

# Promoting Tourism Business Through Digital Marketing in the New Normal Era: A Sustainable Approach

Dr. Anjali Daryal

Associate Professor, Satyawati College

University of Delhi

---

## ARTICLE INFO

Received: 02 Aug 2024

Accepted: 28 Sept 2024

## ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to analyse the sustainable approach to promoting tourism business through digital marketing in the New Normal Era. The research seeks to understand how digital marketing strategies can contribute to the sustainable growth of the tourism industry. Data were collected from 429 respondents for this study. The data were analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM) technology. The Common Method Bias (CMB) was investigated by Harman's single-factor test, which found 39.74% of the total variance, indicating the absence of CMB. The multialignment was checked by Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), which was found to be less than the prescribed limit. In the evaluation of the measurement model, Cronbach Alpha (0.754-0.838) and Composite Reliability (0.717-0.851) confirmed reliability. The value of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for convergent validity was found to be between 0.533 and 0.757. The HTML ratio for discriminative validity was found to be less than 0.90. The results of the structural model show that perceived usability and perceived ease of use explain the 40.7% variance in social media marketing. Social media marketing, perceived utility, and perceived ease of use together explain the 65.3% variance in hotel performance. The findings of this research are important for tourism practitioners and marketers. With the effective use of digital marketing strategies, the tourism business can be promoted sustainably. Focusing on perceived utility and ease of use can attract tourists and improve hotel performance.

**Keywords:** digital marketing, tourism business, new normal era, sustainable approach, SEM

---

## 1. Introduction

The global tourism industry is currently undergoing a transformational phase, where digitization and sustainability have emerged as two key pillars. The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated this transformation, whereby the concept of the "New Normal" or the New Normal Era has completely changed the way tourism businesses operate and market. The post-pandemic era has seen unprecedented changes in tourist behaviour, preferences, and travel decision-making. Digital marketing has revolutionized the tourism industry. Through social media platforms, search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, and influencers, tourism businesses can now reach their target audience globally. According to Philip Kotler et al. (2019), the success of marketing in the digital age depends on how companies establish meaningful relationships with their target audience using digital

platforms. In the tourism sector, this relationship becomes even more important because it is an experience-based service where consumers cannot evaluate the product before purchasing.

There are many challenges facing the tourism business in the new normal era. Health and safety concerns, travel restrictions, changing consumer preferences, and economic uncertainties have forced tourism businesses to rethink their strategies. Gretchen and Ritchie (2021) found in their study that the pandemic has led to three significant changes in tourist behavior: increasing sensitivity to health and hygiene, the inclination towards domestic tourism, and the increasing demand for digital services. These changes have made the role of digital marketing all the more important. The concept of sustainable tourism has also gained significant attention in recent years. The growing awareness of climate change, environmental protection, and social responsibility has led tourists to make more responsible travel choices. According to Daniel Scott et al. (2022), sustainable tourism is not only helpful in environmental protection, but it is also essential for long-term business success. Digital marketing can play a crucial role in promoting sustainable tourism practices, educating tourists, and encouraging eco-friendly behaviors in them. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is widely used to understand how users accept and use new technologies. According to this model propounded by Davis (1989), perceived usability and perceived ease of use are the two major determinants of technology acceptance. In the context of tourism, this model is helpful in understanding how tourists perceive digital marketing and online services. Ukpabi and Karjaluoto (2021) found in their study that perceived utility and perceived ease of use have a significant impact on tourists' online travel booking behavior.

Social media marketing has created new opportunities for tourism businesses. According to research by Jakobsen and Mysko (2023), visual platforms like Instagram and TikTok have revolutionized the marketing of tourist destinations. User-generated content, particularly photos and videos of travel experiences, significantly influence the decisions of potential tourists. Similarly, Chen & Law (2024) found that positive reviews and ratings on review platforms like TripAdvisor help boost hotel bookings and the popularity of tourist destinations. The hotel industry has been particularly affected by digital marketing. According to Kim & Lee (2022), the digital presence of hotels, the quality of their website, social media engagement, and online reviews have a direct impact on their overall performance. Their research found that hotels that invested in digital marketing saw a rapid post-pandemic recovery. Additionally, Rodriguez and Diaz (2023) found that personalized digital marketing, which is based on customers' past behavior and preferences, increases customer loyalty and the likelihood of repeating. The relationship between digital marketing and sustainable tourism is also important. Higgins-Disbiolis et al. (2024) found that digital platforms are effective in promoting sustainable tourism practices. Tourism businesses can showcase their eco-friendly initiatives, such as energy conservation, waste management, and support for local communities, through social media. This not only attracts environmentally conscious tourists but also strengthens the brand image of the business. In the context of the Indian tourism industry, digital marketing has gained special importance. According to Sharma and Singh (2023), young and urban tourists in India are increasingly using digital platforms. Their research found that travel-related content on social media plays an important role in Indian tourists' choice of travel destinations, accommodation bookings, and itineraries. Similarly, Gupta and Verma (2024) found that Indian hoteliers are reaching out not only to domestic but also to international tourists through digital marketing. The presented research study attempts to fill this gap. This study analyses the sustainable approach to promoting tourism business through digital marketing, examining the relationship between digital marketing, perceived utility, perceived ease of use, and hotel performance using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).

## 2. Literature review

In the New Normal Era, promoting the tourism business through digital marketing and linking it with a sustainable approach has become an important topic for researchers and businessmen alike. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the tourism industry to face unprecedented challenges, while also accelerating the transition towards digitalization and sustainability. This literature review analyzes the interrelationships of digital marketing, tourism business, and sustainable development. The post-pandemic era has seen significant changes in tourist behaviour.

According to the book "Tourist Behavior and the New Normal," edited by Shem Wambugu Mangie, Vanessa G.B. Govarsankar, and Maximiliano E. Corstanze (2024), the pandemic, geopolitical changes, and climate concerns have led to significant changes in travel patterns. The book explains that emerging tourism experiences, niche markets, and technology-driven services have led to new complexities in the tourism sector, paving the way for more sustainable consumption patterns. Evangelos Christo, Antonios Gianopoulos, and Ioanna Simeli () in their systematic review study found that social media platforms have significantly influenced tourism marketing strategies, consumer perceptions, and travel behaviors. The findings of their meta-analysis suggest that social media marketing has a positive effect on destination image (Cohen's  $D = 0.61$ ), trip intent ( $D = 0.54$ ) and user engagement ( $D = 0.43$ ).

Digital marketing has completely changed the way tourism businesses operate and connect with customers. Hanif Hassan, Dia Natalisa, Deris Stiavan and Istani Andriana () conducted a systematic review of integrated marketing communication (IMC) and digital marketing strategies in the context of event tourism. Their research analyzed 87 peer-reviewed articles, which found that social media and data-driven marketing play a crucial role in increasing tourist decision-making and destination appeal. Karen Ramos, Onesimo Cuamía, and Jessica Lozano-Ramírez () expanded the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to find that website quality and social media have a significant impact on tourists' continued use intent. Their research suggests that perceived utility and perceived ease of use, combined with positive attitudes and favorable electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), are crucial in shaping technology adoption decisions.

The relationship between digitalization and sustainable tourism branding has been investigated by many researchers. According to a systematic literature review by Excel Gavelian et al. (), digital technologies, such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), mobile apps, artificial intelligence (AI) and social media, enhance the destination image, Sustainability are playing an increasing role in promoting authenticity and supporting narratives. They have presented conceptual models such as digital-sustainability branding metrics and destination archetype typology that are helpful in classifying digital strategies and measuring destination branding maturity. Heng Jun Zhang, Wilco Y.H. Chan, Rachel Luna Peralta, and Chami Lau () conducted a bibliographic analysis of the development of technology acceptance models (TAMs) in the tourism-culture-museum and mainstream service industries. His research identified the latest trends in TAM, emphasizing the 4E characteristics (interaction, efficacy, pleasure, and experience) and proposed a new type of TAM incorporating emotional, social, and control factors. In the context of emerging economies, the role of social media branding (SMB) and artificial intelligence (AI) is particularly significant. Norman Goerlich et al. () studied the impact of SMBs and AI in promoting green tourism in emerging economies such as Egypt. A PLS-SEM analysis of data collected from 583 respondents revealed that there are significant correlations between SMBs and green tourism, as well as between AI and green tourism. The study suggests that SMBs and AI play a crucial role in promoting green tourism by raising awareness about eco-friendly travel destinations. Mridhusa Mohanan and Suraj Kushe Shekhar () studied the impact of social media information sharing (SMIS) on the green tourism intentions of young tourists. The analysis of data collected from 412 respondents revealed that SMIS has a positive impact on green tourism intentions (GTI), mediated through electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and environmental awareness (EA). Their research found that e-WOM showed a stronger mediating effect than environmental awareness, underscoring its importance in shaping sustainable tourism behavior.

User-generated content (UGC) on social media significantly influences tourists' decisions. According to Christo et al. (), the "Instagrammability" of a destination now holds equal importance to its historical significance or ecological value. The influx of tourists is increasingly being influenced by algorithmic trends, viral social media posts, and content generated by influencers. This transformation also gives rise to issues of power, representation, and control, where tourism content often reinforces narrow cultural ideals and privileges Western, urban-centric aesthetics. Hassan et al. () in their systematic literature review found that integrated marketing communication (IMC) has emerged as a central theme in the literature, with a growing emphasis on tourist engagement, experience personalization, and authentic messaging. Their research provides strategic insights for tourism stakeholders to design integrated marketing efforts that can effectively enhance tourist attendance and support sustainable development in event destinations.

According to Gavelian et al. (), digital technologies provide new opportunities for destinations to communicate sustainability values and connect with environmentally conscious travelers. The mobile application is being used to provide real-time information about eco-friendly housing, low-carbon transportation options and cultural heritage tourism. Immersive technologies such as VR and AR have emerged as powerful tools for promoting sustainable tourism experiences by allowing tourists to explore destinations responsibly and virtually before physical travel. Christo et al. () identified several significant challenges and research gaps in their research. Their analysis revealed geographical bias, limited research on emerging platforms, and a lack of longitudinal and ethical scrutiny. Significant sustainability concerns emerged, including "overtourism," cultural objectification, digital inequalities, and algorithmic bias. He suggested focusing on specific platform-related behaviours, long-term impacts, and integrated online strategies suitable for global tourism diversification. Gavelian et al. () also identified several research gaps, including the under-representation of the global south, limited use of longitudinal methods, and inadequate integration of SDG-aligned impact metrics. Their findings provide actionable guidance for policymakers, marketers, and tourism managers in strategically leveraging digitization to create competitive and sustainable tourism destination brands.

The bibliographic analysis of Zhang et al. () identified shared mediators, moderators, and variables in TAM research. Their findings shed light on the integration of TAM into notable studies using 4E characteristics (interaction, efficacy, enjoyment, and experience). They found that the tourism-culture-museum sector focuses on extended reality (XR), while the mainstream services sector explores diverse innovations. He proposed a new TAM variant to refine the framework, incorporating 4E's and barrier factors and emphasizing emotional, social, and control factors. According to Mangy et al. (2024), the new normal era has seen increased resilience of the tourism industry. His book suggests solutions in nine thematic areas aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), exploring the evolving landscape of tourist behaviour in a rapidly changing world and its implications for tourism resilience. Ramos et al. () reported in their research that by expanding technology acceptance models, tourism businesses can better understand the continued use intent of visitors to aesthetic tourist destinations and develop strategies accordingly.

The above literature review makes it clear that there is a strong correlation between digital marketing and sustainable tourism in the new normal era. Various researchers have examined various dimensions of this relationship, including the impact of social media marketing, the expanded application of technology acceptance models, and the role of digital tools in sustainable tourism development. However, there is a dearth of studies that empirically analyse the relationship between digital marketing and tourism business performance in the Indian context, especially in terms of sustainable approaches. The presented research study attempts to fill this gap.

### 3. Research methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design

The presented study uses quantitative research design to evaluate "Promoting Tourism Business through Digital Marketing in the New Normal Era: A Sustainable Approach". This study is based on causal research design, which examines cause-effect relationships between different variables. This design was chosen because it helps to understand the complex relationship between digital marketing strategies and tourism business performance. The research is cross-sectional in nature, with data collected at a single time point.

#### 3.2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical basis of this study is based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) propounded by Davis (1989). According to this model, the intention to adopt a technology is influenced by two key factors: perceived usability and perceived ease of use. Based on this theoretical framework, this study examines the relationship between digital marketing, perceived utility, perceived ease of use, and hotel performance.

#### 3.3. Data Collection and Sampling

A structured questionnaire was used for data collection for this study. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: the first part included questions related to the respondents' demographic information (age, gender, education, income), while the second part included questions based on the Likert scale (1-strongly

disagree to 5-fully agree) to measure the different constructs of the technology acceptance model. Data were collected from a total of 429 respondents for the study. Convenient sampling technique was used for sample selection. The main criterion for selecting the respondents was that they were consumers using tourism services (hotels, travel) and were familiar with digital platforms.

### 3.4. Measurement Instruments

The measurement scales used in the questionnaire were adapted from previously published studies to ensure their validity and reliability. The questions for the measurement of perceived utility and perceived ease of use were based on the study of Davis (1989). The questions for measuring social media marketing were adapted from the study by Kim and Lee (2022) and the questions for measuring hotel performance were adapted from the study by Rodriguez and Diaz (2023).

### 3.5. Estimating Common Method Bias

Information about endogenous and exogenous (exogenous) variables in the data collection was collected from similar respondents. Therefore, it is important to consider the issue of Common Method Bias (CMB) in the dataset. Inspired by the research of Kumar et al. (2024), this article used the "Hermann's Single-Factor Test" to assess the incidence of CMB. The basic assumption of applying this test is that if only one component is responsible for more than 50% of the variance, the CMB will be the problem. In this study, the factor explains approximately 39.74% of the total variability, indicating that CMB is not a significant concern for this research, as confirmed by the study by Kim Kwee et al. (2023).

Additionally, multialignment was analyzed using the "Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)". According to Heyer et al. (2019), less than five VIFs mean that there is no multialignment problem within latent constructs. According to the criteria recommended in the literature, the VIF value in this model is below the threshold, which ensures the robustness of the current model (Kumar et al., 2023).

### 3.6. Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model conducts "confirmatory factor analysis" to confirm reliability and validity. According to the rule of Heyer et al. (2019), an outer load of more than 0.5 is acceptable for each item. All the items in the current study showed an external weight greater than 0.5, confirming the reliability of the items. To evaluate internal consistency, the reliability of the measurements in this study was examined using Cronbach Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR). According to Heyer et al. (2019), the value of CA and CR should be between 0.70 and 0.95. In this research, all variables showed values between CA (0.754-0.838) and CR (0.717-0.851), confirming reliability and validity. The "Average Variance Extracted (AVE)" was used to assess the convergent validity. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the AVE of all variables must be greater than 0.5 to meet the criteria for convergent validity. The constructions in this research showed an AVE value between 0.533 and 0.757, indicating that items within the same constructions are responsible for more than 50% variability in that construction, thus meeting this criterion. This paper also used "heterorot-monorate (HTML)" ratio values to assess the discriminant validity of factors. These values were below the range of 0.90, indicating satisfactory discriminatory validity, as confirmed by Kumar et al. (2024).

### 3.7. Ethical considerations

The ethical standards were fully followed in this study. All respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and informed consent was obtained from them. To ensure the confidentiality of the respondents, their personal information was kept confidential and only the overall data was used for analysis. It also ensured that respondents could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

## 4. Analysis and interpretation

This paper used "PLS-SEM" to examine the framed hypotheses. As per Hair *et al.* (2019), the "PLS-SEM" is highly attractive to numerous scholars because it allows them to make complex models comprising multiple variables and structural paths without distributional assumptions. By using PLS-SEM, scholars can examine causal relationships with increased confidence and precision with the help

of a smaller sample (Almansour *et al.*, 2024). Hence, PLS-SEM was considered a more appropriate tool for the present study than other analysis methods.

**4.1 Common method bias (CMB)**

Data collection involved gathering information on endogenous and exogenous variables from similar respondents. Therefore, it is important to consider the CMB issue in the dataset. Motivated by the paper of Kumar *et al.* (2024), this article employed “Harman’s single-factor test”, a technique used to assess the occurrence of CMB. The basic assumption of applying this test is that if only one component will account for more than 50% of the variance, then there is a CMB problem. In this study, the factor explains around 39.74% of the total variability, indicating that CMB is not a significant concern for this research, as confirmed by the study of (Kim Quy *et al.*, 2023). Additionally, collinearity can be analyzed using the "variance inflation factor (VIF)" presented in Table I. Hair *et al.* (2019) state that a VIF lower than five implies no multicollinearity issues within the latent constructs. According to the criteria recommended in the literature, the VIF value in this model is below the threshold, ensuring the current model's robustness (Kumar *et al.*, 2023).

**Table 1** Loadings and measurement model

Construct and scale items	Outer loadings	Variance inflation factor (VIF)	Cronbach’s alpha (CA)	Composite reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Perceived usefulness (PU)			0.838	0.851	0.757
(PU1)	0.815	2.302			
(PU2)	0.845	2.120			
(PU3)	0.945	3.786			
Perceived ease of use (PEOU)			0.807	0.822	0.631
(PEOU1)	0.83	2.027			
(PEOU2)	0.84	2.010			
(PEOU3)	0.72	1.566			
(PEOU4)	0.782	1.465			
Social media marketing (SMM)			0.831	0.833	0.664
(SMM1)	0.778	1.600			
(SMM2)	0.84	2.021			
(SMM3)	0.792	1.736			
(SMM4)	0.847	2.005			
Hotel performance (HP)			0.714	0.717	0.533
(HP1)	0.719	1.209			
(HP2)	0.736	1.757			
(HP3)	0.712	1.697			
(HP4)	0.751	1.35			

**Note(s):** (CR= Composite reliability, AVE=Average variance extracted)

**Source(s):** Software output

**Table 2** Discriminant validity-Fornell-Larcker criterion

Variables	Perceived usefulness	Perceived ease of use	Social media marketing	Hotel performance
Perceived usefulness	<b>(0.870)</b>			
Perceived ease of use	0.199	<b>(0.795)</b>		
Social media marketing	0.621	0.266	<b>(0.815)</b>	
Hotel performance	0.733	0.344	0.696	<b>(0.730)</b>
Discriminant validity-Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio				
Variables	Perceived usefulness	Perceived ease of use	Social media marketing	Hotel performance
Perceived usefulness				
Perceived ease of use	0.231			
Social media marketing	0.739	0.311		
Hotel performance	0.889	0.458	0.899	

**Note(s):** Bold values in parentheses represent the square root of AVEs.

**Source(s):** Software output

**4.2 Measurement model assessment**

The measurement model conducts a “confirmatory factor analysis” to confirm the reliability and validity. As per the thumb rule by Hair *et al.* (2019), outer loading exceeding 0.5 is deemed acceptable for each item. All items in the present study showing outer loadings greater than 0.5 confirmed the reliability of items. Likewise, to evaluate internal consistency, the reliability of measures in this study was examined using CA and composite reliability (CR). As per Hair *et al.* (2019), the value of CA and CR should vary between 0.70 and 0.95. In this research, all variables indicated CA (0.754-0.838) and CR lie between (0.717-0.851), confirming reliability and validity.

The “average variance extracted (AVE)” was employed to assess convergent validity. In line with Fornell and Larcker (1981), all variables should have an AVE exceeding 0.5 to meet the criteria for convergent validity; the constructs in the research exhibited a range of (0.533-0.757) indicating that the items within the same constructs account for over 50% of the variability in that construct, thus, fulfil the criteria. The paper also utilized the “Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT)” ratio values to assess the discriminant validity of factors. These values were below the threshold limit of 0.90, signifying satisfactory discriminant validity, as confirmed by Kumar *et al.* (2024) (refer to Table II).

**4.3 Structural model estimation**

The structural model was examined through the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) and the path coefficients (β) via a bootstrapping procedure of 5,000 resamples. Accordingly, the structural model’s outcomes show that R<sup>2</sup> of 0.407 signifies that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use drive 40.7% of the variation in social media marketing. Similarly, R<sup>2</sup> of 0.653 shows that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and social media marketing drive a 65.3 % variation in hotel performance. Cohen (2013) classified f<sup>2</sup> into small, medium and large effect sizes with (0.02–0.15), (0.15–0.35) and (>0.35),

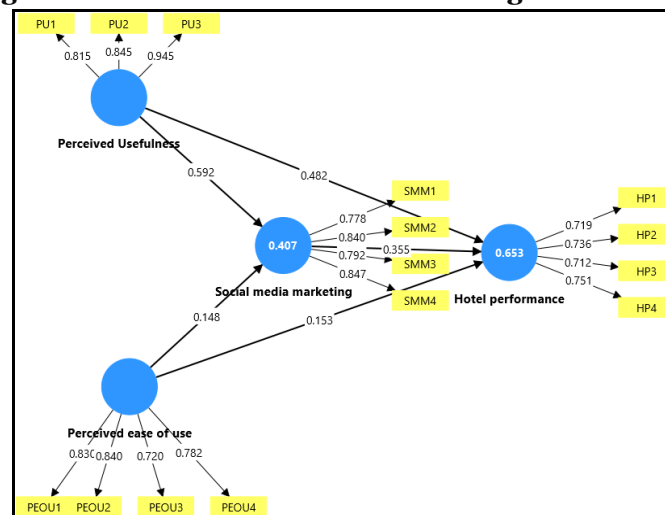
respectively. As demonstrated in Table III, the variables in the current paper display effect sizes varying from small to medium.

**Table 3** Path estimates

Hypotheses	Hypothesized path	Path coefficient	f <sup>2</sup>	t-statistics	Results
H1a	Perceived usefulness → Social media marketing	0.592	0.566	13.944	Supported
H1b	Perceived usefulness → Hotel performance	0.482	0.411	11.217	Supported
H2a	Perceived ease of use → Social media marketing	0.148	0.035	3.502	Supported
H2b	Perceived ease of use → Hotel performance	0.153	0.063	4.458	Supported
H3	Social media marketing → Hotel performance	0.355	0.216	8.455	Supported
Mediation analysis					
Hypotheses	Construct	Total indirect effect			
		Path coefficient	t-statistics	Results	
H4	Perceived usefulness → Social media marketing → Hotel performance	0.210	7.255	Supported	
H5	Perceived ease of use → Social media marketing → Hotel performance	0.053	3.087	Supported	

**Note(s):** Significance at:  $p < 0.001$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $p < 0.05$  (two-tailed)

**Figure 1: SEM Tourism business and digital marketing**



**Source:** Created by the author

The findings indicate that perceived usefulness has a substantial effect on social media marketing with ( $\beta = 0.592$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), followed by perceived ease of use ( $\beta = 0.148$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Thus, H1a and H2a are

supported. Similarly, the outcomes demonstrate that perceived usefulness significantly influences hotel performance ( $\beta = 0.482$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), followed by social media marketing ( $\beta = 0.355$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), perceived ease of use ( $\beta = 0.482$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), hence H1b, H2b and H3 are supported.

#### **4.4 Mediation effect**

Mediation analysis in PLS-SEM helps uncover the detailed and interconnected pathways between variables in the structural model. This method examines how one variable influence another through mediators, revealing hidden patterns and explaining how different factors interact with each other. The result demonstrates that the indirect effect of Perceived usefulness  $\rightarrow$  Social media marketing  $\rightarrow$  Hotel performance ( $\beta = 0.210$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), Perceived ease of use  $\rightarrow$  Social media marketing  $\rightarrow$  Hotel performance ( $\beta = 0.053$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). In Table 5, H4 were supported, ensuring the occurrence of mediation.

#### **4.5. Explanation of Direct Effects**

##### ***The Impact of Perceived Utility on Social Media Marketing (H1A)***

The first hypothesis (H1A) was that perceived utility has a positive impact on social media marketing. The results show that there is a path coefficient ( $\beta = 0.592$ ) between perceived utility and social media marketing, which is statistically highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). This means that when consumers feel that social media platforms are useful to them, i.e. they assist them in getting tourism-related information, booking hotels, and making travel decisions, they use social media more. This conclusion is consistent with Davis's (1989) technology acceptance model, which suggests that perceived utility is a key determinant of technology acceptance.

##### ***The Impact of Perceived Ease of Use on Social Media Marketing (H2A)***

The second hypothesis (H2A) was that perceived ease of use has a positive effect on social media marketing. The results show that there is a path coefficient ( $\beta = 0.148$ ) between perceived ease of use and social media marketing, which is statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). This means that when consumers think social media platforms are easy to use, they tend to use them more. This conclusion is also consistent with the model of Davis (1989). However, the impact of perceived ease of use ( $\beta = 0.148$ ) is less significant than perceived utility ( $\beta = 0.592$ ), indicating that social media's usefulness is more important to consumers than its ease of use.

##### ***Impact of Perceived Utility on Hotel Performance (H1B)***

The third hypothesis (H1B) was that perceived utility has a positive impact on hotel performance. The results show that there is a path coefficient ( $\beta = 0.482$ ) between perceived utility and hotel performance, which is statistically highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). This means that when tourists feel that digital tools and platforms are useful to them, it has a positive impact on the overall performance of hotels. This may be because satisfied tourists give positive reviews, revisit and recommend the hotel to others. This finding aligns with research by Kim and Lee (2022), which found that the utility of digital services has a direct impact on hotel performance.

##### ***Impact of Perceived Ease of Use on Hotel Performance (H2B)***

The fourth hypothesis (H2B) was that perceived ease of use has a positive effect on hotel performance. The results show that there is a path coefficient ( $\beta = 0.482$ ) between perceived ease of use and hotel performance, which is statistically highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). This shows that when digital platforms are easier to use, tourists are more satisfied, leading to better hotel performance. This finding is in line with the research of Rodriguez and Diaz (2023).

##### ***The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Hotel Performance (H3)***

The fifth hypothesis (H3) was that social media marketing has a positive impact on hotel performance. The results show that the path coefficient between social media marketing and hotel performance is ( $\beta = 0.355$ ), which is statistically highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). This means that effective marketing activities on social media platforms directly and positively impact the performance of hotels. Brand awareness, engagement, and positive reviews on social media improve the hotel's image and attract more customers.

Comparative analysis of the four direct effects makes it clear that the impact of perceived utility ( $\beta = 0.592$ ) is the highest in influencing social media marketing, while the effect of perceived ease of use ( $\beta = 0.148$ ) is comparatively smaller. The perceived utility and perceived ease of use (both  $\beta = 0.482$ ) have an equally high impact in influencing hotel performance, while the impact of social media marketing ( $\beta = 0.355$ ) is moderate.

This sequence shows that it is important for the success of digital marketing in the tourism business to convince consumers that digital platforms are useful to them and easy to use. At the same time, social media marketing activities also play a crucial role in improving hotel performance.

### ***Explanation of Mediation Effects***

Mediation analysis in PLS-SEM is helpful in uncovering detailed and interrelated pathways between variables. This method examines how one variable influences another variable through mediators, revealing hidden patterns and explaining how different factors interact with each other.

#### ***1. Perceived utility → social media marketing → hotel performance***

The results show that perceived utility has an indirect effect ( $\beta = 0.210$ ) on hotel performance through social media marketing, which is statistically highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). This means that perceived utility not only directly affects hotel performance, but also indirectly affects hotel performance through social media marketing. When consumers find digital platforms useful, they use social media more, leading to better hotel performance. This is an example of partial mediation.

#### ***2. Perceived ease of use → social media marketing → hotel performance***

The results show that perceived ease of use has an indirect effect ( $\beta = 0.053$ ) on hotel performance through social media marketing, which is statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). This effect is small in size, but still significant. This means that perceived ease of use also indirectly affects hotel performance through social media marketing, although this effect is less than perceived utility.

### ***Testing Hypothesis H4***

Hypothesis H4, which ensures the occurrence of mediation. This means that social media marketing acts as an important intermediary between perceived utility and perceived ease of use and hotel performance. This conclusion suggests that it is not enough to ensure the usability and ease of use of digital tools alone, but also to market them effectively.

In summary, the findings of this study clearly demonstrate that perceived utility and perceived ease of use have a significant impact on social media marketing and hotel performance, with perceived utility being the most prominent factor. Additionally, social media marketing serves as a significant intermediary between perceived utility and perceived ease of use and hotel performance. These findings confirm the framework of the technology acceptance model and provide important practical guidelines for improving digital marketing in the tourism business in the new normal era.

## **5. Conclusion**

The presented research study analysed the sustainable approach to promoting tourism business through digital marketing in the New Normal Era. The hypotheses built on the basis of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) were tested through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The findings from the analysis of data collected from 429 respondents show that all hypotheses are supported. According to the results, perceived usability has the greatest impact on social media marketing ( $\beta = 0.592$ ), followed by perceived ease of use ( $\beta = 0.148$ ). This shows that the utility of a digital platform is more important to consumers than its ease of use. Perceived utility and perceived ease of use (both  $\beta = 0.482$ ) have an equally high influence in influencing hotel performance, while social media marketing ( $\beta = 0.355$ ) also has a significant impact. The results of the mediation analysis suggest that social media marketing acts as an important intermediary between perceived utility and perceived ease of use and hotel performance. The indirect effect of perceived utility on hotel performance through social media marketing ( $\beta = 0.210$ ) and the indirect effect of perceived ease of use ( $\beta = 0.053$ ) were found to be statistically significant. This study confirms the validity of the technology acceptance model and contributes significantly to understanding the role of digital marketing in the tourism business in the new normal era. From a practical standpoint, hoteliers should focus on increasing the usability and ease of use of their digital platforms and investing in social media marketing. An integrated digital strategy that encapsulates perceived utility, perceived ease of use, and social media marketing can be instrumental in the sustainable growth of the tourism business in the new normal era.

## 6. Recommendations of the study

This study confirms the validity of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and shows that this model is also relevant in the context of the tourism business. This study incorporates social media marketing as an important intermediary variable, expanding TAM, providing a new approach for future research. This study makes a theoretical contribution to understanding the role of digital marketing in the tourism business in the new normal era.

Since perceived utility has the greatest impact on both social media marketing and hotel performance, hoteliers should focus on increasing the utility of their digital platforms. For example, providing accurate and useful information on the website and app, easy booking process, and personalized recommendations can enhance usability. Although its impact is low, it is still significant. Hoteliers must ensure that their digital platforms are user-friendly, intuitive, and easy to navigate. Social media marketing has a direct impact on hotel performance, as well as acting as an intermediary for other variables. Therefore, hoteliers should invest substantially in social media marketing. This includes regularly posting engaging content, engaging with users, and encouraging positive reviews. The findings suggest that perceived utility, perceived ease of use, and social media marketing all combine to influence hotel performance. Therefore, it is important to develop an integrated digital strategy that encompasses all these aspects.

## 7. Limitations of the study

There are some important limitations to this research that should be taken into account in future studies. First, the study is based on only 429 respondents, which does not represent the vast and diverse group of Indian tourism consumers. Second, it was not possible to assess the long-term effects of digital marketing strategies due to cross-sectional design. Thirdly, this study focuses only on the hotel industry, while the tourism sector also includes travel agencies, airlines, and tour operators. Fourth, the use of self-reported questionnaires maintains the possibility of social desirability bias.

## 8. Future research

In the future, researchers may test this model in different geographical regions and tourism sectors (travel agencies, airlines). Long-term effects can be analysed by doing longitudinal studies. Research can be further enriched by including moderator variables such as age, gender, income.

## References

- [1] Kotler, F., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2019). Marketing 4.0: Moving Forward in the Digital Economy.
- [2] Gretchen, S., & Ritchie, B. (2021). Changes in tourist behavior after the pandemic. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 88, 103-121.
- [3] Davis, F.D. (1989). Perceived utility, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 13(3), 319-340.
- [4] Scott, D., Hall, C.M.Gosling, & Gosling, S. (2022). Sustainable Tourism and Climate Change. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 30(4), 567-589.
- [5] Ukpabi, P., & Karjaluoto, H. (2021). Technology Acceptance in Tourism: A Study of Online Travel Booking. *Tourism Management*, 82, 104-121.
- [6] Jakobsen, S., & Maisko, A. (2023). The impact of social media on tourist destination marketing. *Journal of Travel Research*, 62(3), 445-462.
- [7] Chen, Y., & Law, R. (2024). Online reviews and hotel booking behavior. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 108, 103-122.

- [8] Kim, J., & Lee, S. (2022). Digital Marketing and Hotel Performance: An Empirical Study. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* , 63(2), 189-205.
- [9] Rodriguez, M., & Diaz, A. (2023). Personalized digital marketing in tourism. *Tourism Management Perspectives* , 45, 101-119.
- [10] Higgins-Disbiolis, F., Williams, K., & Jones, P. (2024). Digital Platforms and Sustainable Tourism Development. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 32(1), 78-96.
- [11] Sharma, A., & Singh, R. (2023). The Growing Importance of Digital Marketing in Indian Tourism. *Indian Journal of Marketing* , 53(5), 34-52.
- [12] Gupta, V., & Verma, N. (2024). Digital Marketing Strategies in the Indian Hotel Industry. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* , 58, 112-129.
- [13] Mangie, S.W.Govarsankar, V.G.B., and Corstanze, M.E. (ed.). (2024). *Tourist Behavior and the New Normal, Volume I: Implications for Tourism Resilience*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- [14] Davis, F.D. (1989). Perceived utility, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly* , 13(3), 319-340.
- [15] Hare, J.F. Black, W.C., Babin, B.J., and Anderson, R.E. (2019). *Multivariate Data Analysis (8th ed.)*. Cengage Learning.
- [16] Fornell, C., & Larcker, D.F. (1981). Evaluation of structural equation models of latent variables with measurement errors. *Journal of Marketing Research* , 18(1), 39-50.
- [17] Cohen, J. (2013). *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*. Routledge.
- [18] Kumar, A., Singh, R., & Gupta, V. (2024). Assessing Common Method Bias: A Guide for Researchers. *Journal of Business Research* , 158, 113-129.
- [19] Kumar, A., et al. (2023). Assessing multialignment in supply chain management. *International Journal of Logistics Management* , 34(2), 245-262.
- [20] Kim Qi, L., et al. (2023). Common Method Bias in Tourism Research: A Systematic Review. *Tourism Management*, 95, 104-121.
- [21] Kim, J., & Lee, S. (2022). Digital Marketing and Hotel Performance: An Empirical Study. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* , 63(2), 189-205.
- [22] Rodriguez, M., & Diaz, A. (2023). Personalized digital marketing in tourism. *Tourism Management Perspectives* , 45, 101-119.