



Social Media as a Tool for Tourism Marketing: The Case of The Federal Polytechnic Ilaro Ogun State

Abdul-Azeez Dawodu & Abisola Sokale

(Department of Tourism Management Technology, Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun state, Nigeria)
Olawale.dawodu@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng; abisola.sokale@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng

Abstract

The paper analysed the significance of social media in influencing and advertising tourism products and services. A study was carried out to collect data from participants in Ilaro in order to evaluate their impression of the correlation between social media and tourism. The study utilised a descriptive research approach, where a sample size of 100 respondents was randomly recruited within Ilaro. The research encompassed both the staff and students of the federal polytechnic Ilaro, as well as other pertinent stakeholders within the institution. The study utilised both secondary and primary sources of data collecting, including journals, textbooks, and the internet as secondary sources, and questionnaires as the primary source. The acquired data was examined using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The findings illustrated that social media functions as a potent instrument for promoting tourism, since even a minor favourable comment and endorsement can have a substantial impact on company results, irrespective of the quality of service offered at a specific location. The survey also found that social media allows businesses to directly interact with their intended audience through several platforms such as websites, email, text messaging, and forums, frequently without significant advertising costs. In conclusion, the study suggests that tourism institutions should effectively utilise the power of social media to promote their tourism offerings.

Keywords: Media, Marketing, Tourism, Society.

Citation

Dawodu, A. & Sokale, A. (2024). Social Media as a Tool for Tourism Marketing: The Case of The Federal Polytechnic Ilaro Ogun State. *International Journal of Women in Technical Education and Employment*, 5(1), 85 – 93.

Introduction

Tourism in Nigeria has significantly contributed to the country's growth by creating employment opportunities, enhancing brand image, generating cash, and resolving balance of payment deficits, stimulation of Gross Domestic Product, and augmentation of per capita income. (Egbaji, 2007). While tourism plays a crucial role in Nigeria's socio-cultural and economic progress, it is imperative to enhance the efficacy of tourism marketing in the country. Nevertheless, the task of using the tourism potentials to foster the growth of the tourism industry has proven to be very challenging for the relevant players. This is due to inadequate marketing of the tourism items. (Adejokun, 2009). Spain, the Gambia, South Africa, Kenya, and other countries have long

acknowledged that tourists often select their vacations depending on advertising tactics. (Holden, 2008). The World Bank has earmarked more than \$3.5 billion (USD) for tourism development initiatives in poor nations (Hawkins & Mann, 2007). The World Bank's allocation of funds to the tourist sector is regarded as a favourable indication, but there are still uncertainties regarding the development and long-term viability of this business in countries like Nigeria that have received such investment. (Ashikodi, 2012). Contrary to expectations, Although there have been substantial investments from external donors, the country's tourist sector still lacks development and falls behind its counterparts in Asia, Europe, and America. The study aim is to investigate social media impact on tourism marketing in Nigeria, with the goal of revitalising and

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: April 6, 2024

Revised: May 4, 2024

Accepted: May 24, 2024

ensuring the long-term viability of the tourism industry for economic gains in the country. Numerous travellers select their destinations based on marketing endeavours. In other words, these sites must have been marketed in order to raise awareness among travellers. Typically, individuals, corporations, and Tourism groups promote these destinations and activities using various marketing strategies, such as advertising, publicity, oral communication, and other promotional methods. (Johnson, 2015).

Social media has significantly enhanced the marketing strategies of the tourism industry by effortlessly reaching and engaging customers worldwide. It effectively captures the attention of potential customers, enticing them to explore the showcased tourism offerings on various social media platforms. Tourism organisations must be aware of the appropriate social media platforms to utilise for marketing the offerings provided by the company in order to attract the attention of potential customers. Currently, social media is saturated with rivalry among tourism organisations, as they showcase a wide range of tourism products and services, such as motels, hotels, resorts, and more, through their posts on social media platforms. Social media enables tourism firms to engage in succinct and straightforward communication with their intended audience. Hence, the chances offered by social media platforms contribute to the improvement of marketing communication efforts. (Babacan *et al.*, 2008).

Social Media Marketing in Tourism

In today's technologically advanced world, social media sites have become a medium through which companies may reach a wider audience with their advertising campaigns. Social media marketing, as defined by Chi (2011, 46), is the process of creating a connection between brands and consumers. It provides a personal channel and currency for user-centered networking and social interaction. Despite extensive study on social media marketing, previous studies have primarily focused on experimental and theoretical approaches, failing to provide a detailed analysis of the specific advantages that shops derive from employing this marketing method. After analysing a wide range of interdisciplinary literature, it is evident that studies are mostly focused on defining social media marketing and investigating the

elements that influence consumer behavior in relation to social networking. Although scholars have achieved some initial advances, the development in this field of study has been restricted. Research should aim to enhance our understanding of the enduring promotional benefits that organizations derive from social media marketing. Further empirical research is necessary to move beyond theoretical or projected results and acquire practical insights. This literature review addresses the existing deficiencies in social media marketing research and highlights the necessity for future studies to investigate the advantages of marketing on social networking sites, particularly for small retailers. Social media marketing refers to the utilization of social media platforms to advertise and promote a company and its products (Barefoot & Szabo, 2010, p. 13). An expanded definition of Online social media marketing is the practice of utilizing different online social platforms to enable individuals to promote their websites, products, or services. This enables them to interact with and reach a considerably larger demographic that may have been inaccessible via conventional advertising platforms. (Weinberg, 2009, p. 3). Hunt (2009) emphasized that social media marketing is ultimately synonymous with community marketing.

Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms are digital platforms that enable users to create, share, and trade content that they have generated. They have become indispensable components of contemporary communication, facilitating connections between individuals, corporations, and communities worldwide. Below are some widely used social networking platforms:

Facebook: Facebook is a highly popular social media network that connects billions of users across the globe. Users can utilize this platform to generate profiles, exchange posts, photographs, and videos, establish connections with friends and family, participate in groups, and track pages of interest.

Instagram: Instagram is a platform that primarily focuses on visual content, allowing users to upload images and brief videos. It is renowned for its focus on visual aesthetics, filters, and innovative content. Users have the ability to track accounts, express approval and provide feedback on posts, and utilize

hashtags to explore and find information.

Twitter: Twitter is a microblogging website that allows users to send concise messages, known as "tweets," with a maximum length of 280 characters. It enables instantaneous communication, dissemination of news, and public discussions. Users have the ability to engage in various actions such as following other users, retweeting, replying to tweets, and utilizing hashtags to actively participate in debates.

TikTok: The TikTok platform provides businesses with a distinctive marketing opportunity through the use of short, captivating videos. By capitalizing on

current trends, addressing concerns, and including music, firms can establish a relatable image and effectively engage with a varied, worldwide audience, making it a powerful weapon for contemporary digital marketing.

YouTube: YouTube is a digital platform that enables people to share, view, and provide feedback on videos. YouTube offers a wide range of content, encompassing music videos, vlogs, tutorials, and documentaries. Users have the ability to subscribe to channels, generate playlists, and interact with content creators.

Social Media Platforms and Their Degree of Usage by Consumers

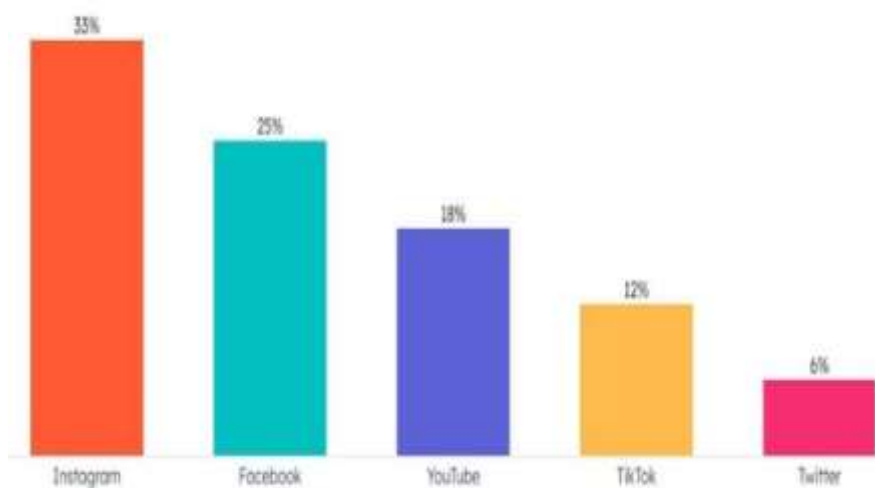


Figure 1: Social Media Platform

Source: sproutsocial.com 2023 report.

Materials and Method

The study utilized descriptive survey research design as its chosen approach. The study's target audience consisted of the staff, students, and visitors of the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro in Ogun State. The research population was downsized using random sampling procedure. This research relied on a combination of primary and secondary sources for data gathering. Secondary sources included textbooks, journals, and

the internet, while the primary method involved the use of well-structured questionnaires. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed randomly among the responders. The data gathered for this study was evaluated utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (S.P.S.S.). The data were presented using descriptive statistical approaches, including tables, frequency counts, percentages, and other measurements.

Results

Table 1: Impact of Social Media on the Promotion of Tourism Market.

S/N	How social media impact the promotion of tourism market.	SA%	A%	D%	SD%
1	Social media plays an important role in tourism marketing.	16	40	34	10
		FB	IG	YT	TW
2	Which of the following platforms do you mostly use to gather information on tourism destination	4	58	37	1
3	Tourism destination promotion done on social media platform influence your travel decision.	16	47	31	6
4	Social media is a key component in tourism marketing.	23	47	26	4
5	Social media platform can be used to find travel Information	51	35	12	2

Source: Authors field survey 2024

Table 1 shows that 16% of the respondents strongly agreed that social media plays an important role in tourism marketing also 40% of the respondents agreed to the statement while 34% of the participants expressed a lack of agreement regarding the significance of social media in tourism marketing and 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed that social media is crucial in the marketing of tourism. This demonstrates the significant importance of social media when it comes to the role of tourism marketing. 4% of the respondents agree that Facebook is the social media platform they mostly use to gather information on tourism destination while 58% of the respondents agreed that Instagram is the social media platform they mostly use to gather information on tourism destination and also 37% of the respondents agreed that YouTube is the social media platform they mostly use to gather information on tourism destination while 1% of the respondents agreed that twitter is the social media platform they mostly use to gather information on tourism destination. This goes to show that Instagram is the most frequently used platform amongst the respondents in federal polytechnic Ilaro to gather information on tourism destinations. 16% of the respondents strongly agreed that tourism destination advertised on social media platform influence their travel decisions also 47% of

them agreed to the statement while 31% of the respondents disagreed that tourism destination advertised on social media platform influence their travel decision and 6% of them strongly disagreed to the statement. This goes to show tourism destination advertised on social media websites influence their travel decisions. According to the table 23% of the respondents strongly agreed that social media is a key component in tourism marketing and 47% of the respondents agreed to the statement while

A total of 26% of the respondents expressed their disagreement with the role of social media as a crucial element in tourism marketing. Additionally, 4% of the respondents strongly disagreed with this statement. According to the respondents, social media plays a crucial role in tourism promotion. 51% of the respondents strongly agreed that social media platforms can be used to find travel information and 35% agreed that social media platform can be used to find travel information however 12% of the respondents disagreed that social media platform can be used to find travel information and 2% strongly disagreed that social media platform can be used to find travel information. This means that social media platform can be used to get travel information according to respondents.

Table 2: Social Media as a Means of Marketing Tourism to Increase Level of Patronage.

S/N	How can the social media be used to market tourism to increase the level of tourism patronage.	SA%	A%	D%	SD%
1	Transparent and accurate information about tourist destination should be shared on social platform to improve the patronage of tourism marketing.	18	53	23	6
2	Social media platforms have been helpful and useful in choosing tourism destination.	27	56	10	7
3	Social media has made it easier for tourism businesses to reach and engage with potential customers	20	55	16	9
4	You are influenced by a social media post or advertisement to visit a particular tourist destination	20	53	24	3
5	Social media platforms have greatly contributed to the purchase of tourism products	10	51	25	14

Source: Author field survey 2023

Table 2 shows that 18% of the respondents strongly agreed that transparent and accurate information about tourist destination should be shared on social media platform to improve the patronage of tourism marketing. Also, 53% agreed to this statement, while 23% of the respondents disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed. Which means that transparent and accurate information about tourism destination should be shared on social media platform to improve the patronage of tourism marketing according to the respondents. It can further be deduced from the table that 27% of respondents strongly agreed social media platform have been helpful and useful in choosing tourism destination and 56% agreed while 10% disagreed and 7% strongly disagreed. This goes to show that social media websites have been helpful and used when choosing tourism destination. 75% strongly agreed and agreed that social media platforms have made it easier for tourism businesses to reach and engage with potential customers while 25% disagreed and strongly disagreed to the statement. This means that social media platforms have made it easier for tourism businesses to reach and engage with their potential customers. 20% of the respondents strongly agreed that they are influenced by post or advertisement on social media for them to visit a

particular tourist destination and 53% agreed while 24% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed. This shows that respondents are influenced by advertisement on social media to visit a particular tourist destination. Additionally, 61% of the participants expressed strong agreement and agreement with the significant contribution of social media platforms to the purchase of tourism items. while 39% disagreed and strongly disagreed to the statement. This means that social media platforms have a significant contribution to the purchase of tourism products.

Discussion

A study was conducted at Federal Polytechnic Ilaro to investigate social media's utilisation as a method of promoting tourism. The survey primarily targeted students, staff, and visitors of the polytechnic, with the majority of respondents belonging to these groups. The study found that social media role in marketing for the tourism industry is crucial, as confirmed by the majority of respondents. Tourism stakeholders utilise social media platforms to promote their tourism offerings. The study also revealed that social media platforms can serve as a valuable source of travel information. This indicates that the respondents believe that social media platforms indeed provide

sufficient travel information. This aligns with the findings of Sheldon (1997, as cited by Gretzel, 2010), who posited that the tourism industry relies heavily on information. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend the frequent shifts in technology and customer behavior, as these factors affect the dissemination and availability of travel-related information.

The study also showed that social media platforms have proven to be beneficial and valuable in selecting tourist destinations, as indicated by the respondents' feedback. This demonstrates that tourism locations promoted on social media platforms have an impact on individuals' travel choices. This aligns with the research conducted by Buhalis & Law (2008), This indicates that the internet has significantly changed how tourism-related information is distributed and how travel planning and consumption are done. Furthermore, the respondents concurred that social media has facilitated the accessibility and interaction between tourism firms and prospective clients. This aligns with the findings of a study conducted by Lopez et al in 2011, which elicited that individuals primarily utilize social media due to the social, functional, and psychological advantages they perceive to gain from it. The usage of social media can lead to several incentive reasons, such as the adoption of new technology, altruistic behavior, exposure to new environments, individual predisposition, belief in other users, and knowledge exchange.

Conclusion

Social media serves as a means for promoting tourism, where even a small positive comment or recommendation can greatly impact a tourism business, independent of the quality of service at a certain place. Hence, it is imperative for tourism planners to employ social media platforms in a proficient manner by establishing official accounts for their enterprises and recruiting personnel to oversee and administer these accounts. This tool will assist in mitigating unfavorable posts and comments regarding tourism firms, as well as promptly addressing any negative feedback about the destination. Social media enables the establishment to effectively and directly communicate with target groups through various online platforms such as websites, emails, short messages, and other social media forums. This communication is cost-effective since it eliminates the

need to calculate and minimize advertising expenses. Tourism managers should be aware of the influence of social media advertising in addition to Print media and social media are seen as innovative communication tools for providing excellent services.

References

- Adejokun, S., (2009). RMAFC: Nigeria is broke. Nigerian Compass. (Online) Available from: http://www.compassnewspaper.com/NG/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=314.
- Ahmad, A., (2015). Effect of social media on the students socially, students the world Islamic University of Malaysia as a model. *Research Presented to Language Center*.
- Ashikodi J., (2012). Tourism Development in the Coastal Region of Nigeria: economics of tourism Development a Shift from Oil Dependence. *Paper Presented at the Annual Conference on Tourist Development in Nigeria*.
- Babacan, E., Kamanlıoğlu, E.B. & Yeniçeri, A.M., (2008). *Testing a Model for Environmentally Friendly Product Purchasing Behavior*. *Beykent University 31*, 5-24.
- Barefoot, D., & Szabo, J. (2010) *Friends with Benefits: A Social Media Marketing Handbook*, San Francisco: No Starch Press
- Casaló, L., Flavián, C., & Guinalú, M. (2011). Understanding the intention to follow the advice obtained in an online travel community. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27(2), 622–633.
- Cha, Jiyong. (2009.) Shopping on Social Networking Websites: Attitudes towards real versus virtual items. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 10: 77-93.
- Chan, N. L., & Denizci Guillet, B. (2011). Investigation of social media marketing: How does the hotel industry in Hong Kong perform in marketing on social media web-sites? *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 28(4), 345–368.
- Chi, Hsu-Hsien. (2011). “Interactive Digital Advertising VS. Virtual Brand Community: Exploratory Study of User Motivation and Social Media Marketing Responses in Taiwan.” *Journal of Interactive Advertising* 12: 44-61.



- Cox, C., Burgess, S., Sellitto, C., & Bultjens, J. (2009). The role of user-generated content in tourists' travel planning behavior. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 18(8), 743–764.
- Dippelreiter, B., Grün, C., Pöttler, M., Seidel, I., & Berger, H. (2008). Online tourism communities on the path to Web 2.0— An evaluation. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 10(4), 329–353.
- Egbaji, S., 2007. *Tourism Development in Nigeria. The Cross River Experience*. Lagos: El-Sapphire Limited.
- Eley, B. & Tiley, S., (2009). *Online Marketing Inside Out*, Sitepoint, USA.
- Ellion. (2007). Web 2.0 and the travel industry: Practical strategies for exploiting the social media revolution. Retrieved from <http://195.130.87.21:8080/dspace/handle/123456789/329>
- Hawkins, D.E., & Mann, S., (2007). The World Bank's Role in Tourism Development. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34 (2): 348-363.
- Holden A., (2008). *Environment and tourism (2nd edition)*. London: Routledge.
- Huang, Y. H., Basu, C., & Hsu, M. K. (2010). Exploring motivations of travel knowledge sharing on social network sites: An empirical investigation of U.S. college students. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 19(7), 717–734.
- Internet World Stats. (2012). Facebook usage and Facebook penetration statistics by world geographic regions. Retrieved from <http://www.internetworldstats.com/facebook.html>
- Jeng, J., & Fesenmaier, D. (2002). Conceptualizing the travel decision-making hierarchy: A review of recent developments. *Tourism Analysis*, 7(1), 15–32.
- Johnson, K.S., (2015). What is tourism marketing? demand media. Available at: <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/tourism-marketing-56473.html>. Retrieved 06/27/2015
- Kaplan, A. M. & Michael H. (2010). Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons* 53: 59-68.
- Kasavana, M. L., Nusair, K., & Teodosic, K. (2010). Online social networking: Redefining the human web. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, 1(1), 68–82.
- Kotler, P., Bowen, J. T., & Makens, J. C. (2006). *Marketing for hospitality and tourism*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Litvin, S. W., Goldsmith, R. E., & Pan, B. (2008). Electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management. *Tourism Management*, 29(3), 458–468.
- Lo, I. S., McKercher, B., Lo, A., Cheung, C., & Law, R. (2011). Tourism and online photography. *Tourism Management*, 32(4), 725–731.
- Pantelidis, I. S. (2010). Electronic meal experience: A content analysis of online restaurant comments. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 51(4), 483–491.
- Schmallegger, D., & Carson, D. (2008). Blogs in tourism: Changing approaches to information exchange. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 14(2), 99–110.
- Schmollgruber, K. (2007). The social web in destination marketing—Canada and New Zealand relaunch. Retrieved from <http://passionpr.typepad.com/tourism/2007/06/index.html>
- Shankar, V., Jeffer, I., Murali Mantrala, Eileen, K., & Ross Rizley. (2011). Innovations in Shopper Marketing: Current Insights and Future Research Issues. *Journal of Retailing* 1: s29-s42, doi: 10.1016/j.jretai.2011.04.007.
- Sparks, B. A., & Browning, V. (2011). The impact of online reviews on hotel booking intentions and perception of trust. *Tourism Management*, 32(6), 1310–1323.
- Stepchenkova, S., & Morrison, A. M. (2006). The destination image of Russia: From the online induced perspective. *Tourism Management*, 27(5), 943–956.
- Torres, R. (2010). Today's traveler online: 5 consumer trends to guide your marketing strategy. *Paper presented at the Eye for Travel, Travel Distribution Summit, Chicago, IL*.
- Xiang, Z., & Gretzel, U. (2010). Role of social media in online travel information search. *Tourism Management*, 31(2), 179–188.
- Yoo, K. H., & Gretzel, U. (2011). Influence of



personality on travel-related consumer-generated media creation. *Computers in Human*

Behavior, 27(2), 609–621.