consumers to recall and recognize products and embed a brand's image in consumers' minds, encouraging more frequent purchases. Furthermore the impact of brand awareness in the fashion industry is supported by Tsabitah and Anggraeni (2021) who claimed that increased brand awareness has helped boost customers' intention to purchase

which in turn positively impacted growth of the fashion brand.

Social Media Platform

Social media platform (SMP) has the Sig. Value of 0.001. Hence, the null hypothesis should be rejected suggesting that social media platforms have a positive impact in the growth of the Nepalese fashion industry. This finding aligns with the findings of Ahmad et al. (2015) that customer engagement and brand recognition has increased through the use of social media and has improved relationships between brands and consumers which in turn led to improved sales of the clothing industry. The finding of this study also resonates with Muturi (2024), which found that social media platforms play a pivotal role in setting the trends in the fashion industry and also influences consumers to be active participants.

Social Influencer

Social influencer (SI) has the Sig. Value of 0.017 which is less than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis should be rejected suggesting that social influencers have a positive impact in the growth of the Nepalese fashion industry. This study's finding resonates with research conducted by Legeay (2023) and Chun et al. (2018) which identified that influencers who are trustworthy and attractive are likely to assert influence on users' decision to purchase a fashion item. The effectiveness of social influencers is further supported by Dahl & Diebel (2021), who emphasised the role of social media influencers in achieving greater customer engagement and traffic and encouraging them to make purchases.

Customer Loyalty

On the other hand, Consumer loyalty (CL) has a Sig. Value of 0.409. This means that the variable does not have a significant effect on the growth of the fashion industry in Nepal. This findings contradicts with the findings of the research conducted by Li and Huang (2016) which suggested that customer loyalty plays a role in generating sales in the industry as it helps to guarantee a fixed future customer group. The findings of this article also contradicts with the research conducted by Mwangi (2020),

which identified that customer loyalty through the efforts made in customer satisfaction, customer reward programs by the company helped with customer retention which in turn led to increased sales and brand loyalty. Such results could be due to consumers not being loyal in the fashion industry compared to other industries as this industry is highly influenced by celebrities. Rise in influencers like celebrity players, renowned social workers significantly impact consumers purchase intention (Mishra et al., 2023).

In this study the findings analysed that customer loyalty does not have a significant impact on the growth of the Nepalese fashion industry. Due to this reason, the following framework can be further refined to draw precise conclusions as following:

Where,

$$Y = -0.238 + 0.389 * X_2 + 0.413 * X_3 + 0.211 * X_4$$

Y = Growth of Fashion Industry In Nepal

X₂ = Brand Awareness (BA)

X₃ = Social Media Platform (SMP)

X₄ = Social Influencer (SI)

This framework shows that if the average score for Brand Awareness (BA) increases by 1 unit, the average score for growth of the fashion Industry in Nepal increases by 0.389. The average score for Social Media Platform (SMP) increases by 1 unit, the average score for Growth of Fashion Industry In Nepal increases by 0.413. And if the average score for Social Influencer (SI) increases by 1 unit, the average score for growth of the fashion Industry in Nepal increases by 0.211.

Conclusion

This study contributes significantly to the understanding of crucial factors such as customer loyalty, brand awareness, social media platforms, and social influencers, and their effects on the Nepalese fashion industry.

The findings of this research demonstrate the pivotal role that brand awareness plays in the growth of the fashion industry in Nepal. As consumers become more informed about the

products offered by specific fashion stores, this heightened awareness drives sales and enhances brand visibility. In an increasingly competitive market, brands that effectively communicate their value propositions and maintain a strong presence in consumers' minds are more likely to succeed.

Additionally, the study highlights the growing influence of social media users in Nepal, who are increasingly swayed to purchase fashion products that are trending on social networking sites. This trend has led to a significant boost in sales for fashion brands, as these platforms allow brands to amplify their reach and engage directly with consumers. The ability to showcase products in real-time and connect with a broader audience has transformed how fashion brands market their offerings.

The research also reveals that social influencers are becoming more prevalent in Nepal, effectively guiding consumer purchasing decisions through their reviews and experiences. Many fashion consumers follow these influencers to stay updated on new trends, making influencer endorsements a powerful marketing tool. The authenticity and relatability of influencers resonate with consumers, leading to increased brand loyalty and sales for the products they endorse.

On the other hand, the study found that customer loyalty does not significantly impact the growth of the Nepalese fashion industry. This finding may be attributed to rapidly changing fashion trends and consumer preferences, which are often influenced by social media and endorsements from social influencers. As trends shift frequently, consumers may prioritize novelty and current styles over brand loyalty, indicating a need for brands to remain agile and responsive to market changes.

Therefore, this study underscores the necessity for fashion brands to analyze these factors comprehensively to enhance their sales and secure a competitive advantage for sustainable long-term growth. By leveraging brand awareness, engaging effectively on social media, and collaborating with relevant influencers, fashion brands can better align themselves with consumer preferences and market dynamics.

In brief, the insights gained from this research provide a roadmap for fashion brands in Nepal to navigate the complexities of consumer behavior in the digital age. As the fashion landscape continues to evolve, brands must adapt their strategies to foster brand awareness, harness the power of social media, and engage with influencers to thrive in a competitive environment. Future research could further explore the implications of these findings and investigate how brands can cultivate deeper connections with consumers in an ever-changing market.

Limitations

This study's sample size of only 100 respondents is confined only within the Kathmandu Valley hence it may not represent the diverse and dynamic represent the diverse and dynamic fashion consumer landscape in Nepal.

Authors Note

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