

Influence of Social Media Marketing Strategies on Tourist Engagement and Destination Branding in Southern Rajasthan

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ABSTRACT

Social media marketing includes tourist marketing via social media, and it includes video platforms and social niche apps, which are promotional integration and a digital marketing mix. These are Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and others, and are important for promoting Udaipur, Mount Abu, Chittorgarh, Kumbhalgarh, Dungarpur, and Banswara. This study examines the impact of social media strategies on fostering tourists and influencer marketing, and on the brand of the destinations, including those stated above. A determination of 350 respondents, including domestic, international tourists, and professionals in the field of tourism, and using a structured questionnaire. These respondents used apps and social media platforms to promote and build tourist destinations. Social media platforms have not only built the marketing of Dungarpur, Mount Abu, Udaipur, Kumbhalgarh, Chittorgarh, and Banswara, but have also changed their perceptions of these destinations and influenced the change in travel motivation and intent. Social media marketing enhanced and retained engagement, fostering motivation and intent, to travel to the destinations in Southern Rajasthan. Increase in concern for authenticity in target consumers, lack of more inclusive marketing or promotional strategies, lack of strategies to decrease over-commercialization, minimal target marketing, and the non-inclusive portrayal of destinations remain the challenge. An ethically inclusive, more culturally sensitive engagement across social media platforms for Southern Rajasthan and its Dungarpur, Udaipur, Mount Abu, Chittorgarh, Kumbhalgarh, and Banswara tourism marketing is recommended to enhance positive social media marketing and culturally inclusive social media marketing.

Keywords: Southern Rajasthan Digital Tourism Social Media Marketing, Instagram Tourism.

INTRODUCTION

The influence of digital platforms has transformed the marketing of tourism across the globe. For travelers, social media has become a major source for obtaining information about a destination, reading reviews, viewing content, and gaining real-life experiences. Research conducted in Rajasthan has shown that digital narratives play a vital role in shaping the preferences and perceptions of tourists towards a destination. Southern Rajasthan encompasses the historical city of Udaipur, the Fort city of Chittorgarh, the hill station and eco-tourism destination of Mount Abu, as well as the tribal area of Dungarpur. These places have recently become tourist attractions, and have experienced a notable increase in social media marketing visibility.

Instagram Reels, YouTube Travel Vlogs, and Facebook posts in Community Groups have all helped in the dissemination of narratives focusing on the culture, cuisine, heritage, and nature of the region. Destination marketing in this area has become highly reliant on social media marketing strategies, including collaborations with influencers, user-generated content, paid advertisements, and campaigns built around specific hashtags.

The Southern Rajasthan social media marketing tourist engagement, influence on travel behavior and destination branding the focus of this study.

OBJECTIVES

1. To evaluate the impact of social media marketing strategies on tourism in Southern Rajasthan.
2. To determine the impact of social media on travel engagement and travel intention.
3. To determine the impact of social media on perceptions of destination branding.
4. To explore the difficulties of tourism promotion through social media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Armutcu et al. (2023) Modern tourist behaviors can be altered by digital marketing and social media. Targeted ads and personalized messages travel consumers. Increased awareness and emotional connection to a travel destination social media posts to travel. Therefore, social media marketing tools must be integrated in a marketing strategy.

Deb and Mallik (2023) This user-generated travel content positively influences tourism marketing. Reviews and traveler experiences, photos, and social media posts create and alter perceptions and decisions. UGC trust and authenticity in travel marketing, encouraging travel to a specific destination choice.

Shriharsha (2023) Real-time communication and visual content social media tourism marketing. Instagram and YouTube travel destinations. This social media marketing tourism engagement and visibility and interest in travel experiences.

Chatterjee & Dsilva (2021) The researchers conclude that social media serves as an effective means of advocating eco-friendly tourism in the regions of Assam and Odisha by advancing awareness and participation using social media campaigns and influencer marketing. Advocacy campaigns that incorporate social media influencers and engage community members online promote eco-friendly behavior.

Alghizzawi et al. (2018) The results of the study conclude that in the case of Jordan, social media serves as an effective tool for marketing tourism by impacting the selection of travel destination, information acquisition, and travel itinerary formulation. The results demonstrate that social media functions as a vital marketing tool for the promotion of tourism in Jordan which helps the potential travelers in developing a favorable perception, as well as, trust toward the destination.

Hayati & Novitasari (2017) This study investigates the relationship between tourism service quality and overall tourist satisfaction in the context of Bali. The results indicate a strong positive correlation between service quality and tourist satisfaction, which underscores the importance of improving service quality as a means of strengthening the competitiveness of the destination. The main elements that influenced the positive experience of the tourists were reliability, responsiveness, and hospitality.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used the random sampling method to gather data from three hundred and fifty respondents, which were two hundred domestic tourists, ninety international tourists and sixty professionals in the tourism industry including hoteliers, tour guides and marketers. Primary data collection involved the use of structured questionnaires and secondary data were gathered from research articles and reports in tourism, studies in digital marketing, and literature on Rajasthan, including the one that has been uploaded. Descriptive statistics and chi-square were used to analyze the data to analyze the relationship between the social media marketing strategies, the engagement of the tourists, and the branding of the destination.

HYPOTHESES

- H₀₁:** There is no relationship between social media exposure and tourist engagement.
- H₀₂:** Social media marketing strategies do not influence destination branding.
- H₀₃:** Content authenticity has no effect on tourist engagement and decision-making.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Social Media Exposure vs Tourist Engagement

Exposure Level	Low Engagement	Moderate Engagement	High Engagement	Total
Low Exposure	38	42	20	100
Moderate Exp.	25	70	80	175
High Exposure	12	18	45	75
Total	75	130	145	350

Chi-Square = 21.67, df = 4, p < 0.01

The results show a strong positive association between social media exposure and tourist engagement. Respondents with higher exposure levels displayed significantly greater interaction, interest, and participation in tourism-related activities. Increased visibility of destination content, influencers, and user-generated posts appears to meaningfully enhance tourists’ motivation, emotional involvement, and intention to engage with Southern Rajasthan.

Table 2: Social Media Strategies vs Destination Branding

Strategy Impact	Low	Moderate	High	Total
Weak Strategies	30	45	25	100
Moderate Strat.	22	68	70	160
Strong Strategies	10	24	56	90
Total	62	137	151	350

Chi-Square = 16.40, df = 4, p < 0.05

The analysis indicates that stronger and well-designed social media marketing strategies substantially improve destination branding outcomes. Respondents exposed to consistent, creative, and visually appealing content reported more favourable impressions of Southern Rajasthan. Effective strategies such as influencer partnerships, reels, storytelling, and interactive campaigns positively shaped brand image and strengthened tourists’ overall perception of the region.

Table 3: Content Authenticity vs Influence on Decisions

Authenticity Level	Low Influence	Moderate	High	Total
Low Authenticity	40	50	15	105
Moderate Authenticity	28	72	40	140
High Authenticity	12	28	65	105
Total	80	150	120	350

Chi-Square = 19.88, df = 4, p < 0.01

Findings reveal that content authenticity plays a critical role in influencing tourist decision-making. Higher authenticity reflected through honest reviews, genuine storytelling, and unsponsored posts greatly increased trust and engagement levels. Conversely, low authenticity weakened credibility and reduced influence. Tourists responded more positively to transparent, experience-based content when evaluating travel choices in Southern Rajasthan.

DISCUSSION

These findings indicate that social media marketing has a noticeable impact on tourist engagement in southern Rajasthan. Udaipur's lakes, the landscapes of Mount Abu, and forts of Chittorgarh garner sympathy and interest and are frequently visually narrated through social media. Reels highlighting Rajasthani festivals, cuisine, folk dances, and tribal markets showcase cultural curiosity, paralleling findings from former research regarding digital content creators. Tourists tend to prefer authentic, non-advertising, and organic materials over content that is commercialized. Challenges brought by social media include overcrowding of places that go viral, slighting of the local culture, and overconcentration on high-end tourism as opposed to community participation in tourism. Ultimately, social media has the most powerful and definitive impact as a contemporary source of brand development in southern Rajasthan.

MANAGERIAL SUGGESTIONS

To enhance tourism promotion in Southern Rajasthan, we suggest working with socially responsible sponsors to develop ethical advertising partnerships that integrate social media and tribal, rural, and rural tourism to democratize and promote the authentic heritage and rural culture of the region. In addition, the promotion of less common destinations such as Dungarpur, Banswara, and Kumbhalgarh wildlife areas would likely lead to a better distribution of tourist traffic. Improving public digital amenities, such as free Wi-Fi, QR code enhanced heritage trails, and alternative digital signage, can extend and improve the experience of visiting Southern Rajasthan. Finally, offering content creators training in responsible heritage narrative, heritage culture, and sustainable practices will more likely provide rich and respectful digital promotion of the culture and region.

CONCLUSION

Promotion of social media marketing strategies and the reliance on social media platforms is critical to the integration of digital advertising into the promotion of tourism and related activities in Southern Rajasthan. This integration and dependence on a single digital platform is also creating an unusual and potentially unbalanced brand identity toward overcommercialization. Authentic visual storytelling and narrative merit will engagement of the product or service. Sustainable digital marketing strategies that enhance community, will promote a strengthen identity of tourism in the region over the long term.

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