



The humanistic use of social media strategies for tourism and hospitality industry promotion

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ABSTRACT

This study examines communication and promotional strategies in the hospitality and tourism sectors, emphasizing the strategic use of social media to achieve specific marketing objectives and to enhance relationships between tourism managers and tourists. In the digital era, social media functions as an essential tool that facilitates access to information about tourism destinations and hospitality services for prospective travelers and hotel guests. This research adopts a qualitative methodology, enriched by a humanistic perspective, to gain a deeper understanding of tourism participants' behaviors and expectations. The findings indicate that social media plays a crucial role in promoting tourism and hospitality businesses by fostering meaningful engagement and sustaining relationships between operators and stakeholders over both short- and long-term periods. Furthermore, the integration of social media into promotional efforts enables more personalized, accessible, and location-independent communication, thereby improving the overall effectiveness of tourism marketing strategies on a global scale.

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1. Introduction

A number of developments that occur in the world of social media certainly provides some impact that can be said they are very useful for human life in modern times. There are 4.8 billion social media users worldwide, representing 59.9% of the global population and 92.7% of all internet users (Nyst, 2023). Nowadays as we already know that the times are

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getting longer and longer to do Globalization which means a number of changes that occur globally. This is a significant change happening all over the world.

In an increasingly interconnected world, social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools for marketing, branding, and customer engagement. The rapid dissemination of ideas and concepts [1], [2] of digital technology has significantly transformed the way businesses communicate and engage with their target audiences, particularly in the hospitality and tourism sectors. These platforms offer businesses the ability to reach a broader audience, deliver timely information, and foster interactive communication with both existing and potential customers.

In the context of tourism and hospitality, where customer experience and service quality are central to success, social media enables organizations to establish and maintain meaningful relationships with tourists. Through user-generated content, real-time feedback, and personalized communication, social media platforms help bridge the gap between tourism service providers and consumers. Tourists today often rely on digital platforms not only to discover destinations and compare accommodation options, but also to engage with brands, share experiences, and make informed travel decisions.

Despite its widespread adoption, the strategic use of social media for communication and promotion in the tourism and hospitality industries remains an area requiring deeper exploration, particularly in understanding how it contributes to building long-term relationships and effective promotional strategies. The level of engagement with social media marketing varied, as summarised in the B2B Social Media Engagement Taxonomy. Enhancing brand image, extending brand awareness and facilitating customer engagement were the most common social media objectives [3]. Furthermore, while many studies have examined the technical or commercial aspects of social media marketing, fewer have adopted a humanistic perspective that centers on the needs, experiences, and interactions of tourism participants.

The changes found in globalization certainly also bring us all to a level or modern era like this time. All activities in the fields of our lives are currently undergoing very rapid changes and can be said to be modern. This is said to be modern because all activities that are being carried out in the state of our world at this time require technology. For example, such as mobile phones or mobile phones that we often use for everyday life. This also proves that the existence of technology has fulfilled or accompanied our lives. Therefore, technology is very useful for our lives. Unlike the ancients who are still not too familiar with all the positive sides of technology and they choose to maintain and use what has been their habit for a long time. However, today times are different. Everyone has to change into a modern society and use all existing technology where the technology is one of the results of the adaptation of existing technologies before the era turned into modern as it is today. Technology certainly has all the positive impacts which is enormous for the progress of our world. Technology is also currently used by almost everyone or humans who live in this world.

In fact, without age restrictions. Starting from children, teenagers, adults, and even the elderly. All of them are currently competing to deepen and explore further knowledge of technology so as not to be left behind by the existence of an increasingly modern era. Even in every second. This can be excluded against certain groups of individuals or groups who

reject the entry of technology into their lives and choose to continue to maintain all the habits of life where these habits have been applied by their ancestors since long ago. This can certainly make them lag behind by the progress of the times. However, this only happens by a few people and groups of individuals. Currently it is proven that there are many people who continue to follow the progress experienced by technology in order to make them become a modern society and know technology.

In life, we certainly use the concept of technology in its activities. We need to know that, the technology used is very diverse or varies from one another. For example, technology in the field of education, technology in the field of industry, technology in the field of information and communication, and much more. On average, most of us already know and even every day continue to use technology that is the type of information and communication technology that exists on our respective cellphones. Of course, it can be known today that there are many people who have used mobile phones for their daily lives.

In fact, almost all people in this world use information and communication technology on their respective mobile phones. Information and communication technology are certainly linked to each other. This is due to the dissemination of all information. In fact, it continues to require all communication activities. Therefore, they are connected to each other. Like the understanding possessed by information technology in the form of a technology that can create, obtain and get certain news or information appropriately and ready to be disseminated to readers or recipients of the news in accordance with what the author or maker of the information has set. Information to be disseminated certainly requires a media or an intermediary so that the information can be conveyed to the recipients of news or information.

These intermediaries usually use the help of communication technology so that all information that has been disclosed and written can be addressed precisely and as it is. These two technologies are constantly in contact. They are inseparable from each other. Therefore, if in a concept in the field of life, the existence of information technology continues to be associated with the existence of communication technology as well. Currently, we often use these two technologies and use them to help and ease our work. Or even to keep ourselves entertained in a relaxed time. This is because there are so many displayed by information and communication technology on a number of tools whose application uses information and communication technology. Just like the mobile phones that we use every day. Even in every minute, nowadays mobile phones or mobile phones are always in the grip of our hands. Applied information or communication technology that exists on mobile phones that we each have displays sharing of things that can be said to attract people's attention. Including us. Therefore, do not be surprised if many people nowadays often use their phones, even if it plays or sees something that is useless. Currently, social media is also widely used by all humans on this earth. They use social media to interact with each other online or online. The use of social media itself can certainly help all of us to interact with relatives or friends and even new people we know from social media even though it is remote.

We can stay connected by those in our respective networks. Therefore, this also requires the internet in access. Social media or social media itself has an understanding in the form of an intermediary in the network that can allow their users to interact, participate, share

with each other, create blogs and other things that can be done on the online media. Usually, social media is also used for a promotional media that can help institutions or business owners to introduce what they sell such as goods, services or other things widely. Even in this whole world. This certainly can provide more benefits and broad relationships for them so that what they produce can be famous in a wider market share.

Social media has become a central element in modern marketing strategies, offering businesses interactive platforms to promote products, build brand identity, and foster relationships with consumers [4]. In the hospitality and tourism industries, the visual and experiential nature of services makes social media especially valuable. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and TripAdvisor enable tourism providers to share rich content that appeals to travelers' emotions and expectations [5].

Existing literature highlights several key functions of social media in tourism: information dissemination, customer engagement, service feedback, and reputation management [6]. Research by Hays, Page, and Buhalis (2013) also emphasizes the importance of user-generated content (UGC), which significantly influences travel decisions and enhances authenticity in promotional messages. Tourists increasingly depend on reviews, photos, and experiences shared by others on social media as a basis for their own travel planning [7].

From a strategic standpoint, social media allows hospitality and tourism businesses to develop both transactional and relational marketing approaches. Transactional approaches focus on immediate conversions, such as booking accommodations, while relational marketing prioritizes long-term engagement, loyalty, and trust-building [8]. Studies have shown that brands that engage meaningfully with customers on social platforms can increase satisfaction, retention, and positive word-of-mouth [9].

Despite the extensive use of social media, much of the existing research has focused on quantitative metrics such as reach, likes, and conversion rates. There is a growing recognition of the need for more qualitative and humanistic approaches to understand the subjective experiences of both tourism service providers and participants [10]. Such approaches examine how communication practices via social media affect emotional connection, trust, and perceived value—critical components of the tourism experience.

This study builds on prior research by combining qualitative methods with a humanistic lens to explore how social media not only serves promotional functions but also fosters deeper connections between tourism operators and their audiences. By addressing both the practical and emotional dimensions of social media use in hospitality and tourism, this research seeks to fill a gap in the literature and offer more holistic insights into digital communication strategies.

In addition, promotion can also be done in market such as hospitality and tourism industry that can attract people to come and try what is really by the company. Such as in the field of tourism industry. They are currently promoting their services using social media so that people can see and be interested in trying what their mikiki tourism industry produces. In addition, in the health sector, this is usually done in the promotion of a number of hospitals or other things around the health sector so that many people or people turn to hospitals that have been opened to get better and complete services between each other. Therefore, currently social media is very much hunted by everyone because in one media information

providers can do everything that can be known or seen by foreign shares. Therefore, it is no wonder that nowadays there are so many people who use social media in their daily lives.

The media that is currently being hunted is media that can highlight promotional brochures for a tourism industry. For example, Instagram and Tik Tok now have facilities for entrepreneurs and tourism to be able to promote a product by collaborating with an application company, usually clients will pay and send their promotional brochures to application companies and application companies will post the brochure, this application filter will promote a product to all application users both followers and non-followers of the client and usually posts it will bear the "Sponsored" logo. This strategy is quite influential to promote or introduce a product because application users will see this post, also many are interested in this post.

In addition, promotion can also use through interesting videos to be uploaded on social media, for example such as tours of tourist attractions that will be promoted so by using such promotional methods visitors or people who are looking for information on the place will know the details of the tourist spot without having to check the location directly, besides that there will definitely be many visitors because we do not know in the future the video will be viral or not.

At present the younger generation in general must follow the ongoing trend so it is not surprising that now a lot of news spreads briefly, we as the tourism industry can take advantage of the situation for positive things and can benefit both parties, and not only use social media for things that are not beneficial and can even harm themselves and others.

2. Method

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the role of social media in communication and promotional strategies within the hospitality and tourism industries. A qualitative approach is deemed appropriate for capturing the complex, context-dependent, and subjective experiences of both tourism operators and participants, which are central to understanding relationship-building and engagement in a digital environment [11]. Qualitative research as a form of systematic empirical inquiry into the meaning of things. Qualitative research involves the collection and analysis of non-numerical data e.g. text, audio or video to understand from a concept, experience or opinion. This type of data was collected through observation methods, one the one interview, conducting focus groups, and similar methods [12].

A humanistic perspective underpins this research, focusing on the values, perceptions, and lived experiences of individuals involved in tourism—both as service providers and consumers. This perspective emphasizes empathy, authenticity, and personal meaning, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of how social media contributes to emotional and relational aspects of tourism marketing [13].

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Result

The analysis revealed several key themes regarding the use of social media as a communication and promotion strategy in the hospitality and tourism sectors. These themes highlight both the strategic advantages and emotional dimensions of social media engagement, as perceived by industry practitioners.

A primary consideration is social media as a primary promotional channel. Participants consistently emphasized the central role of social media in their marketing efforts. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok were identified as essential for reaching target audiences, particularly younger travelers. Visual content—especially photos and short videos—was considered highly effective in conveying the atmosphere, uniqueness, and appeal of tourism destinations or hospitality establishments. Promotional campaigns often relied on trending hashtags, influencer partnerships, and user-generated content to increase visibility and credibility.

A subsequent factor involves another major theme was the use of social media to provide accessible, real-time information to potential tourists. Participants noted that social media allowed for dynamic updates regarding room availability, travel restrictions, promotions, and local events. Unlike static websites or printed brochures, social media channels enabled tourism businesses to respond instantly to inquiries and feedback, enhancing customer satisfaction and trust.

Taken together, beyond its promotional function, social media was also perceived as a relational tool that allowed businesses to create emotional connections with their audiences. Storytelling, behind-the-scenes content, and personalized responses to comments and messages were cited as practices that helped humanize the brand and foster long-term loyalty. Several participants mentioned that positive reviews, reposted guest experiences, and user engagement significantly influenced customer perception and decision-making.

Cumulatively, Cultural Sensitivity and Personalized Messaging highlight the importance of cultural sensitivity in crafting social media messages, particularly when targeting international audiences. Social media allowed for segmentation and personalization of content based on language, cultural references, and traveler preferences. This flexibility enhanced the relevance and effectiveness of communication strategies in diverse markets.

Finally, an often-overlooked dimension is the benefits of social media is clear, but it also reported challenges such as algorithm changes, managing negative reviews, and maintaining consistent content quality. Some smaller businesses expressed concerns about the time and resources required to maintain an active and professional online presence.

3.2. Discussion

The word from social media marketing has often been heard in the field of marketing management. Social media marketing itself is one strategy where usually the strategy is used to make a relationship to a collection of networks on social media. This relationship strategy is certainly done with the aim of making a certain relationship concept complex to the audience they have addressed. After connecting with several parts of the selected audience later they will be able to create a brand via the website they use. Usually this will add and increase sales goal designed by a company that has applied this concept to the entire business they have. Just like the tourism industry and the hospital services they have. However, in fact, not only within the tourism industry group, but this also exists and began to be applied to various industries in the field of our lives by using social media strategies. There have been many studies that say that, this strategy is very effective to be applied in order to promote or marketing by a company. Where as we know that life in society at a time like this can never be separated from the existence of technology which is increasingly becoming one part of their lives. Humans today cannot live quietly without the help of technology.

Therefore, today all humans have used and applied the concept of technology in their daily lives. From all the statements above, it can also be concluded that all industries that exist in the business world must continue to use and take advantage of conditions like this to build, improve or also advance companies that are determined to have. Including the tourism industry and also the health industry. They should use this activity to promote what they get. Activities contained in social media marketing itself will also involve a number of processes carried out in order to produce and process for distribution of their content that has certain benefits.

Examples are such as doing a number of interactions with their followers on social media, analyzing all the results that are underestimated and using features to place an ad that usually exists and is often used to promote a number of social networks on social media.

The findings of this study affirm the increasingly strategic role of social media in the promotion and communication efforts of hospitality and tourism businesses. The results support existing literature that positions social media as a central marketing tool in the digital era [5], [6], yet they also extend this understanding by highlighting the emotional and relational dimensions that emerge from its use—an aspect that has been relatively underexplored in prior research.

First, the use of visually engaging and real-time content aligns with Hays et al. (2013), who argue that social media enhances customer engagement through dynamic and authentic messaging [7]. The emphasis on visual storytelling and user-generated content found in this study reinforces the notion that social media does not merely inform but also inspires, influencing tourist decision-making and perception of service quality.

Second, the study's findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the relational marketing potential of social media, echoing Grönroos's (1994) theory of relationship marketing [8]. Participants reported that personalized responses, behind-the-scenes narratives, and emotionally resonant content contributed to customer loyalty and trust—outcomes that go beyond immediate promotional impact. These practices demonstrate

the shift from transactional to relational marketing models in tourism communication, with social media serving as the medium for ongoing, two-way interaction.

In order to promote the two fields of industry by using social media as a medium used for intermediaries, of course, all social strategies are also needed which are also included and also applied in order to promote the tourism and health industries in order to market what they produce.

This social strategy can generally be useful to be used as an integration that exists in the relationship with the managers or owners of the tourism and health industry so that all relationships that have been built can be established properly. As we know, the overall delivery of information in these two fields is always done by hard sell where this procedure can help to support the occurrence of a sale and to acquire to create sales activities for people. Therefore, the concept of social strategy must be grown and applied to the implementation in establishing relationships with audiences that have been pre-determined.

Social media strategies carried out in marketing or promotion to establish a relationship with several existing audiences can certainly also help the person in establishing relationships with others. Like if inside the field of tourists. They will get to know and interact with each other with a number of invitations that have been given by the tourists. The interaction will develop into a socialization in which they will also recommend an industrial company to others and of course it is very useful and provides all the more benefits for the company. It is also used the same ways. Nonetheless, the difference is the existing audience or the audience that has been determined also recommends the illness in order to serve the community at large.

For the tourism industry, you can also include various kinds of holiday package promos in order to attract many people. In addition, the health sector can implement free chat features, online pharmacies, online consultations and their company's hospital services so that people can be well served. Holiday package promos can be promoted through special tourism tour applications via online travel agent which provides interesting features that can trigger the hearts of tourism players to choose tourism products in the form of ticket discounts and hotel discounts as well as cheap vacation packages to generate sales transactions by tourism players. Thus, all the efforts made for this will later obtain maximum results.

The integration of a humanistic perspective also proved valuable in capturing the experiential aspects of both service providers and tourists. This aligns with Mkono's (2011) call for more qualitative, empathetic tourism research that prioritizes individual meaning-making over metrics alone [10]. Participants' attention to emotional tone, cultural sensitivity, and personalized engagement reflects a broader understanding that successful tourism promotion must be grounded in authentic human connection.

Notably, the challenge of maintaining consistent content quality and managing negative feedback highlights the dual-edged nature of social media, consistent with earlier findings by Hudson and Thal (2013) [9]. This underlines the importance of digital professionalism, responsiveness, and strategic planning—especially for small- and medium-sized tourism enterprises that may lack dedicated social media teams.

Finally, the findings suggest that social media not only functions as a promotional tool but also as a bridge between digital interaction and physical tourism experiences. This dual role enables tourism businesses to shape visitor expectations before travel, influence satisfaction during service delivery, and extend the relationship after the visit through post-travel engagement.

4. Conclusion

This study has explored the strategic and humanistic use of social media in the communication and promotion of hospitality and tourism services. The findings demonstrate that social media platforms not only function as effective marketing channels but also as relational tools that help foster trust, emotional connection, and long-term engagement between tourism providers and tourists. Through visual storytelling, real-time communication, and personalized interaction, social media has become integral to how tourism experiences are promoted, perceived, and remembered in the digital age.

By employing a qualitative approach grounded in a humanistic perspective, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the experiential and emotional dimensions of social media use in tourism contexts. It emphasizes the importance of communication strategies that are not only visually appealing and informative but also culturally sensitive, responsive, and authentic. This aligns with contemporary trends in digital marketing, where value is increasingly placed on relationships, transparency, and shared narratives to get number interactions with followers on social media, analyzing all the results obtained and using features to place an ad that usually exists and is often used to promote a number of social networks on social media.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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