



Investigating the Performance of Indian Hotels in Utilizing Social Media Marketing: An Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the performance of Indian hotels in utilizing social media marketing and examines its role in enhancing marketing effectiveness and organizational performance. Primary data were collected from sales and marketing professionals working in hotels across the Delhi-NCR region and analysed using descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and regression analysis. The findings reveal that social media marketing significantly contributes to customer engagement, brand visibility, market reach, customer retention, and booking generation. The study also identifies key performance dimensions and highlights challenges related to content management, performance evaluation, and resource allocation. The study concludes that effective utilization of social media marketing can enhance competitiveness and support sustainable growth within the Indian hotel industry.

Introduction

Due to the widespread use of social media by stakeholders and customers, there is growing demand on companies to implement these technologies. However, questions remain regarding the reasons for businesses' adoption of social networking sites. Researchers and the media demand additional empirical investigations in this area of study (Högberg, 2017). The increasing digitization of societythe development

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of the information technology industry (IT), and digital inventions like social media have resulted in a considerable shift of organizations in recent decades (Aral et al., 2013; Yoo, 2010). Social Media networks are known for being user-friendly, making it simple for businesses and consumers to adopt and utilize the technology for online communication (Kane et al., 2014). Moreover, social media has allowed people to actively use and generate content that is shared and presented on the internet, which has also resulted in a shift in authority from businesses to consumers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Today social media refers to a wide range of networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, X, video sharing websites like YouTube etc. which also indicates rapid development of newer social media technologies and strategies (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The TOE framework (Technology-Organization-Environment framework) has been utilized in previous researches on the adoption of technology to study various IT adoptions, such as when (Iacovou et al., 1995) examined data exchange systems in small enterprises. Four elements were found by the study to either directly or indirectly affect customers' intentions to use social media to make hotel reservations. Usefulness has a direct impact on online booking intention. A fundamental component of the approach is permission-based acceptance. Permission-based acceptance is directly positively impacted by both the constructs of trust in online hoteliers and social media use, whereas permission-based acceptance directly positively relates to the intention to book through social media. The verified approach extends the requirement that hoteliers seek customer consent before engaging in any marketing efforts. To increase bookings via social networks, hotel owners, managers, and social media professionals must remember their customers, provide them with helpful details and amenities, and behave in a trustworthy manner (Theocharidis et al., 2020). Further (Palmer et al., 2000) states that newer and creative marketing methods are important for hotels of which one of the key excerpts being "customization for customers" that is extremely specific to satisfy the expectation of guests. According to (King et al., 2011) the importance of using social media marketing strategies, since hotels are in a highly competitive industry that calls for creative marketing strategies. The importance of social media for the hotel industry is only increasing due to the widespread usage of mobile phones and tablets, which make applications for social media accessible at any time and from any location (Yang & Kang, 2015). Social networks, which provide more dynamic, user-focused, and transparent channels of communication, are one of the Web 2.0 developments that have radically changed how hotels engage with their guests (Leung et al., 2015). Social media platforms are essential for the hotel industry as a result of this development, especially since most tourists now check reviews prior to making reservations (Leung et al., 2015). Hotel's consider social media to be an "ocean of possibility that is highly tied to service quality, accurate information channels, and effective tools to monitor competitors and for completing self-review of performance," according to research by (Sanliöz Özgen &

Kozak, 2015). These results are related to the evolution of productive guest conversations and the examination of large data, two aspects which are critical components of contemporary social media strategies, despite the fact that this pattern appears to have remained constant over the past ten years. According to (Susilo & Santos, 2023) digital content has grown to be a significant technological component of marketing efforts; it leverages Instagram and the internet to produce material and reach audiences while keeping their campaign moving forward. As a result, in order for hotels to succeed, they must also engage in sustainable development, which is a crucial corporate duty while also running their businesses.

Literature Review

To study the effect of social media content (experiential – ambience related, and non-experiential – non-ambience related) and congruence of management response on user engagement, hotel brand image and booking intention, (Veloso et al., 2024), launched an online factorial design experiment with 559 participants. They found that response congruence, defined as the match between the message of a post and the hotel's reply to the comments, is a strong moderator, as congruent responses significantly boost engagement, functional and hedonic-brand image, and intention to book versus incongruent and no responses. Where hotels are not able to respond congruently, experiential content (ambience focused) serves as a compensating factor, and continues to engage, and improve brand perceptions. The coordinated use of content and dialogue management in social media strategy is emphasized by the study, which shows that the posts and replies need to be synchronized to affect consumer behavior in a social media setup. The results provide practical insights: consistency in messages and response; focus on the immersive, experiential story to increase user engagement and conversions.

This study by (Devaru et al., 2024), examines the possibilities of social media and e-marketing for small hotels, as a mechanism to overcome the limitations of resources and be competitive in comparison to large-scale hotels. They show that responsive websites, online booking platforms and targeted ads can help you reach the world and increase visibility. Social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram provide direct interaction, trust building and real-time feedback from customers, thereby extending brand messages and responses to both positive and negative reviews. User generated content is a solid endorsement and honest answers to criticism increase the reputation. The overall results indicate that strategic adoption of e-marketing and social media competencies contributes to the growth, sustainability and competitive edge of independent hotels.

This study by (Ahmad et al., 2024) examines the effect of CSR-related communications through social media on guests' advocacy behavior in a developing economy. They demonstrate that CSR messages can

highly influence consumer advocacy, which is explained by consumer happiness and the sense of a warm feeling. Furthermore, those who hold more altruistic values are more likely to convert their experience of CSR to positive advocacy. The findings support the notion that emotional responses, not only the informational content, are responsible for supportive actions such as positive word of mouth. In real terms, the study suggests that hotels should leverage social media to convey CSR efforts in an emotionally resonant manner. The results indicate that the values of target audiences are significant factors to consider when developing social media CSR strategy in order to create a meaningful consumer advocacy.

Involvement (how involved guests were) was shown as the most powerful determinant of customer engagement and customer loyalty by analyzing the Italian Airbnb users (Sallaku & Vigolo, 2024), via PLS-SEM. The direct and significant impact on engagement and loyalty is furthered by enhancing authenticity and interactivity. Besides, the interactivity increases the authenticity perceived by the customer and reinforces customer loyalty. Their model demonstrates that customer engagement serves as a partial mediator between involvement, authenticity, and loyalty, such that involvement, authenticity, and interactivity have a direct effect on loyalty, as well as an indirect effect via customer engagement. Practical implications highlight the importance of interactive, real and stimulating experiences from online to offline, through peer-peer platforms and hospitality providers to ensure a lasting customer loyalty.

(Zhuang et al., 2023) developed a comprehensive model that explores the variables that contribute to the perceived helpfulness of user-generated content (UGC) on a widely-used Chinese social media platform. They discovered that the helpfulness of the UGC can be greatly improved by content detailedness, readability and objectivity and that creator's social recognition and popularity has a positive effect on content usefulness. The study finds that creator interactivity (e.g., replying to comments) is a significant moderating factor and has a significant impact on both content quality and source credibility. This study highlights the importance of not only creating quality UGC, but also attracting the creators who establish trust and encourage dialogue. In practice, the authors recommend that hospitality marketers should aim to not only solicit detailed, clear, and objective feedback but also to prompt dialogue from creators to increase helpfulness and inform consumer actions.

In this in-depth qualitative study by (Syrdal & Briggs, 2018), marketing professionals and consumers were interviewed to gain clarity on the definition of “engagement” in the context of social media content about brands. They view engagement as more than just likes or shares; it is a psychological state of being, a feeling, a state of interest, a mental state that creates attention, emotion, and thinking, regardless of whether it involves an action or not. What they have discovered stands in contrast to the traditional metrics focused

perspective, as they believe in the more profound and introspective nature of true engagement. The study emphasizes that it is important for companies to develop content that connects and resonates with the cognitive and emotional level rather than simply elicit engagement. In practice, hotel marketers should look to telling stories or creating images that will have meaning and make people feel the emotion that will trigger interaction without social cues. Hotels can build deeper relationships with their audience, going beyond metrics, by focusing on psychological resonance.

Enhancing Social Media Engagement with AI-driven Automation (Ashok Manoharan, 2024) explores the impact of deep learning and natural language processing on creating personalized and timely content to boost social media engagement. The study shows that AI tools are 4x more effective compared to manual, resulting in better likes, comments, shares, and CTRs on social media and websites. A novel “BEEM” model-Behavior Emotion Engagement Model-facilitates real-time sentiment-based content optimization. AI chatbots and content triggers have been proven to boost brand visibility and customer satisfaction through their effective use in case studies. The study points to some challenges, such as algorithmic bias, ethical considerations, privacy concerns, and maintaining human creativity. In his closing remarks, Manoharan argues that while AI-driven automation transforms digital interactions, the proper use of AI is key to maintain authenticity, trust, and consumer loyalty.

Objectives of the study

- To investigate the Indians hotels performance in using social media marketing.
- To provide strategic recommendations for improving the performance of social media marketing in the Indian hotel industry.

Research Methodology

In this study, the target population consists of the Sales Managers and the sales and marketing workforce and managers present in other related departments who are currently working in the various star category hotels of Delhi/NCR. The total number of employees working in these hotels who can give the actual feedback about the acceptance of Social Media Marketing in the hotels were defined as the study’s universe.

Research Design

To achieve its goals and provide a thorough analysis, the study combined investigative and descriptive research techniques. As part of the investigative phase, an extensive literature review was undertaken to

gather in-depth insights into the issues and challenges influencing guest satisfaction in relation to social media marketing opportunities and constraints. Furthermore, an exploratory research approach was adopted to identify and analyze the key factors shaping tourist expectations.

Data Collection

The study used data from primary and secondary sources to ensure a comprehensive and well-rounded analysis. Primary data were collected specifically to address the research objectives, while secondary data were utilized to support, validate, and enrich the findings derived from the primary investigation. This integrated approach facilitated a deeper understanding of the research problem.

Data Analysis

According to (D George, 2003) and (Nunnally, 1978) a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 or higher is generally regarded as indicative of good reliability. Furthermore, (Hulin, C. L., Netemeyer, R. G., & Cudeck, 2001) suggested that an alpha coefficient exceeding 0.60 may be considered acceptable for research purposes. As presented in Exhibit 1, the scale achieved a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.965, demonstrating an excellent level of internal consistency and confirming the reliability of the instrument for subsequent analysis.

Exhibit 1: Reliability Analysis	
No. of Items	23
Cronbach's Alpha	0.952

Measuring Sampling Adequacy of Data

Following the assessment of internal consistency, the next step was to evaluate the suitability of the data for factor analysis. To determine sampling adequacy and the factorability of the data, two widely accepted statistical tests were employed: the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (BTS). According to (Kaiser & Rice, 1974) a KMO value greater than 0.60 indicates that the data are appropriate for factor analysis. Similarly, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity should yield a significance value of less than 0.05 to confirm that the correlation matrix is suitable for factor extraction (JF Hair, WC Black, 2010; Pallant, 2009). The results of these tests are presented in Exhibit 2. A higher KMO value indicates a strong degree of correlation among the variables, suggesting that they share common underlying factors. Conversely, a lower KMO value implies weak intercorrelations among the variables, making factor analysis less appropriate. As shown in Exhibit 4.26, the KMO value was found to be 0.957, indicating a high level of sampling adequacy and confirming the suitability of the data for factor analysis.

Exhibit 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Test		Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.957
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4945.788
	Degree of Freedom (df)	253
	Significance (Sig.)	<.001

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity examines whether the observed correlation matrix significantly differs from an identity matrix, in which variables are uncorrelated and factor analysis would be inappropriate. The significance value obtained was 0.000 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix and that meaningful relationships exist among the variables (D George, 2003). Therefore, the results of both the KMO measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity confirm that the data are adequately correlated, approximately multivariate normal, and appropriate for conducting factor analysis.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a statistical technique used to identify groups of interrelated variables and combine them into a smaller number of underlying factors. It helps researchers reduce data complexity by summarizing a large set of variables into meaningful dimensions while retaining most of the original information. The technique has also been extensively employed in studies examining social media marketing strategies, enabling researchers to uncover underlying constructs and simplify data interpretation (E. S. Chan, 2014; Leung et al., 2017). Condensing the data from a large number of variables into a smaller collection of significant factors is the main goal of factor analysis (Malhotra, K. N. & Dash, 2011). To determine the underlying factor structure in the current study, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) employing the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) method was utilised. The extraction of factors was guided by criteria such as Eigenvalues and the percentage of variance explained.

Exhibit 3: Initial Eigenvalues and Percentage of Variance Explained			
Component (Factor)	Initial Eigenvalues	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings (% of Variance)	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings (Cumulative %)
1	11.489	24.876	24.876
2	1.793	23.846	48.722
3	1.005	13.397	62.119

Extraction method: Principal Component Matrix

Exhibit 4 presents the Rotated Component Matrix, which illustrates the factor loadings of each variable on the extracted factors. The matrix facilitates the identification of variables that exhibit strong associations with a particular factor while maintaining relatively low loadings on other factors. This helps in achieving a clearer and more interpretable factor structure. According to (JF Hair, WC Black, 2010; Nunnally, 1978), variables with factor loadings of 0.50 or higher are generally considered significant and are therefore retained for further analysis. Accordingly, the variables loading above the prescribed threshold were used to interpret and label the extracted factors. After the extraction of the 2 factors the identification and naming of the factors is done according to the items associated in the factor.

Factor 1: Strategic Performance Measurement and Marketing Effectiveness

This factor accounts for 24.876% of variance and Eigen value 11.489. This factor comprises variables related to campaign planning, goal achievement, performance measurement, promotional effectiveness, market expansion, return on investment, brand visibility, and customer feedback. Collectively, these variables reflect the ability of hotels to evaluate, manage, and achieve marketing objectives through social media marketing. Therefore, this factor may be labelled "Strategic Performance Measurement and Marketing Effectiveness." The high variance and Eigen value shows that for the sales team of the hotels the variables related to the Strategic Performance Measurement and Marketing Effectiveness has high significance.

Factor 2: Customer Engagement and Relationship Performance

With Eigen value 1.793 and 23.846 percent of variance, the second factor consists of variables associated with customer interaction, guest relationship management, audience engagement, responsiveness, booking generation, and overall social media effectiveness. The factor highlights the role of social media marketing in fostering stronger customer relationships and enhancing hotel performance through sustained engagement. Hence, this factor can be named "Customer Engagement and Relationship Performance."

Factor 3: Operational and Performance Evaluation Challenges

This factor accounts for 13.397% of variance and Eigen value 1.005 and includes variables related to account management difficulties, content creation challenges, performance measurement issues, and the need for improved evaluation mechanisms. These variables represent the operational obstacles and monitoring challenges faced by hotels when implementing social media marketing initiatives. Therefore, this factor may be labelled "Operational and Performance Evaluation Challenges."

Exhibit 4 Rotated Component Matrix

	Component		
	1	2	3
We find SM metrics easy to apply	.772		
We track metrics to assess campaigns	.730		
Social media promotes events and offers	.714		
We set goals for social campaigns	.709		
SM platforms expand our guest demographics	.681		
We meet goals for SM campaigns	.656		
Ads on social media drive high ROI	.638		
Social media boosts our brand visibility	.584		
We've gained more positive online feedback	.539		
Online platforms drive higher guest interaction		.761	
Analyzing posts enhances social media impact		.728	
Social media strengthens our guest relationships		.692	
Regular posts keep our audience engaged		.651	
Marketing online results in higher bookings		.634	
We address customer queries on social media		.621	
We maintain presence on major social platforms		.604	
SMM improves performance at lower cost		.565	
Social Media campaigns engage and retain past guests		.562	
We see better ROI via SMM		.518	
Managing SM accounts is quite difficult			.848
We face issues with creating content			.842
Measuring SM campaign success remains challenging			.750
Better evaluation tools will enhance tracking			.609
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.			

Conclusion

The study was to study the performance of Indian hotels on social media marketing. For this purpose, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was carried out first, which resulted in three dimensions of social media marketing performance: Strategic Performance Measurement and Marketing Effectiveness, Customer Engagement and Relationship Performance and Operational and Performance Evaluation Challenges. Next, percentage analysis was used to analyze the respondents' viewpoints on various aspects of social media marketing performance in Indian hotels. The results indicated that social media marketing has undoubtedly improved the marketing efforts of the Indian hotels in the following ways. More than half of those responding said that hotels make a good use of social media statistics, measure campaign effectiveness, set a social media marketing target and are successful in meeting that campaign objective. Social media was also identified as an excellent medium for promoting hotel events, expanding guests base, increasing brand visibility and creating positive feedback on the Internet. The results suggest that hotels are increasingly turning to data-driven strategies to track and optimize their social media marketing efforts, thereby improving their marketing effectiveness. The study further highlights the strong contribution of social media marketing towards customer engagement and relationship management. Many respondents confirmed that social media platforms enable increased interaction with guests, deepen customer relationships, enable quick guest enquiry responses and enable regular posting of content to keep the audience engaged. Also, social media marketing was identified as a useful tool in keeping their old guests and generating long-term customer loyalty. One of the other ways that hotels can be seen as really important in regard to social media is their ability to be active on major social media platforms. As far as the business performance is concerned, the findings indicate that social media marketing has a positive impact on the hotel's performance. The social media advertising returns positive ROI, enhances the marketing effectiveness at a lower cost, and helps increasing bookings, respondents stated. Additionally, the results reveal that social media marketing is a cost-effective marketing and promotional tool that helps the hotel to extend its reach among wider customer base and maximize its marketing budgets. This has led social media marketing to become a critical aspect of a hotel's brand building, customer acquisition and revenue generation. Despite these positive results, there are still some operational and performance evaluation issues identified from the study. Multiple social media accounts, developing engaging and relevant content, and measuring social media campaign results were cited as challenges for many respondents. In addition, most participants felt that more evaluation and tracking tools would help to improve the effectiveness of social media performance measurement. The results of this study indicate that there is a great potential for hotel

businesses to improve their content management, campaign assessment and analysis abilities, and social media marketing efforts have been successful.

The results prove that social media marketing is successful in Indian hotels for improving marketing effectiveness, building customer engagement, brand visibility, customer retention and customer benefits, respectively. Meanwhile, the challenges faced in both the operation and assessment of the program demonstrate the necessity of ongoing investment in technology, data analytics, and digital marketing skills. Hence, it may be inferred that social media marketing is one of the effective strategies and it is playing a significant role in the performance of the Indian hotels thereby achieving the objective of the study.

Suggestions & Recommendations

Strategic Recommendations: Hotels need to have a combination of engagement and performance social media strategy that allows them to balance the two while building their brand and increasing their hotel revenue. For each campaign, a social media marketing plan should be created that has a clear objective, target audience and social media platform-specific strategy. Hotels need to optimize platforms and make a point of targeting high-impact ones, such as Instagram, WhatsApp and LinkedIn, and others should be supportive tools.

Content and Engagement Recommendations: Hotels should focus on creating visually appealing and high-quality content, particularly videos, reels, and storytelling content, to improve the engagement of their audience. Increase visibility of UGC (user-generated content) like guest reviews, testimonials and social media posts to foster authenticity and trust. To sustain audience engagement, hotels need to adhere to a regular posting schedule with content calendars. Influencer marketing should be reinforced to improve reach and an opportunity to reach new customer segments.

Performance and Analytics: Improvements: Hotels can leverage more sophisticated analytics solutions (such as Google Analytics, Meta Insights, CRM integration) to gain deeper insights into the performance of their campaigns. Need to have standard KPIs which measure the effectiveness, like engagement rate, conversion rate, cost per booking, ROI. Hotels need to use integrated dashboards that integrate social media with booking and revenue information to inform decision making. Scheduling regular performance reviews and A/B testing should be done to refine campaign strategies.

Operational Recommendations: Hotels should start to use automation and scheduling tools (such as Hootsuite, Buffer, Sprout Social) to help them simplify their content posting and account managing process. There should be a single content management system for consistency of the brand's messages across all

platforms. Hotels should establish social media teams or specify clear duties for social media management to ensure they can manage several social media efficiently.

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