

## Developing a Model of Factors Affecting Optimal Digital Marketing Implementation in Tourism Industry Startups

Mahboubeh Nazari<sup>1</sup>, Majid Fattahi<sup>2\*</sup>, Majid Fani<sup>3</sup>

1. PhD Students in Business Management, Sari Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sari, Iran. Email: [Mh.nazari1370@gmail.com](mailto:Mh.nazari1370@gmail.com)
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Business Management, Sari Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sari, Iran (Corresponding Author). Email: [majid.fattahi59@gmail.com](mailto:majid.fattahi59@gmail.com)
3. Assistant Professor, Department of Business Management, Babol Branch, Islamic Azad University, Babol, Iran. Email: [drfani2020@gmail.com](mailto:drfani2020@gmail.com)

**Received:** 16 April 2024

**Revised:** 12 June 2024

**Accepted:** 01 July 2024

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop a model of factors influencing the optimal implementation of digital marketing in startups operating within the tourism industry. The research adopts an applied-developmental approach in terms of its objective and employs a descriptive-survey methodology with a qualitative strategy, utilizing thematic analysis. The participant population consists of theoretical experts (including experienced academic faculty in management and marketing) and practical experts (managers and consultants in tourism organizations). A combination of purposive and snowball sampling methods was used to select participants. The sample size was determined based on theoretical saturation, achieved after conducting semi-structured interviews with 15 experts. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, and the identification of primary and secondary themes for model development was performed using thematic analysis with MAXQDA2020 software. The results indicate that the main themes of the model for factors affecting the optimal implementation of digital marketing in tourism industry startups comprise five key dimensions: experience-driven marketing strategy, tourism-oriented technologies, interaction and trust-building with tourists, human resources and organizational agility, and performance evaluation and competitiveness. These findings provide a comprehensive framework for enhancing digital marketing practices in tourism startups.

**KEYWORDS:** Optimal Digital Marketing Implementation, Startups, Tourism Industry, Thematic Analysis

This is an open access article under the CC BY license.

© 2024 The Authors.

**How to Cite This Article:** Nazari, M; Fattahi, M. ; Fani, M. (2024).“ Developing a Model of Factors Affecting Optimal Digital Marketing Implementation in Tourism Industry Startups”. *The Open Access Journal of Resistive Economics*, 12(3): 1-13.

## 1. Introduction

The growing significance of digital marketing, both in industry and research domains, is undeniable. Numerous studies have been conducted in this field; however, despite extensive efforts in this scientific area, the impact of factors influencing the implementation of digital marketing in the digital marketing landscape has not been fully explored (Mathew & Suleiman, 2020). The classification of various startups based on their experiences in adopting digital marketing has been noted (Alshehhi & Hassan, 2025). Many prior studies have addressed aspects such as customer trust in the digital market, value-based pricing, and personalization for consumer behavior. Some studies have also focused on the implementation of digital marketing through digital technologies (Mathew & Suleiman, 2020). It has been noted in the digital marketing process that greater emphasis has been placed on the content of digital marketing itself, with less attention given to the factors influencing digital marketing (Giacomaki & Krepapa, 2020). Additionally, little attention has been paid to the factors affecting the implementation of digital marketing in tourism industry startups (Genç et al., 2020; Li & Han, 2021).

The implementation of digital marketing has increasingly become a valuable component of digital marketing activities (Santos et al., 2022; Lopez & Casas, 2020), prompting further research in this area. However, a literature review indicates that the extent of these studies is insufficient. While existing research provides valuable insights into the digital marketing process and its impact on consumer behavior in marketing literature, most studies have focused on isolated segments of digital marketing, addressing specific marketing needs or issues (Zaman Fashami et al., 2022). This has resulted in fragmented, unorganized, and sometimes contradictory or outdated knowledge. Consequently, there is limited contribution to developing a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing digital marketing implementation (Baliu & Casas, 2021; Delbaer et al., 2021; Hu et al., 2020). For instance, Osei Frimpong et al. (2022) argue that, given the importance and dynamic nature of digital marketing, the factors affecting its implementation require further investigation. Additionally, a notable gap exists in qualitative studies on digital marketing and its examination within tourism industry startups (Shahbaznejad et al., 2021).

Furthermore, with advancements in information and communication technology, digital tourism marketing has become a key driver of growth and a springboard for tourism businesses. The introduction of digital marketing into the tourism industry has transformed even the smallest details of this sector, from product sales to customer engagement, creating opportunities for organizations and tourism suppliers to promote, sell, and establish long-term relationships with customers through digital channels (Loafan, 2022). Thus, digital marketing has been at the core of many studies. However, there remains a need to clarify the current trends in implementing digital marketing in the tourism industry. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the tourism industry and influenced digital marketing strategies in this sector (Dimitriou et al., 2023).

The current literature, at least from a theoretical perspective, has room for further development, as there is a lack of a comprehensive framework that does not focus solely on one element or segment of the process but instead identifies various factors influencing the implementation of digital content marketing. As mentioned, few studies have explored digital marketing in depth (Zaman Fashami et al., 2022). In Iran, the scarcity of qualitative research tailored to the local context and environment is evident. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the marketing literature and enhance researchers' understanding of the digital marketing framework by identifying the factors affecting the implementation of digital marketing in tourism industry startups. Accordingly, the main research question is formulated as follows: What is the pattern of factors influencing the implementation of digital marketing in tourism industry startups?

## 2. Theoretical Foundations and Research Background

### Digital Marketing

Digital marketing serves as a critical tool in the development of modern businesses, particularly in the tourism industry. Tourism startups, due to the competitive and dynamic nature of this sector, require the adoption of digital marketing strategies to attract customers, enhance brand awareness, and improve market performance (Kotler & Keller, 2016). However, the optimal implementation of digital marketing in these startups faces challenges such as limited resources, lack of specialized expertise, and technological complexities (Chaffey et al., 2018). This section explores the theoretical foundations related to the factors influencing the successful implementation of digital marketing in tourism industry startups and provides a conceptual framework for the topic. Digital marketing refers to a set of activities that utilize digital channels, such as websites, social media, email, and online advertising, to promote products and services (Kotler & Keller, 2016). This form of marketing holds particular significance in the tourism industry due to its ability to deliver interactive, personalized, and targeted content (Li et al., 2020). Based on the Technology Acceptance Model, perceived usefulness and ease of use of digital tools significantly influence the adoption and success of these strategies (Chang, Rosenberg, & Paolo, 2020; Wong & Chan Olmsted, 2020). In tourism startups, digital marketing encompasses activities such as search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, social media advertising, and the use of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and big data analytics (Prentice, Han, Hua, & Hu, 2019; Delbaer, Michael, & Philips, 2021). These activities enable startups to create personalized experiences for tourists and foster customer trust and loyalty by delivering relevant content (Mesbahi Amidabadi et al., 2023).

## Factors Influencing the Optimal Implementation of Digital Marketing

### Technological Infrastructure

Technological infrastructure, including high-speed internet access, advanced digital platforms, and data analytics tools, is a fundamental prerequisite for the successful implementation of digital marketing (Kshetry et al., 2020). Tourism startups lacking adequate technological infrastructure may encounter challenges such as slow processes and an inability to analyze customer behavior effectively. For instance, the use of artificial intelligence-based customer relationship management (CRM) systems can assist startups in identifying customer needs and providing personalized recommendations (Wang et al., 2021).

### Specialized Human Resources

The knowledge and skills of employees in utilizing digital tools play a pivotal role in the success of digital marketing (Chaffey et al., 2018). Tourism startups, often constrained by limited financial resources, frequently face shortages of skilled personnel in areas such as data analytics, content design, and social media management (Behnam, Halbik, Clark, & Farabi, 2021). Training employees and recruiting digital marketing specialists can enhance the performance of digital marketing initiatives.

### Financial Resources

Implementing digital marketing requires investment in technological tools, online advertising, and high-quality content production (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Tourism startups, typically operating under financial constraints, may struggle to allocate sufficient budgets for these activities. However, leveraging cost-effective methods such as social media marketing and user-generated content (UGC) can serve as effective solutions for these startups (Li et al., 2020).

### Organizational Culture

A dynamic and innovative organizational culture can facilitate the adoption of digital technologies (Mathew & Suleiman, 2020). In tourism startups, an organizational culture that emphasizes innovation, flexibility, and collaboration can support the successful implementation of digital marketing strategies. For example, startups that promote a culture of feedback and continuous learning are better equipped to adapt to the rapidly changing tourism market (Lu & Zi, 2021).

## Customer Experience

Customer experience is a critical factor in the success of digital marketing in the tourism industry (Kim & Lee, 2019). Providing personalized content, responding promptly to customer needs, and creating positive experiences on digital platforms can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. For instance, the use of AI-powered chatbots to address customer inquiries can significantly improve the user experience (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Shokri and Rezazadeh (2024) in a study titled *Investigating the Impact of Digital Business Adoption on Tourists' Purchase Intention with the Mediating Role of Digital Trust in the Tourism Industry* stated that the adoption of digital business has a positive and significant impact on digital trust and tourists' purchase intention. Additionally, digital trust positively and significantly influences the purchase intention of tourists in Mazandaran province. Moradi Ziba et al. (2023) in a study titled *Designing a Model of Causes and Consequences in Implementing Digital Marketing Strategies in Successful Iranian Startups Using a Mixed-Methods Approach* indicated that the qualitative analysis identified 241 initial codes, 46 axial codes, and 14 selective codes. The findings revealed that causal conditions, comprising four variables—network capability, application of artificial intelligence, marketing capability, and customer knowledge—impact digital marketing strategies. Confirmatory factor analysis results confirmed the fit indices of the proposed model.

Rahmani et al. (2023) in a study titled *Designing a Native Digital Marketing Model for Small Online Retail Businesses in Iran* identified six categories of factors: causal conditions, contextual factors, strategies, central phenomenon, intervening factors, and consequences. In the context of digital marketing, indicators such as granting customer choice, customer retention, providing services based on customer needs, maintaining positive customer relationships, and creating value were identified. Company competitiveness was recognized as the most significant intervening factor, while economic development and improved service quality were identified as the primary categories of consequences.

Alshehhi and Hassan (2025) in a study titled *Classifying Digital Marketing Adoption Experiences in Startups: Examining Characteristics and Interactions* stated that factors such as experience in digital marketing, allocation of time and budget, and levels of utilization significantly influence this classification. Additionally, the use of websites was identified as a key criterion for distinguishing between early and moderate adopters of digital marketing among Egyptian startups. Erhan et al. (2023) in a study titled *Digital Marketing Innovation and Firm Performance: The Role of Decision-Making Comprehensiveness in Dynamic Environments* found that digital marketing innovation positively impacts firm performance in a pandemic environment. The authors also noted that decision-making comprehensiveness moderates the relationship between digital marketing innovation and firm performance, with notable benefits in stable environments. This study expands the understanding of contextual factors affecting the performance benefits of digital marketing innovation and clarifies the role of decision-making comprehensiveness in enhancing the impact of digital marketing innovation on firm

performance. Furthermore, the authors developed and tested a new digital marketing innovation metric.

The theoretical foundations and research background of this study indicate that the optimal implementation of digital marketing in tourism industry startups depends on multiple factors, including technological infrastructure, specialized human resources, financial resources, organizational culture, and customer experience. These factors, by creating a conducive environment for implementing digital strategies, can contribute to increased brand awareness, customer attraction, and improved market performance. The conceptual framework presented in this section can serve as a foundation for future research and the development of a comprehensive model for implementing digital marketing in tourism startups.

### **3. Research Methodology**

The present study is exploratory in nature and utilizes qualitative data. The objective of this research is to develop a model of factors influencing the optimal implementation of digital marketing in tourism industry startups. The participant population consists of theoretical experts (including experienced university professors in management and marketing) and practical experts (managers and consultants in tourism organizations). A combination of purposive and snowball sampling methods was employed for participant selection. The sample size was determined based on achieving theoretical saturation, meaning interviews with theoretical and practical experts continued until theoretical saturation was reached. This was achieved after conducting semi-structured interviews with 15 experts. The data collection method involved semi-structured interviews. To design the model, the identification of primary and secondary themes was conducted using the thematic analysis technique with MaxQDA 2020 software.

Prior to conducting the interviews, ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining permission to record the interviews, and assurances were provided that the interviewees' identities would remain confidential and undisclosed. On average, each interview lasted approximately two hours. Through the application of thematic analysis, this study aimed to develop and validate a model for the "optimal implementation of digital marketing in tourism industry startups." To ensure construct validity in this qualitative research, the member-checking method was used. Additionally, a search for negative cases and alternative explanations was conducted. Efforts were made to select interviewees with diverse experiences and perspectives to avoid bias stemming from personal inclinations. To achieve internal validity, after coding, categorizing, and analyzing the qualitative data, an empirically derived model was compared with the theoretically predicted model based on the literature.

In qualitative research, since participants are not representative of the broader population, generalizing results to the population is not feasible, and thus, external validity cannot be claimed in this study. To ensure the reliability of the qualitative component and confirm theoretical saturation, the inter-rater agreement correlation matrix and dual-coder chart were utilized, which

will be elaborated further. Data analysis was performed using the qualitative analysis software MaxQDA, version 2020.

#### 4. Findings

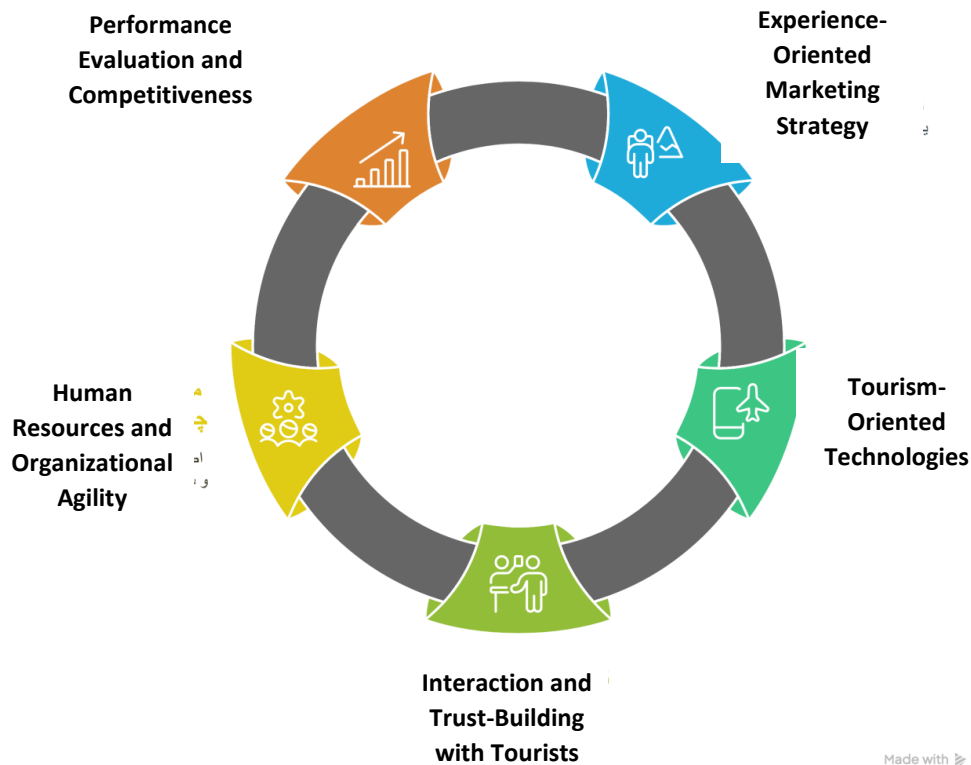
This section addresses the analysis of collected data and the research findings. The data collection tool consisted of semi-structured interview files, and the results were analyzed using the qualitative analysis software MaxQDA, version 2020. Data analysis was conducted based on 16 interview files. The analysis process involved three stages: open coding, coding of sub-themes, and coding of main themes, leading to the extraction of primary and secondary themes. These three stages are illustrated in detail in Figure 1. Ultimately, a model titled “Factors Influencing the Optimal Implementation of Digital Marketing in Tourism Industry Startups” was developed for this study. The coding stages are described as follows:

1. **Open Coding:** In this stage, interview files were collected and categorized by the researcher. Notably, 15 interview files were collected and coded in this study.
2. **Sub-Themes:** Sub-theme coding occurs when the researcher assigns a code to each paragraph or section of the text after review. At this stage, multiple codes may be assigned to a single paragraph or text segment.
3. **Main Themes:** In this stage, the extracted codes are displayed in the Code System window, allowing for categorization and merging of codes. This window represents selective coding (main themes), where codes are used to categorize, organize, and arrange them for classification and visualization in a diagram.

The main themes (initial pre-organizing themes or dimensions) of the model for factors influencing the optimal implementation of digital marketing in tourism industry startups are as follows:

- **Main Theme 1:** Experience-Oriented Marketing Strategy
- **Main Theme 2:** Tourism-Oriented Technologies
- **Main Theme 3:** Interaction and Trust-Building with Tourists
- **Main Theme 4:** Human Resources and Organizational Agility
- **Main Theme 5:** Performance Evaluation and Competitiveness

Thus, the thematic network of the model for factors influencing the optimal implementation of digital marketing in tourism industry startups is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Thematic Network of the Model for Factors Influencing the Optimal Implementation of Digital Marketing in Tourism Industry Startups

One of the reliability indicators in qualitative research is the evaluation of two or more documents in terms of their reference to a specific indicator. The MaxQDA software is equipped with this capability. The reliability coefficient can be calculated using one or more tests, and these tests can be applied at a single point in time or across multiple instances.

For each of the selected themes in this study, the level of agreement among interviewees is presented in Table 4-8, with an acceptable threshold of above 60%. Specifically, the intersection of the row and column for each interviewee with themselves is naturally 1 (100%). To assess agreement, the column of a given interviewee is compared with those of other interviewees. For example, Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 2 have an agreement level of 0.71 (71%) for a selected theme. This indicates that Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 2 share 71% commonality on the selected theme. The same approach can be applied to interpret other rows and columns. Given that the agreement levels among interviewees exceed 60%, it can be concluded that theoretical saturation has been achieved.

**Table 1:** Correlation Matrix of Interviewees for Themes

Interviewees	Res01	Res02	Res03	Res04	Res05	Res06	Res07	Res08	Res09	Res10	Res11	Res12	Res13	Res14	Res15
Res01	1.00	0.76	0.60	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.64	0.61	0.64	0.63	0.69	0.69	0.68	0.74
Res02	0.76	1.00	0.64	0.61	0.61	0.64	0.64	0.63	0.63	0.60	0.64	0.77	0.77	0.76	0.73
Res03	0.60	0.64	1.00	0.68	0.65	0.68	0.77	0.61	0.69	0.66	0.63	0.66	0.66	0.68	0.64
Res04	0.63	0.61	0.68	1.00	0.65	0.63	0.63	0.64	0.66	0.61	0.65	0.66	0.66	0.68	0.64
Res05	0.63	0.61	0.65	0.65	1.00	0.63	0.63	0.64	0.69	0.66	0.63	0.76	0.76	0.77	0.64
Res06	0.63	0.64	0.68	0.63	0.63	1.00	0.75	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.73	0.71	0.71	0.70	0.79
Res07	0.63	0.64	0.77	0.63	0.63	0.75	1.00	0.81	0.71	0.79	0.63	0.74	0.74	0.73	0.66
Res08	0.64	0.63	0.61	0.64	0.64	0.76	0.81	1.00	0.77	0.77	0.79	0.77	0.77	0.76	0.73
Res09	0.61	0.63	0.69	0.66	0.69	0.76	0.71	0.77	1.00	0.93	0.79	0.65	0.65	0.66	0.77
Res10	0.64	0.60	0.66	0.61	0.66	0.76	0.79	0.77	0.93	1.00	0.79	0.68	0.68	0.69	0.60
Res11	0.63	0.64	0.63	0.65	0.63	0.73	0.63	0.79	0.79	0.79	1.00	0.69	0.69	0.68	0.66
Res12	0.69	0.77	0.66	0.66	0.76	0.71	0.74	0.77	0.65	0.68	0.69	1.00	0.72	0.99	0.73
Res13	0.69	0.77	0.66	0.66	0.76	0.71	0.74	0.77	0.65	0.68	0.69	0.72	1.00	0.69	0.73
Res14	0.68	0.76	0.68	0.68	0.77	0.70	0.73	0.76	0.66	0.69	0.68	0.99	0.69	1.00	0.71
Res15	0.74	0.73	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.79	0.66	0.73	0.77	0.60	0.66	0.73	0.73	0.71	1.00

### Analysis of Extracted Codes and Code Cloud

The extracted codes for two interview files, Respon15 and Respon1, were visualized. Based on the diagram, the codes positioned in the center, connected by bidirectional arrows, represent the codes that are common between the two interviewees (Respon15 and Respon1), indicating that both individuals referenced these codes. Codes located on the right side are those exclusively mentioned by Interviewee 15 and not by Interviewee 1. Conversely, codes on the left side are those referenced solely by Interviewee 1. Additionally, each arrow in the diagram is accompanied by a value reported by the software, indicating the frequency of occurrence of that code within the coded segments. According to the model, Interviewee 15 agrees with Interviewee 1 on 74% of the codes, confirming that theoretical saturation has been achieved.

One of the key tools in MaxQDA software is the Code Cloud. Based on the findings, among the extracted codes, the highest frequencies are associated with the following: the number of digital touchpoints, booking rates during low-demand periods, variety of rewards, number of tailored campaigns, level of personalization of offers, and alignment of content with various stages of the customer journey. In the hierarchy of these factors, the number of digital touchpoints forms the core of the pyramid, while the variety of rewards and the number of tailored campaigns are at the apex. The alignment of content with various stages of the customer journey is at the base of the pyramid, and the booking rates during low-demand periods and targeted campaigns are positioned on the sides of the pyramid within the model of factors influencing the optimal implementation of digital marketing in tourism industry startups.

## 5. Conclusion

The results of this study identify five main themes in the model of factors influencing the optimal implementation of digital marketing in tourism industry startups: experience-oriented marketing strategy, tourism-oriented technologies, interaction and trust-building with tourists, human resources and organizational agility, and performance evaluation and competitiveness. These themes are recognized as the core pillars of success for tourism startups leveraging digital marketing and align with existing literature.

**Experience-Oriented Marketing Strategy:** This theme emphasizes creating personalized and engaging experiences for tourists. This finding is consistent with Li et al. (2020), who demonstrated that interactive and personalized content on social media can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. Tourism startups focusing on compelling visual content, storytelling, and digital experiences can foster stronger emotional connections with customers. However, implementing this strategy requires a deep understanding of tourists' needs and preferences, which may pose challenges for early-stage startups with limited resources.

**Tourism-Oriented Technologies:** Technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and augmented reality play a pivotal role in enhancing the effectiveness of digital marketing. This aligns with Dwivedi et al. (2021), who highlighted the importance of innovative technologies in delivering personalized experiences. For instance, smart chatbots for addressing tourist inquiries or augmented reality applications for showcasing tourism attractions can improve user experiences. However, infrastructural limitations and high implementation costs may hinder startups from fully leveraging these technologies (Kshetry et al., 2020).

**Interaction and Trust-Building with Tourists:** Two-way communication and credible content are critical for successful digital marketing. This finding aligns with Wang et al. (2021), who showed that online interactions can strengthen brand attachment. Tourism startups that utilize customer feedback to improve services and provide transparent, trustworthy content can build tourist trust. Nevertheless, managing negative feedback and ensuring customer privacy remain significant challenges in this domain.

**Human Resources and Organizational Agility:** Specialized human resources and organizational agility are essential prerequisites for successful digital marketing implementation. This is consistent with Chaffey et al. (2018), who emphasized the importance of employee skills in using digital tools. Tourism startups with skilled teams and flexible organizational cultures are better equipped to adapt to rapid market changes. However, a shortage of specialized personnel and financial constraints in hiring such talent can impede progress (Afshari & Rezaei, 2020).

**Performance Evaluation and Competitiveness:** Measuring performance through key performance indicators (KPIs) such as conversion rates, online engagement, and return on investment (ROI) is vital. This finding aligns with Kim et al. (2019), who indicated that continuous performance evaluation can enhance marketing strategies. Tourism startups leveraging data analytics tools to monitor performance can achieve a sustainable competitive

advantage. However, a lack of expertise in data analysis may complicate this process for smaller startups.

These themes operate cohesively, and the success of digital marketing in tourism startups depends on their integration. Financial constraints, a shortage of skilled personnel, and inadequate infrastructure are major challenges that must be considered when designing digital marketing models.

The findings underscore the importance of investing in innovative technologies, training human resources, and creating customer-centric experiences. Additionally, the role of agile organizational culture and continuous performance evaluation is critical for digital marketing success. This study enriches the digital marketing literature in the tourism industry and provides a comprehensive framework for future research.

### **Recommendations:**

- Tourism startups should focus on producing personalized content, storytelling, and engaging visual media to create memorable customer experiences.
- Leveraging technologies such as AI, chatbots, and augmented reality is recommended to enhance user experiences and deliver innovative services.
- Startups should strengthen trust-building by promptly responding to feedback, providing credible content, and prioritizing customer privacy.
- Training programs for employees in data analysis, social media management, and digital tools are essential.
- Utilizing data analytics tools to evaluate performance metrics such as conversion rates and online engagement will help startups refine their strategies.

In summary, this study demonstrates that the optimal implementation of digital marketing in tourism industry startups relies on five key themes: experience-oriented marketing strategy, tourism-oriented technologies, interaction and trust-building with tourists, human resources and organizational agility, and performance evaluation and competitiveness. These themes are critical success factors, highlighting the importance of integrating digital strategies with the specific needs of the tourism industry. Startups that effectively manage these factors can enhance brand awareness, customer satisfaction, and market competitiveness.

### **Future Research Directions:**

- Future studies could explore the impact of contextual factors such as startup size, type of tourism services, and organizational culture on digital marketing implementation.
- Investigating the influence of specific technologies, such as generative AI or blockchain, on digital marketing in tourism startups is recommended.
- Comparative studies across tourism startups in different countries to identify cultural and economic differences in digital marketing implementation are suggested.

## References

- Afshari, M., & Rezaei, S. (2020). The impact of digital marketing on customer satisfaction and loyalty in Iranian e-commerce platforms. *Journal of Business Research*, 125, 89-102.
- Balio, S., & Casais, B. (2021). A content marketing framework to analyze customer engagement on social media. In *Research Anthology on Strategies for Using Social Media as a Service and Tool in Business* (pp. 320–336). IGI Global.
- Chaffey, D., Ellis-Chadwick, F., & Mayer, R. (2018). *Digital marketing: Strategy, implementation and practice* (7th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Cheung, M. L., Rosenberger, P. J., & Paulo, S. (2020). *Driving consumer – brand engagement and co-creation by brand interactivity*. 38(4), 523–541. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-12-2018-0587>
- Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 13(3), 319-340.
- Delbaere, M., Michael, B., & Phillips, B. J. (2021). Social media influencers: A route to brand engagement for their followers. *Psychology and Marketing*, 38(1), 101–112.
- Dimitrios, Belias Rossidis Ioannis, Ntalakos Angelos, Trihas Nikolaos,(2023) Digital Marketing: The Case of Digital Marketing Strategies on Luxurious Hotels, *Procedia Computer Science*, 219, 688-696.
- Dwivedi, Y. K., Hughes, L., & Wang, Y. (2021). Artificial intelligence-driven personalization in digital marketing: Opportunities and challenges. *European Journal of Marketing*, 57(4), 987-1012.
- El-Shihy, D., Hassan, N. (2025) Classification of start-ups' digital marketing adoption experiences: an investigation of characteristics and interactions. *Futur Bus J* 11, 36. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43093-025-00467-0>
- Erhan, T.P., van Doorn, S., Japutra, A. and Ekaputra, I.A. (2023), "Digital marketing innovation and firm performance: the role of decision-making comprehensiveness in dynamic environments", *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-01-2023-0097>
- Geng, R., Wang, S., Chen, X., Song, D., & Yu, J. (2020). Content marketing in e-commerce platforms in the internet celebrity economy. *Industrial Management and Data Systems*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMDS-05-2019-0270>

Giakoumaki, C., & Krepapa, A. (2020). Brand engagement in self\_concept and consumer engagement in social media: The role of the source. *Psychology & Marketing*, 37(3), 457–465.

Ho, J., Pang, C., & Choy, C. (2020). Content marketing capability building: a conceptual framework. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 14(1), 133–151. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-06-2018-0082>

Kim, J., Lee, J., & Han, K. (2019). The role of perceived value in the relationship between online advertising and customer loyalty. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 50, 234-243.

Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management* (15th ed.). Pearson Education.

Kshetri, N., Voithofer, P., & Alcantara, L. (2020). Digital infrastructure and entrepreneurial activity in the tourism industry. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, 14, e00192.

Li, S., Zhang, J., & Chen, L. (2020). Digital marketing and customer loyalty: The mediating role of customer experience. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 19(4), 345-356.

Li, D., & Han, X. (2021). Assessing the influence of goal pursuit and emotional attachment on customer engagement behaviors. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 59, 102355.

Loafan, A. (2022). Identifying and Evaluating the Effectiveness of Factors Influencing Marketing in Tourism Industry Organizations. *International Conference on Management and Humanities Research in Iran*.

Lopes, A. R., Porto, I., & Casais, B. (2022). Digital Content marketing: conceptual review and recommendations for practitioners. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*, 21(2).

Mathew, V., & Soliman, M. (2020). Does digital content marketing affect tourism consumer behavior? An extension of technology acceptance model. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, June, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1854>

Mesbahi Amidabadi, B., Karimi, O., & Hashemnia, S. (2023). Designing a Digital Marketing Model for the Brand of Online Commercial Companies. *Marketing Management*, 18(59), 129–151.

Moradi Ziba, S., Abbasi, J., Radfar, R., & Abdolvand, M. A. (2023). Designing a Model of Causes and Consequences in Implementing Digital Marketing Strategies in Successful Iranian Startups Using a Mixed-Methods Approach. *Value Creation in Business Management Quarterly*, 3(3), 12–33.

Osei-Frimpong, K., McLean, G., Islam, N., & Otoo, B. A. (2022). What drives me there? The interplay of socio-psychological gratification and consumer values in social media brand engagement. *Journal of Business Research*, 146, 288–307.

Prentice, C., Han, X. Y., Hua, L.-L., & Hu, L. (2019). The influence of identity-driven customer engagement on purchase intention. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 47, 339–347.

Rahmani, N., Vahabzadeh Monshi, S., & Mehrani, H. (2023). Designing a Native Digital Marketing Model for Small Online Retail Businesses in Iran. *Entrepreneurship Development Quarterly*, 16(1), 109–120.

Santos, O. N., Santos, M. S., Dragas, C. D., & Posadas, M. A. (2022). Effective Digital Marketing Strategies Used by MSMEs in NCR Under New Normal. *Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 4(1), 124–130.

Shahbaznezhad, H., Dolan, R., & Rashidirad, M. (2021). The role of social media content format and platform in Users' engagement behavior. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 53, 47–65.

Shokri, Y., & Rezaadeh, F. (2024). Investigating the Impact of Digital Business Adoption on Tourists' Purchase Intention with the Mediating Role of Digital Trust in the Tourism Industry of Mazandaran Province. *Studies in Management, Economics, and Entrepreneurship*, 4(2), 14–31.

Wang, Y., Zhang, Z., & Li, H. (2021). The impact of digital marketing on customer engagement and loyalty. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 37(9-10), 876-895.

Zaman Fashami, R., Haghghi Nasab, M., Seyedamiri, N., & Ahadi, P. (2022). Identifying the Factors of Digital Content Marketing Affecting Consumer Engagement with the Brand: A Bibliometric Approach. *Business Management*, 14(4), 573–601.

#### COPYRIGHTS

© 2025 The Author(s). This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, as long as the original authors and source are cited. No permission is required from the authors or the publishers.



#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The current study has not received any grant, fund or contribution from private or government institutions. Also, the authors declare that there is no conflict of interests

#### ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Authenticity of the texts, honesty and fidelity has been observed.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Author/s confirmed no conflict of interest.