



## **Decoding SEO Perceptions: A Comprehensive Mapping of Public Understanding and Awareness**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research paper delves into the public's understanding and awareness of Search Engine Optimization (SEO), employing a methodical approach to unravel the complexities of perceptual mapping in the context of SEO knowledge. Through the analysis of responses gathered from a meticulously designed questionnaire, the study aims to shed light on the varying degrees of familiarity, misconceptions, and accurate perceptions that individuals hold about SEO practices. The survey, distributed across a diverse demographic, captures insights into how SEO is perceived by people with different levels of expertise, from novices to those with intermediate knowledge, and experts in the field. This paper categorizes the findings into thematic areas, highlighting the commonalities and disparities in SEO comprehension and the impact of these perceptions on the implementation and outcomes of SEO strategies. By mapping the landscape of public SEO understanding, the study not only identifies gaps in knowledge and potential educational opportunities but also examines the implications for digital marketing professionals in crafting more effective, inclusive, and accessible SEO education and communication strategies. This exploration into the perceptual dimensions of SEO awareness aims to contribute to the broader discourse on enhancing digital literacy in the ever-evolving domain of search engine marketing.

Keywords: SEO, digital marketing, competitor analysis

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### **Review of literature**

Sana (2014) studied that SEO strategy and using the right tools is crucial to success in search. Equally important is ensuring a proprietary advantage that your competitors will be hard-pressed to duplicate. The paper outlined a long-term strategy for creating a powerful SEO roadmap. Search Engine Optimization is constantly changing as new aspects come into play, and others go. Fundamentally, businesses need to recognize the two crucial fundamentals for high-quality SEO, on-page and off-page. On-page SEO refers to what a publisher can control directly, whereas off-page SEO basically relies on user behavior, social engagements, visitors, and other publishers. Organizations must recognize - to have the top spots in the search engine results page, recognition, support and the backing of others is required.

Surbhi Chhabra (2016) analysed that each web search tool is partitioned into assorted modules including crawler module on which web index depends the most. A crawler is used to download and store web pages for internet searcher. For any crawler two issues should be considered. First the crawler should organize and select a strategy to decide which pages to download next. Second, It needs to have optimized and robust structure with a goal to download maximum pages per second including accidents and crashes. Web crawler is focused on data and can be orchestrated to target what we require. A superior crawler for large search engine needs to address the accompanying issues: It needs a profoundly advanced framework design that can download an extensive number of pages every second. It ought to have great memory administration framework to dodge the memory stack overflow. It needs to choose which pages ought to be downloaded next. It must be strong and solid against crashes. It has to be managed by the accessible resources and web servers. To construct a viable web crawler, different issues should be considered because the size of the web is enormous and such far reaching scope is exceptionally troublesome. Several crawling strategies or algorithms are utilized for downloading web pages from the World Wide Web.

There are numerous more procedures and techniques that might be considered for crawler to enhance its execution and performance. Focused Crawler is intended for highly advanced users who crawl over a small part of the internet for specific topic. Focused crawler is created to extort only pertinent website pages of intrigued subject from the Internet with quicker recovery speed furthermore helps in giving clean client submitted content against a sheltered whitelist, to forestall XSS attack. Due to constraint of network bandwidth and time a web crawler can't download all pages, it is critical to pick the most imperative ones amid the crawling process and going by numerous immaterial pages.

Aanchal Kakkar (2015) have studied that the PR of page is calculated by google spider once it come in contact with it which has no idea nearly the contented or size of the page or the language and the text used in the link. URL strips off to the parent page when present on the toolbar. With the proper understanding of page rank under different cases we have summarized the result as follow: I. The normalized probability distribution of page rank will

be 1.0 II. When number of pages includes and when we start page with 1, the little iterations required to converge to a suitable result. III. No negative value can be estimated. IV. Each time an algorithm is executed it gets closer to the final value.

Vishakha Chilpibre (2017) We have analyzed that survey the working of web search engine and analyses the role of web search optimization, web crawler, web mining. Increase in the user of web facility results in insert, delete and manipulate of huge amount of data in web so study of Search engine optimization, web crawler and web mining for search engine helps to provide an efficient structure to the system that will handle web data as per the user convenience. Also we have discussed some of the challenges that web search engine faces in web. To extract, manipulate and presentation of information are discussed in terms of SEO, Web crawling and Web mining on which search engine rely.

Chawla (2016) focused on the genetic algorithm for generating the cluster based optimal ranked clicked URLs for effective personalized web search. To increase the effectiveness and satisfy need of users, the researchers found that the average precision of the personalized search result in the domain of academics, entertainment and sports has shown improvement in each of the selected domain for the personal web server with optimal ranked clicked URLs in comparison to personal web server without optimal ranking and Classic IR.

Shafiq & Alhadjj & Rokne (2015) examined the strategies based on standard social network analysis technique which pull out relevant and important publicly available information from the community of a user that help to rank and re-order the search results of a Web search engine based on personal interests of the user and his/her community. The researchers have taken the real life data set and complexity analysis to show how the solution is usable in practical application and Web search scenarios which produced more relevant results for users than that of an ordinary Web search.

Behnert & Lewandowski (2015) studied the ranking factors of library information system. They stated that the ranking should be for the benefit of users only as they should get all the relevant information. The researcher found the factors like text statistics, popularity, freshness, and physical location of the user and availability of item, content property, user background, size of website, number of printed pages.

Researchers Boutet & Quoniam (2012) stated that Search engine optimization is a strategic discipline that aims to generate visibility, internet traffic and a maximum exploitation of sites publication. It evolved to be a facilitating tool for them who wish to reference their website with search engine. SEO techniques are being smeared with bed press as they are considered illegal and ineffective. The researchers proposed an ACTIVE SEO 2.0 which offers excellent referencing potential without violating the law.

Mahendru & Singh & Sharma (2014) has evaluated the impact of search engine optimization on advertisement of the firm, to find the perception of consumer about the SEO is an advertisement tool and to compare SEO with other advertisement tools. The researchers stated that to give a website web presence SEO may target different kinds of search, including the image search, local search, video search and industry-specific vertical search engines. There is a Black Hat SEO which uses methods like link farms, keyword stuffing and article spinning that degrade both the relevance of search results and the quality of user- experience with search engines. The researchers found that search engine optimization have a high length effect on advertisement. More than 90% people select the product from first page

and 80% of them from first three or four pages. SEO increases the new customer base, return on investment and revenue to the company apart from using any other tool.

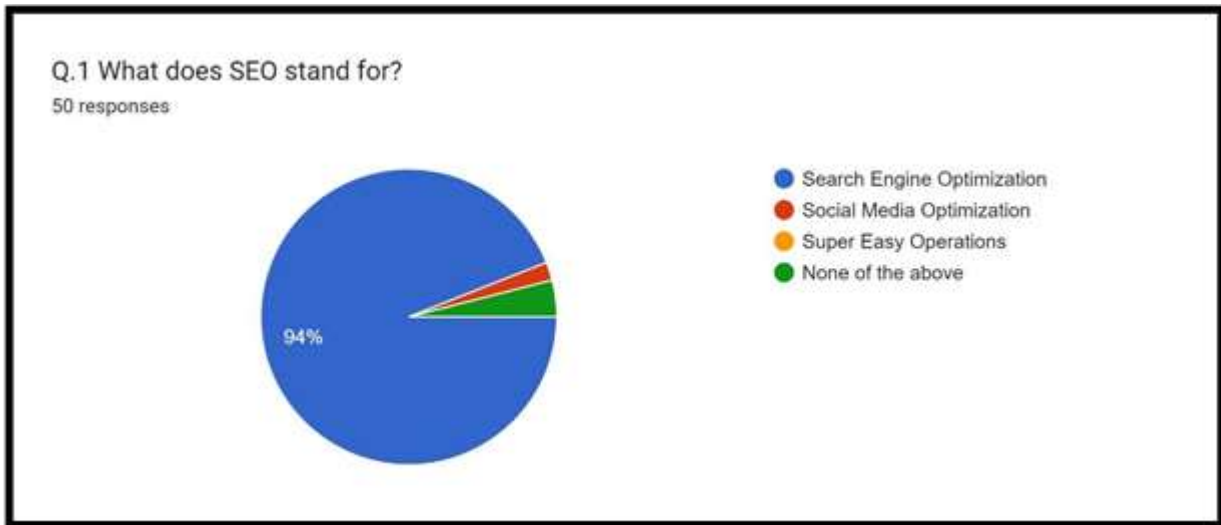
Visser & Weideman (2014) studied the search engine result pages which improve the visibility of the web pages to search engine crawlers. The search engine result pages fall in to two sections: organic and pay per click. The researchers Visser & Weideman (2014) found that the experimental study is better than control website by taking three factors: (1) average time on site per visitor (2) the average page views per visit (3) the average number of conversions obtained per visitor in to consideration. The other study by Weideman (2009) shows that on an average the searchers on webpages sight not more than three search engine result pages for any particular search query.

Jindal & Kharb (2014) studied how the users of websites interact with web site, the web pages visited, the order of visit, timestamps of visits and durations. The researchers have used the user query relevancy factors - keyword based analysis, user recommendation analysis and the user web service visit analysis. By using the factors the researchers stated that the user can get the best web service as well as recommend other for the best service selection.

Researchers Choudharia & Bhalla (2015) have focused on video search optimization. They carried out experiment to identify the key attributes for a video while searching. The experiment resulted in features for exploring the area of Video SEO which are (1) On basis of site optimization: keyword research, video tag, title, description, thumbnail, video transcript, annotation and (2) Off site optimization: views, shares, comments, channel authority.

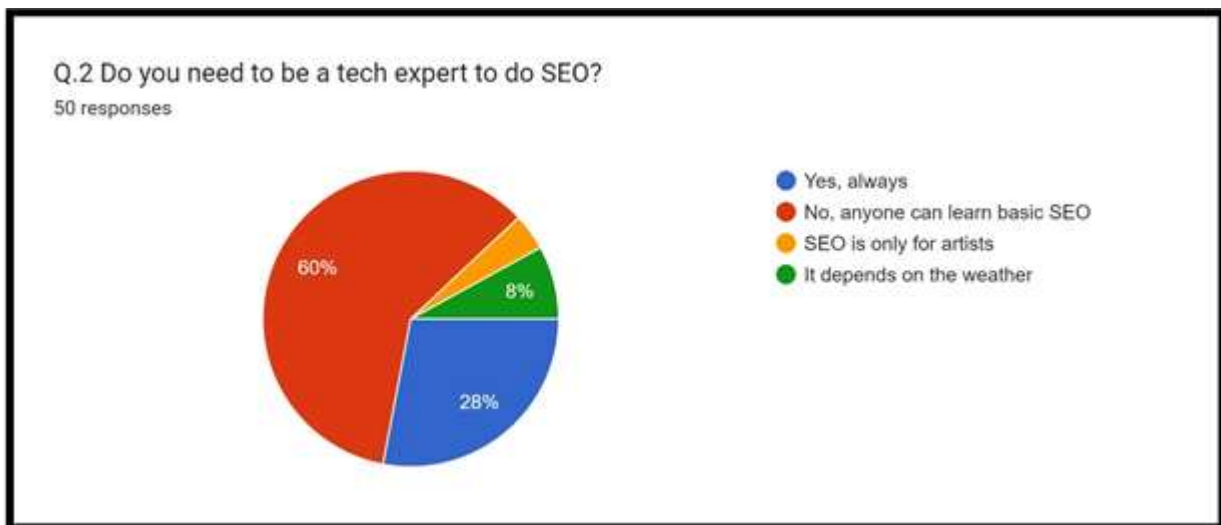
## Data Analysis, Results, and Interpretation

Q1.



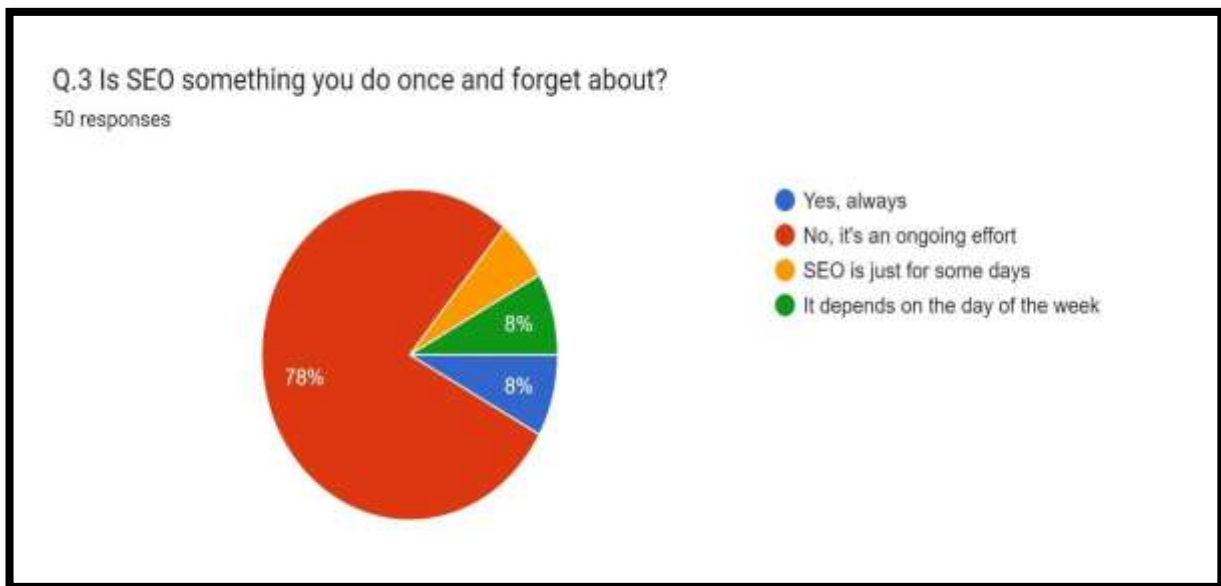
Approximately 94% of people replied that it stands for "Search Engine Optimization," while the remaining respondents mentioned "Social Media Optimization." This interpretation highlights that the overwhelming majority of respondents associated SEO with Search Engine Optimization, emphasizing its predominant significance in their understanding.

Q2.



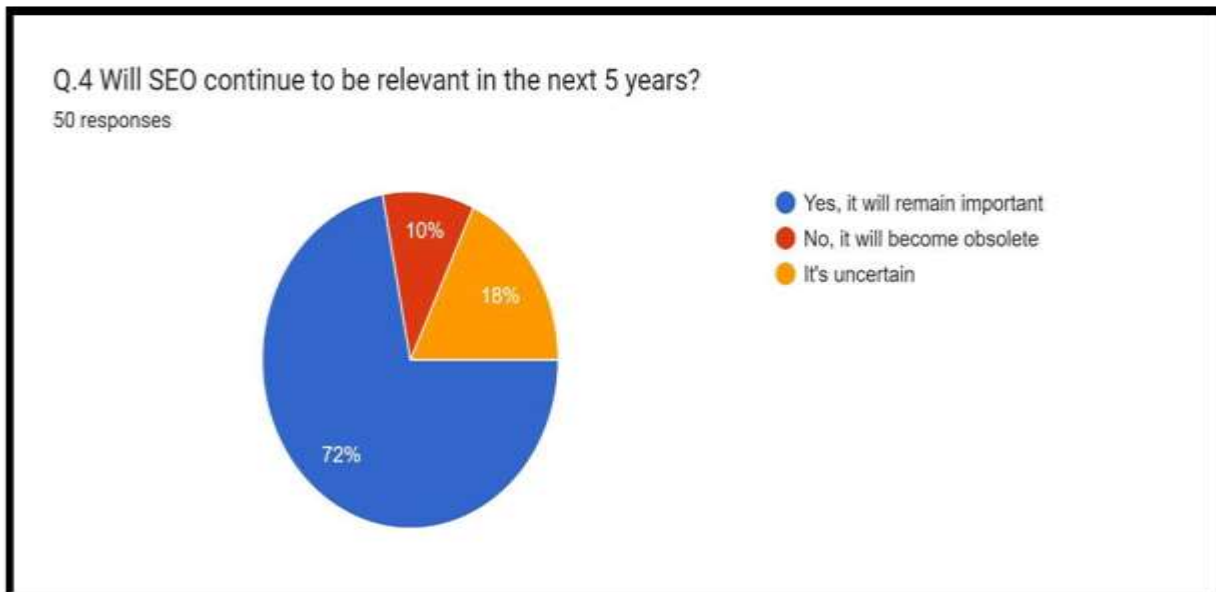
The majority (60%) believe anyone can learn SEO fundamentals, while 28% think specialized expertise is always needed. This suggests that SEO basics are accessible to many without requiring technical expertise.

Q3.



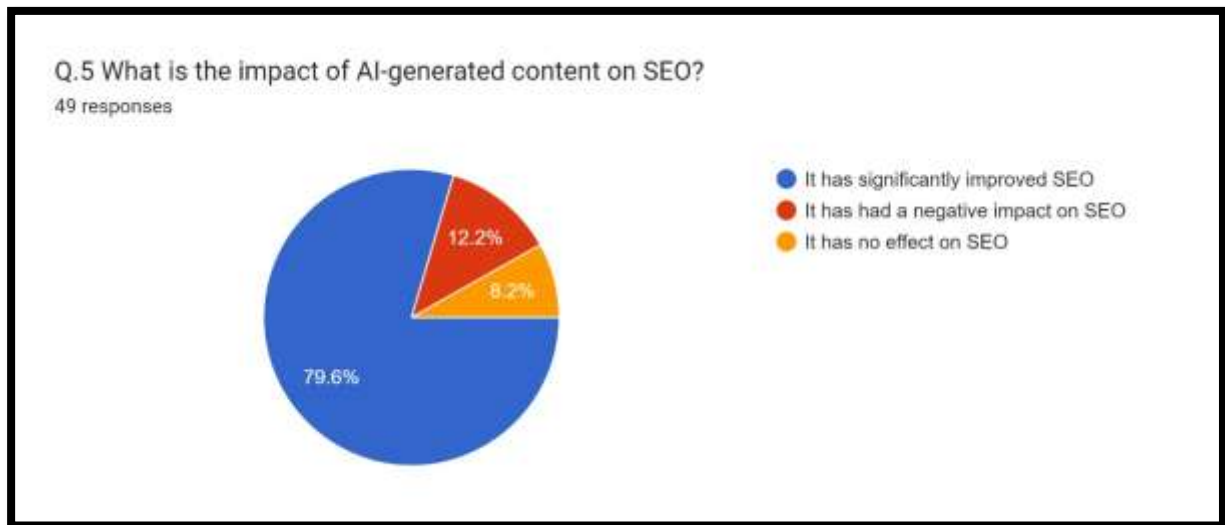
The majority (78%) see SEO as an ongoing effort, while 8% believe it's a one-time task, and 8% think its necessity varies ("It's depended on the week"). Overall, SEO is widely perceived as an ongoing and continuous process.

Q4.



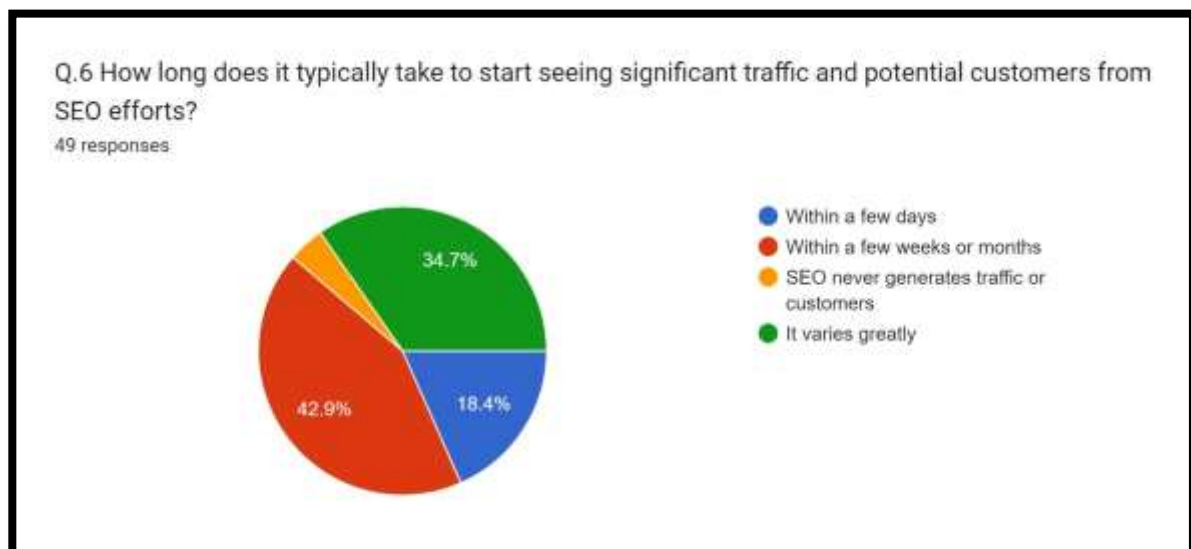
Most respondents (72%) are confident that SEO will remain relevant in the next five years. However, 10% believe it won't, and 18% are uncertain about its future significance. This data shows a prevailing optimism with some uncertainty and scepticism.

Q5.



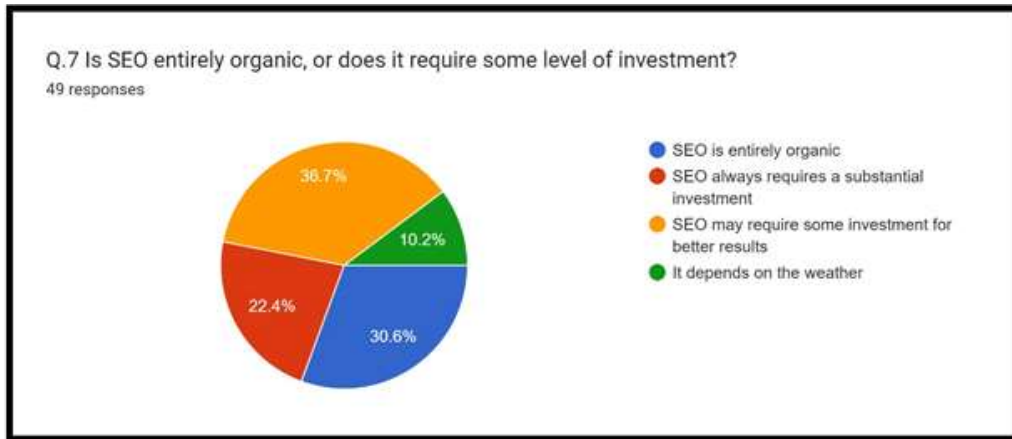
AI-generated content has improved SEO according to 79.6% of respondents, while 12.2% believe it has decreased quality, with some uncertainty among the rest.

Q6.



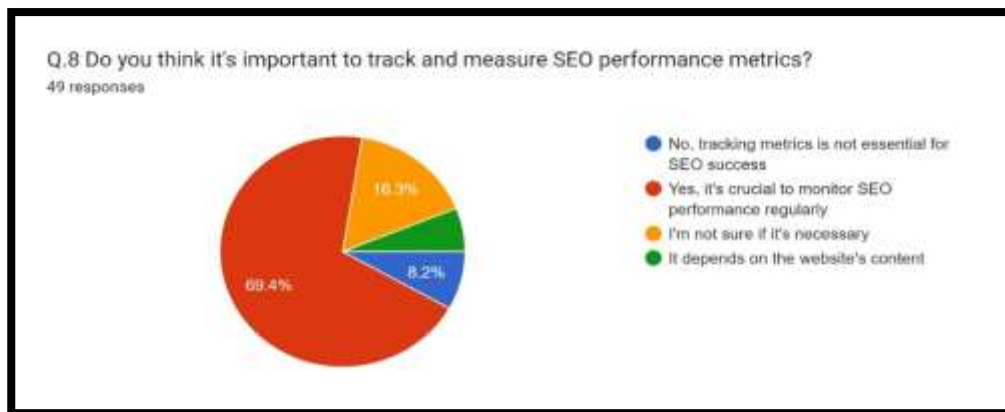
When asked about the time it takes to see significant SEO results, 42.9% said it takes a few weeks to months, 34.7% noted it varies greatly, and a few respondents mentioned seeing results in just a few days.

Q7.



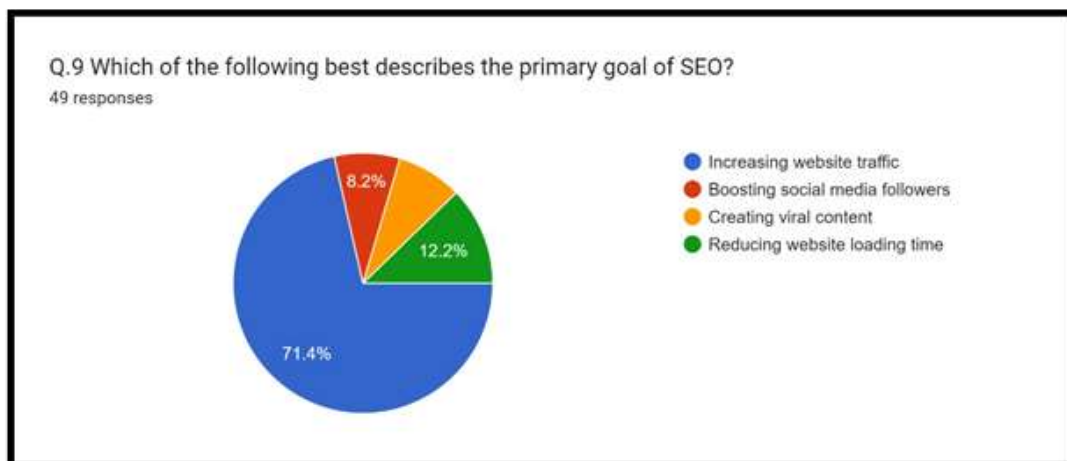
In response to the question of SEO's financial requirements, 36.7% believe it needs some investment, 30.6% see it as entirely organic, and the rest suggest it requires substantial investment.

Q8.



When asked about tracking SEO performance, 69.4% stressed its importance, 16.3% were unsure, and the rest deemed it unnecessary.

Q9.



When asked about the primary goal of SEO, 71.4% said it's increasing website traffic, 12.2% mentioned reducing website loading time, and 8% referred to boosting social media followers.

## Findings

The analysis of the survey data reveals significant insights into public perceptions and understanding of Search Engine Optimization (SEO). A striking 94% of respondents correctly identified SEO as "Search Engine Optimization," indicating a high level of awareness about its primary function. This

underscores SEO's prominent role in the digital landscape and its recognition among the public. The accessibility of SEO knowledge appears to be widely acknowledged, with 60% of participants believing that the fundamentals of SEO can be learned by anyone, suggesting an openness towards self-education in this area. However, a notable 28% of respondents still perceive the need for specialized expertise, pointing towards a perceived complexity in mastering SEO beyond its basics.

Perceptions of SEO as an ongoing effort were dominant, with 78% recognizing it as a continuous process. This contrasts with a small minority who view it as either a one-time task or dependent on specific circumstances, highlighting the general understanding of SEO as requiring sustained effort over time. Looking ahead, 72% of respondents are confident in the relevance of SEO in the next five years, reflecting a prevailing optimism about its future importance in the digital marketing strategy. Nonetheless, a degree of skepticism and uncertainty exists among a fraction of the surveyed individuals.

The impact of AI-generated content on SEO was seen positively by 79.6% of the participants, suggesting a broad acknowledgment of technological advancements enhancing SEO practices. However, concerns about quality decrease were noted by 12.2%, indicating some reservations about the implications of AI in content creation. Expectations regarding the time frame for observing tangible SEO results varied, with a plurality indicating a period ranging from a few weeks to months, while a significant portion also highlighted the variable nature of SEO outcomes. This diversity in responses suggests a realistic understanding of SEO's unpredictability and complexity.

Financial aspects of SEO garnered mixed views, with opinions split between seeing SEO as requiring some investment, entirely organic, or needing substantial investment, illustrating varying perceptions of SEO's cost implications.

The importance of tracking SEO performance was acknowledged by a majority, with 69.4% emphasizing its necessity, indicative of a widespread recognition of analytical approaches in SEO strategies. Finally, increasing website traffic was identified as the primary goal of SEO by the majority, with other objectives like reducing website loading time and boosting social media followers also noted, reflecting a broad understanding of SEO's multifaceted goals.

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## Conclusion

The survey findings illuminate a comprehensive understanding and positive perception of SEO among respondents, with a significant majority recognizing its definition, ongoing nature, and relevance in the digital domain. The data reflects an optimistic outlook on the future of SEO, despite some existing skepticism and uncertainty. Furthermore, the acknowledgment of AI's role in enhancing SEO practices and the varied expectations regarding SEO's time frames and financial requirements reveal a nuanced comprehension of its complexities and challenges. The importance of continuous monitoring and the diverse objectives associated with SEO strategies underscore the multifaceted nature of SEO in achieving digital marketing success. Overall, the survey highlights a generally informed and realistic perspective on SEO, pointing towards its recognized value and the perceived accessibility of its fundamentals, alongside an appreciation for the continuous effort and adaptability required to navigate its evolving landscape.

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## Future Research Direction

**Longitudinal Studies on SEO Trends:** Given the optimistic yet uncertain perspectives on the future relevance of SEO, longitudinal studies could track changes in public perceptions and the actual effectiveness of SEO strategies over time. This would help in understanding how technological advancements, such as AI and machine learning, continue to influence SEO practices and outcomes.

**Detailed Analysis of SEO Learning Pathways:** With a significant portion of respondents believing in the accessibility of SEO knowledge, future research could explore the specific resources, platforms, and educational pathways that are most effective in learning SEO. This includes examining the balance between self-taught skills and the need for specialized expertise.

**Impact of AI on Content Quality and SEO:** While this survey indicated a general positivity towards AI-generated content in SEO, further research could delve into the nuanced impacts of AI on content quality, search engine algorithms, and user engagement. Studies could compare traditional content creation methods with AI-driven approaches in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, and audience reception.

**SEO in Different Industry Contexts:** Investigating how SEO strategies and perceptions vary across different industries could provide valuable insights into sector-specific challenges and best practices. This includes a deeper understanding of how B2B companies versus B2C companies leverage SEO, and the unique SEO considerations in emerging markets or niche sectors.

**User Experience (UX) and SEO:** As search engines increasingly prioritize user experience in their ranking algorithms, future research could explore the intersection of UX design and SEO. Studies could examine how enhancements in website design, navigation, and content accessibility contribute to SEO success and overall digital marketing objectives.

**Global Perspectives on SEO:** Expanding the research to include global perspectives on SEO could uncover regional differences in SEO practices, challenges, and the integration of SEO into broader marketing strategies. This could also involve investigating the role of multilingual and multicultural SEO strategies in global market penetration and brand visibility.

Ethical Considerations in SEO: With the increasing sophistication of SEO techniques, future research could address the ethical considerations and potential for manipulation within SEO practices. This includes studying the impact of 'black hat' SEO tactics on the digital ecosystem and developing guidelines for ethical, sustainable SEO strategies.

Quantitative Impact of SEO on Business Metrics: Building on the initial findings of this survey, further research could quantitatively measure the impact of SEO on specific business metrics such as conversion rates, sales, customer retention, and brand loyalty. This would provide concrete evidence of SEO's ROI and its role in achieving strategic business goals.

By pursuing these directions, future research can contribute to a more comprehensive, nuanced, and actionable understanding of SEO, supporting businesses, marketers, and content creators in navigating the complex and dynamic digital marketing landscape.

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