



The Impact of Digital Marketing on Tourism Demand: A Comparative Study Using Primary Tourist Responses and Secondary Market Data

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ABSTRACT

Using a comparative approach that incorporates primary visitor answers with secondary market data sets, this study explores the effect of digital marketing on tourism demand. Digital marketing impacts a destination discovery, trust, feelings of involvement, and perceived risk reduction during travel decision-making, based on a recent study, making it a key driver of tourist demand. A substantial shift toward standard digital advertising also appears in Indian tourist industry reporting, demonstrating that tourism marketers now mostly rely on digital mediums to stimulate demand. The study employs a mixed-data paradigm. While secondary data encompasses previously published reports, publications, and market findings utilised for comparing and interpretation, primary data belongs to new content compiled directly from travellers in the context for the current study. By connecting visitor-level impressions with general industry trends in digital tourism marketing, this combination strengthens the study. Based on the data, demand for tourist attractions is influenced positively by social media, online reviews, video content, influencer communication, and destination websites. While the recommended primary-data design

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assists in looking into the same link that exists among tourists in a local setting, secondary evidence consistently indicates these tools boost destination visibility and visit intention. The analysis comes to a conclusion that digital marketing has established itself as a vital tool for generating demand for visit and should be conducted using concentrated, reliable, and attractive tactics.

Introduction

Digital communication has a growing impact on the demand on tourism. Tourists and travellers regularly do online research, evaluate alternative options, watch videos, read reviews, and correspond with destination-related content on a range of digital platforms earlier than completing a travel choices. For this cause, one of the most vital tools for modern-day tourism promotion is digital marketing.

In India, where travel and tourist branding has increasingly been shifted toward digital media, the relevance of this concern becomes especially prominent. Based on an industry review, YouTube and Instagram altogether accounted for over 62 percent of digital spend in 2024, with online mediums accounting for 78 percent of travel marketing spending. This suggests a substantial structural transformation in the manner in which travel agencies engage in and convert tourists as well.

Since the tourism business is an information-sensitive service sector, marketing drives demand through perceived experience quality, trust, and awareness. By exposing travellers with pictures, ratings, comparisons, and interactive information before they start their trip, digital content minimises uncertainty. As conclusion, research regarding digital marketing and demand for travel is significant from an academic and practical view.

Using both primary and secondary data, this paper is formatted as a comparative study. While secondary data is employed to compare findings with generalised research and market trends, primary tourist responses are proposed for assessing perception and actions at the individual level. The study's validity is boosted by the mixed approach, which also improves its practicality to destination managers and tourism businesses.

Research Problem

Even while tourism companies devote more money on digital marketing, it's not always transparent how various digital tools actually affect tourism demand. Depending on their age, motive for travelling, and extent of faith in online information, visitors may be influence differently by social media, video content,,

online reviews, and websites. Comparative research that merge secondary market data with direct tourist responses, are therefore essential.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore how demand for tourism is altered by digital marketing.
2. To figure out how different digital platforms change tourists' choices.
3. To assess a demand for travel utilising secondary market data as well as primary traveller answers
4. To offer solutions for approaches to strengthen effectiveness of tourism marketing.

Hypotheses

1. H1: The demand for travel is benefited by digital marketing.
2. H2: Static digital information has a smaller amount of an impact on tourist traffic than social media and video-based promotions.
3. H3: The preference to visit and make the booking is strongly impacted by online reviews and perceived credibility.
4. H4: The pattern found in secondary market data will be generally supported by primary visitor answers.

Literature Review

Digital marketing has evolved into an essential element in the continued growth of tourism. Digital marketing drives travel demand through destination image, developing trust, emotional bonding, and perceived risk reduction, as demonstrated to a recent analytical study. This implies that digital marketing primarily determines how safe, visually appealing, and memorable an establishment seems in combination with delivering travellers with content.

Social media, organic search engine optimisation, and content marketing have a major positive influence on bringing tourists and strengthening destination competitiveness, according to a comprehensive assessment of research on tourism promotion. This provides validity to the assumption that digital marketing is no more a separate communication tool but rather a vital component of the tourism value chain.

Additionally, empirical study on tourism demonstrates that tourists look up information about attractions on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and others. Based to one study, digital marketing has a substantial effect on the proportion of people who visit tourist sites. This is similar to actual-world market

data illustrating that India's travel advertising budgets are controlled by visually pleasing and video-led channels.

Evidence taken from the Indian industry presents an insightful market outlook. Travel and tourist advertising spending amounted to 28% year over year in 2024, according to a reporting based on over 30,000 campaigns and TAM Media Research data, with tier-II and tier-III cities accounting for 35% of digital impressions. This indicates the promotion of digital tourism is broadening in both scope and geographic reach.

Combining primary and secondary research is very rational from the perspective of methodology. While secondary research serves in confirming assumptions, identifying seeing trends, and saving time and money, primary research delivers direct, unique, audience-specific insights. Questionnaires and interviews are acknowledged by tourism research methodology to be basic approaches to obtaining primary data from tourists and tourism stakeholders.

Conceptual Framework

The study's conceptual paradigm defines tourism demand as the dependent variable and digital marketing as the independent variable. Social media content, destination websites, online reviews, influencer marketing, and video marketing are common instances of digital marketing. Demand towards tourism is characterised by awareness, intention to visit, intention to book, and willingness to offer suggestions.

The model employs perceived benefit, trust, and destination image as mediating variables. Tourists are more likely to develop favourable thoughts about an establishment and be more inclined to travel when they come across dependable and compelling digital content. As consequence, digital marketing has become no longer merely a means of communication but also a behavior-based influence.

Research Methodology

Based on both primary and secondary data, the present research applies a descriptive and analytical design. Because the topic demands both direct measurement of visitor opinion and comparison with recent market developments and publicly accessible data, the strategy is relevant. The methodology involves structured questionnaires for collecting primary data in accordance with accepted tourism research techniques.

Primary Data

It is recommended that an organised questionnaire be utilised for obtaining primary data from tourists. Primary data in marketing research means first-hand knowledge collected specifically for the study. Digital access, preferred travel-information sources, trust in online reviews, the influence of video media, and the influence of digital communication on vacation scheduling are potential subjects for the questionnaire.

Secondary Data

Journal articles, reports from travel-related businesses, and studies on digital tourism are the primary sources of secondary data. Secondary research involves use of previously collected data to find general trends and helps in the interpretation of field research results. This analysis uses secondary data to compare the outcomes of a local poll conducted with significant alterations in digital activity and tourism advertising.

Sampling Design

Convenience sampling may be utilised when selecting a sample of 200 tourists. When respondents receive communication at popular tourist attractions or through online travel populations, this approach is usually useful in tourism research. For comparative analysis, the sample can be segmented by age, gender, purpose for travelling, and extent of digital usage.

Tools for Analysis

Regression, weighted mean, rank analysis, chi-square test, percentage analysis, and correlation can all be employed in the study. In questionnaire-based analysis, these techniques are effective in establishing the correlation between exposure to digital marketing and markers for tourism demand. In contrast to being statistically incorporated into primary data, secondary data are employed comparatively.

Data Analysis and Tables

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18–25	64	32.0
Age	26–35	72	36.0
Age	36–45	38	19.0
Age	46 and above	26	13.0
Gender	Male	108	54.0
Gender	Female	92	46.0
Travel purpose	Leisure	118	59.0

Travel purpose	Religious/Cultural	52	26.0
Travel purpose	Business	30	15.0

An illustrative distribution of respondents for the proposed primary survey can be seen in this table. When determining how different tourist segments get influenced by digital marketing, this grouping is beneficial.

Table 2. Digital Platforms Used by Tourists for Information Search

Platform	Evidence	Marketing implication
Instagram	Tourists use Instagram for destination information.	Strong visual influence.
Facebook	Facebook is used for destination search and travel updates.	Useful for broad reach.
Twitter / X	Tourists also use Twitter for tourism information.	Useful for real-time information.
YouTube	YouTube holds a major share of tourism digital ad spending in India.	Strong video persuasion.
Destination websites	Content marketing and web presence improve promotion outcomes.	Important for trust and conversion.

This table shows that tourists depend on multiple digital touch-points rather than a single platform.

Table 3. Travel Advertising Trend in India

Indicator	Value
Increase in travel ad spend in 2024	28%
Share of digital in travel ad budgets	78%
Share of digital spend captured by YouTube and Instagram	More than 62%
Share of digital impressions from tier-II and tier-III cities	35%
Long-term digital share benchmark	About 50% in 2015 to 78% in 2024
Indicator	Value

This table indicates that digital marketing is now dominant in tourism advertising in India.

Table 4. Influence of Digital Marketing Elements on Visit Intention

Digital element	Mean score	Rank
Online reviews and ratings	4.42	1

Social media posts	4.27	2
Short-form travel videos	4.19	3
Influencer recommendations	3.96	4
Destination website quality	3.88	5

This primary-data table provides a model of how survey results could potentially be reported. The ranking pattern is in alignment with study that underlines the relevance of trust and visual engagement in tourist decision-making.

Table 5. Comparison of Primary and Secondary Data

Aspect	Primary data	Secondary data
Meaning	First-hand data collected for the present study.	Existing data collected earlier and reused for analysis.
Source	Tourist questionnaires and interviews.	Journals, industry reports, and previous studies.
Strength	Specific and current.	Broad and efficient for trend validation.
Limitation	Time-consuming and costlier.	May not fully match local needs.
Role in study	Measures tourist perception directly.	Benchmarks findings with wider market patterns.

This table explains the methodological value of combining both data types.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Plan

Hypothesis	Variables	Suggested test	Expected result
H1	Digital exposure vs tourism demand	Correlation / Regression	Positive
H2	Social/video content vs static content	Mean comparison	Social/video stronger
H3	Review trust vs booking intention	Correlation / Chi-square	Positive
H4	Primary pattern vs secondary trend	Comparative analysis	Broad consistency

This table provides a simple analytical structure for the empirical section of the paper.

Table 7. Mechanisms Linking Digital Marketing to Tourism Demand

Mechanism	Explanation
Destination image	Digital content shapes perceived attractiveness.
Trust formation	Reviews and credible content reduce uncertainty.
Emotional engagement	Stories and visuals create desire to travel.
Risk reduction	Better information lowers perceived travel risk.
Competitiveness	Strong digital presence improves visibility.

This table explains why digital marketing can produce actual tourism demand instead of mere attention.

Table 8. Platform-wise Tourism Marketing Implications

Platform	Strength	Implication
Instagram	Visual storytelling	Strong for inspiration and youth appeal
YouTube	Immersive video	Strong for destination preview
Facebook	Community and sharing	Useful for campaign spread
Influencer channels	Social proof	Useful for niche trust-building
Destination website	Information depth	Important for confidence and booking

This table suggests that tourism organizations should use integrated multi-platform strategies.

Table 9. Illustrative Tourist Opinion on Digital Marketing Outcomes

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Social media increases awareness of destinations	74	16	10
Online reviews affect travel choice	78	12	10
Video content makes destinations more appealing	69	19	12
Influencer content affects travel planning	55	23	22
Official tourism websites build confidence	63	21	16

This showed table provides secondary data concerning the meaning of social and visual content and makes sense for Likert-style preliminary survey reporting.

Table 10. Strategic Recommendations from Combined Evidence

Issue	Evidence base	Recommended action
High dependence on	YouTube and Instagram dominate	Invest in short-form and

visual platforms	digital tourism spend.	experience-based video.
Need for trust signals	Reviews and credibility shape decision-making.	Highlight ratings, testimonials, and verified details.
Multi-platform search behavior	Tourists use several platforms for destination search.	Run coordinated cross-platform campaigns.
Regional growth opportunity	Tier-II and tier-III cities contribute notable impressions.	Use regional targeting and local-language content.
Need for evidence-based marketing	Mixed research strengthens interpretation.	Combine survey feedback with market tracking.

This table converts the research findings into actionable tourism-marketing strategy.

Findings

Based on the report, demand for tourism has a strong positive correlation with digital marketing. Social media, content marketing, reviews, and promotional videos all increase tourists perceived value and destination competitiveness, as determined by secondary data. This is additionally backed up by data from the industry from India, which shows the dominant position of online platforms in tourism advertising.

Furthermore, the comparison indicates that distinct digital tools have distinct impacts on travellers in general. Because they combine knowledge with social proof and appeal to emotion, social media, reviews, and short-form video clips seem to have greater impact than static online material. This lends support to the idea that online experience cues and rational appraisal contribute to tourist demand.

A further finding is that primary and secondary data perform well collectively. While primary data reveals the way tourists understand digital content at the decision-making level, secondary data demonstrates broad trends. This enhances the research design's quality.

Suggestions

Rather than focussing on isolated campaigns, tourism-related businesses ought to focus primarily on integrated digital marketing. A holistic marketing initiative must incorporate video content, online social media engagement, the quality of the corporate website, and review management.

In addition, Indian tourism marketers ought to exercise extra caution to localise their marketing materials. The increase in digital impressions from tier-II and tier-III cities indicates that appropriate cultural message and regional language guidelines may boost effectiveness.

Future field investigations for academic research ought to make use of relevant statistical approaches like regression and correlation as well as a structured questionnaire. This will help with assessing which platform has a significant effect on tourist demand as well as whether digital marketing impacts it at all.

Conclusion

Demand for tourism is currently greatly impacted by digital marketing. Through platforms including social media, video content, reviews, and official websites, it shapes tourist awareness, trust, destination image, and booking intention.

The study is further enhanced by the comparative use of primary and secondary data. While secondary evidence places those responses alongside broader changes in the market, such as India's significant shift toward digital travel advertising, primary data provides direct tourist insight. With all factors considered, the data indicates to the importance of visible, credible, segmented, and data-driven tourism marketing in the age of digital media.

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