

# AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF EFFICACY OF DIGITAL MARKETING TECHNIQUES ON TOURISM ENTREPRENEURS

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## Abstract

As more advanced internet technologies have been available, more channels for communicating with certain demographics of people have become available. In today's world, digital marketing has evolved to the point that it is an essential component of every kind and size of organisation. The increasing significance of digital marketing has had an effect not only on the method in which businesses sell their goods and services to new customers, but also on the way in which they sell those goods and services to customers who are already in their customer base. In the travel industry, where customers have easy access to a range of information on the most current bargains and lowest price, there has been a desire for digital marketing like it has never been felt before. Digital marketing is now an incredibly essential aspect that plays a significant role in defining the amount of success that any given firm operating in the tourism industry achieves. It is possible that a number of factors, such as developments and growths in communication and transportation, developments and growths in educational standards, the advancement of a class with changed attitudes regarding lifestyle and spending habits, and increased levels of stress and strain in everyday life, are to blame for the increased proclivity that people have toward tourism.. The guidelines for marketing have been rethought completely across the board ever since the introduction of internet technology. The study aims to measure the efficacy of digital marketing on the tourism industry through the satisfaction of the stakeholders of the industry in Tamil Nadu.

The study is an empirical study which has been carried out in Tamil Nadu with 100 tourism entrepreneurs. The stakeholders of the tourism industry like hotels, travels and hybrid (offering tour package with boarding, lodging and travel) are considered as sample respondents. They are selected using the convenient sampling technique.

**Keywords:** Tourism Entrepreneurs, Digital Marketing Techniques, Travels Hotel and Hybrid

## **Introduction**

Entrepreneurs in the tourist industry are essential to the success of the industry overall. One of the most important factors in the growth of tourism in a nation as a whole or in certain locations within that nation is the presence of entrepreneurial spirit. The pace of expansion of the tourist industry is impacted by factors like entrepreneurial ability and expertise. The tourist industry benefits from the proactive pursuit of new prospects, entrepreneurial vigilance, acquired expertise, and participation in the social networks of other company owners. The fact that Wickham (2004) said that a "entrepreneurial approach" is no longer considered a choice but rather the only choice for managers who want to improve the performance of their organisations is illustrative of the significance of entrepreneurship in contemporary management. The researcher emphasizes how important of a role entrepreneurship plays in modern management. It makes no difference whether the business in question is a brand-new start-up that is attempting to establish itself in the market, an established business that is attempting to strengthen itself, or a government or non-profit organisation that is attempting to meet the opportunity and challenge of the shifting boundaries between the private sector and the public sector; this is important in all of these situations. Because entrepreneurship is a topic that draws on many fields of study, it has drawn academics from a wide variety of educational and professional backgrounds. As a result, studies on the issue have been conducted using a wide variety of research methodologies and theoretical frameworks. Kaur. (2017) [19]. Tourism provides a specific context that is perceived to be different from other industrial sectors in terms of identification of entrepreneurial opportunities and the process of their consumable tourism product. When viewed from the point of view of entrepreneurship, this difference can be seen as being unique to the tourism industry. In this process, there is typically more than one group of stakeholders, each of whom has their own approach to the development of an essential part of the economy through the implementation of a strategy. Since the 1980s, governments and public sector organisations have usually considered tourism as a growth industry with the ability to drive entrepreneurship, the establishment of new firms, job growth, and the rehabilitation of local economies. However, there is now global competition among communities all over the world that are working toward these strategic goals. The public sector has, for the most part, given its approval to the role that tourism development play in order to maximise the use of the resources in order to differentiate their tourism offering. When innovation in the tourism industry fails to occur at the level of a destination, there is a strong probability that the destination will lose its competitiveness, which then lead to a spiral of declining visitor numbers in the lifecycle. It is essential to innovate in order to maintain a competitive edge in the tourism industry, as well as to guarantee that the overall quality of the experience that tourists have is continually enhanced.

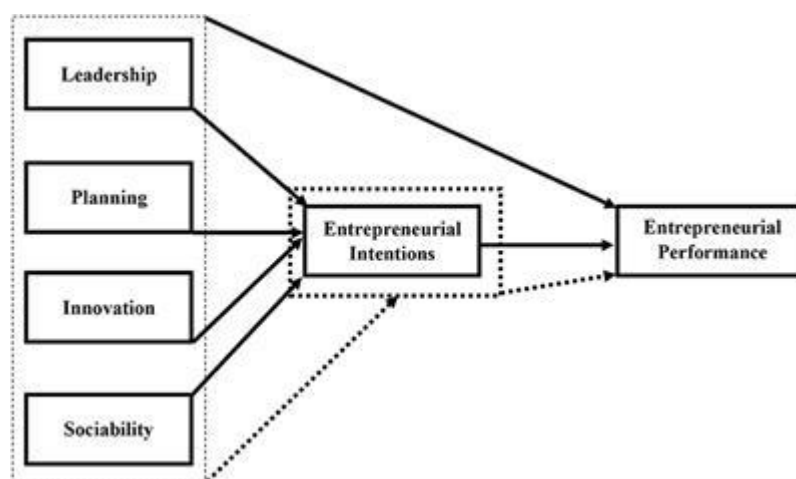
## **Theoretical background**

The expansion of a country's primary, secondary, and tertiary industries all have a role in the country's overall economic health and development. Newly formed industrial patterns suggest that during the early phases of industrialization, a greater focus should be placed on the primary sector, which consists of agriculture, animal husbandry, and activities that are related to these two fields. After this comes the secondary sector, which consists of things like factories, mining, processing plants, and so on. As a direct consequence of the expansion of the primary and secondary sectors, the tertiary sector, which comprises all of the service industries like banking, communications, education, healthcare, and tourism, amongst others, will ultimately see growth. The government makes independent investments at the beginning phases of the project in order to encourage private businesses to participate and cohabit in the process of extending the scope of the operation. The anticipated rate of return will determine both the level of importance placed by the government on providing assistance for a sector and the specific policies that will be implemented. Kannan & Vijayakumar (2012) [9]. However, ever since India gained its independence, the country's industrial pattern has demonstrated a departure from the patterns that had previously been established. As a result, the country's development has become asymmetrical, and the contributions to the various sectors have become increasingly weighted toward the tertiary sector. Because to the economic reform policies that placed a priority on globalization and privatization, as well as the structural adjustment policies that were deeper ingrained, such unbiased expansion of the service sector was made possible. Although the growth is uneven, the service industry has enormous potential because to the breadth and depth of the services it offers, which includes tourist services. The travel and tourism business is very important to the upkeep of a nation's positive balance of payments. The social and economic advantages of developing tourist infrastructure, in the form of investments in the services associated to tourism, contribute to the overall growth and development of the area. Mishra (2011) [13]. Because tourism has its own unique characteristics, it is able to have a multiplier impact in the economy. This means that for every Rs 1,000 that a visitor spends, numerous job opportunities will be created to serve a variety of various classes of people. Last but not least, tourism is a sector that brings in foreign currency while having very little investment directed toward promoting exports or imports. The sector of such magnitude has the potential to be grown with an entrepreneurial approach, which is the necessity of the hour in order to reap the advantages of the development of tourist needs. An entrepreneur has to be forward-thinking, creative, and always focused on expanding their business.

## **Entrepreneurial Approach – An overview**

A person who initiates the launch of a new venture is often referred to as an entrepreneur in the business world. However, according to this definition, government and non-profit organisations that launch tourist services by using entrepreneurial tactics are not considered to be tourism entrepreneurs. One of the most important aspects of an entrepreneurial strategy is to monitor the surrounding environment for shifts and trends that might lead to new business possibilities. The entrepreneur will next use standard management tasks in order to maximise the potential for profit or achieve self-sufficiency in terms of financial resources. This definition is offered as a result (John et al., 2012)[8]. For the

purpose of analyzing the tasks associated with entrepreneurship, an entrepreneurial approach may either be a singular method or a mixture of two other methodologies: the "Entrepreneurial Assessment" method and the "Multidimensional Approach." These two methodologies are strategies that may be used to measure the entrepreneurial endeavors that are taken by the businesses. The process of entrepreneurial activity, which comprises the following components: (a) The Entrepreneur, (b) The Venture, and (c) The Environment, is the primary emphasis of the entrepreneurial evaluation. However, secondary considerations also take place. Quantitative, qualitative, strategic, and ethical considerations are taken into account while evaluating the aforementioned three elements. Both "Macro" and "Micro" conceptions of entrepreneurs are considered to be two distinct approaches to the activity of becoming an entrepreneur. The integrative approach is based on the idea that one's contribution to the entrepreneurial process and the results that result from that process are what ultimately determine the robustness of an entrepreneurial endeavour. (Bjerke & Hultman (2004)[11]. The multidimensional strategy has fewer discrete categories, which gives it a more focused and in-depth method for approaching entrepreneurship. The bureaucratic tactics of tourism, such as memoranda and meetings, are diametrically opposed to the entrepreneurial approach to tourist. In its most basic form, it entails bringing to management the same creative, free market, entertaining, and energetic strategy that is used to sell to consumers. People who take an entrepreneurial approach are far more likely to taste the sweetness of success and much less likely to taste the bitterness of failure. When management and employees get training on how the business world operates, the company as a whole enjoys more success because its members become more optimistic, inventive, and proactive in their commercial practices. Because tourism is such a big, intricate, and multidimensional industry, it is important to have a variety of techniques to studying the industry, each of which is targeted at a slightly different activity or goal. Chaffey (2011)[5], explored that one of the components of social media marketing is "encouraging customer interactions on the company's own website or through the company's social presence."



### **Tourism Entrepreneurs Digital Marketing Techniques**

The introduction of internet technology, the many aspects of marketing have been going through a period of profound transformation. The increased use of the internet among customers has enhanced the manner in which they see a brand. The old marketing methods

that have been ineffective are undergoing a complete transformation as a result of this technological innovation, which has also altered every phenomenon that is associated with marketing. Marketers no longer feel that it is worthwhile to engage with outdated techniques since such methods are no longer viable. More and more attention is being paid, these days, to digital marketing by companies all around the globe (DGM). In addition to being a significant instrument for efficient communication and a supplementary source of cash for the company, it also plays a key role in the long-term maintenance of ties with various sections of the market. The fact that the Internet recognizes "Interaction" as the most important aspect that should be capitalized on enables marketers to maintain connections with a variety of interested parties. Internet users in today's world rely on the internet not only as their primary means of communication but also as an avenue to a deeper degree of engagement with the companies that they most admire. Users are now able to have direct dealings with their favourite companies on their needs as a result of the linkage that exists between the internet and marketplaces. When compared to conventional marketing techniques, it differs in that it makes use of a variety of different processes in order to get a comprehensive understanding of marketing campaigns and to evaluate the successful and failed actions actually taken. The strategy that is used by conventional marketing in order to understand the consumer information is to first collect the data and then build an analysis of it in order to acquire insights about the audiences.



The development of the Internet has made it possible to get a more in-depth understanding of customers and to establish the behaviour that are most prevalent across electronic platforms. The firms' decision-making processes have been fundamentally reshaped as a result of the information obtained via digital methods. In addition to catering to clients in accordance with the preferences they have specified, the actions that marketers do in order to accomplish their goals may often be analyzed and evaluated for accuracy. DGM is expected to be an advanced type of marketing in the future since it spans new domains, has a high growth ratio, and is altering the manner in which passengers build up a relationship with travel locations while they are travelling. The author argued that a closer connection between businesses and customers may be established via the use of mobile phone technology, which would ultimately result in a more individualized and satisfying experience. Applications

relating to tourism are becoming an increasingly important source of acquiring a new and extensive circle of clients and expanding one's company as the internet continues to grow in popularity. People post their trip tales and experiences on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, which are important for the "old fashioned word of mouth" advertising of the tourist business, the connection that exists between customers and brands is substantially impacted by the use of digital forms of marketing. The so-called "zero moment of truth," so-called because it is not only about purchasing decisions but has been narrowed down to the important points of competition in the market in order to gain more and more attention of the customer, refers to a situation in which the competition has been narrowed down to the important points. When it comes to their preferences in vacation destinations, today's younger generation has a very different set of priorities than their parents and grandparents had at their age. The frequency of use and competence of the younger generation in the use of mobile phones and the internet may each play a role in giving Portugal a considerable boost in economic growth. The notion that this younger generation must be preserved as an asset for the benefit of tourism and that doing so should be given priority should be the focal point here. The future of tourism will not belong to those who continue to practice antiquated methods, such as kidnapping locals and adhering to outmoded fashion and thought patterns; rather, the future will belong to those who make significant contributions to the tourism industry by utilizing cutting-edge technologies and adopting an entirely fresh frame of mind. This generation's thoughts and actions are quite different from those of previous generations, and accommodating those differences should be a top priority for the expansion of the tourist business.

### **Essential Components of Digital Marketing for Tourism Entrepreneurs**

There has been an explosion of technology advancement and capacity over the course of the previous decade; both of these have made significant contributions to the development of all industries, including tourism. As a direct result of this, there is a significant lot of uncertainty about the nature of the future for the several stakeholders who are involved in the industry at the present time. This adaptability is incredible, but being put in situations where one is forced to deal with the unexpected may be nerve-wracking. These sorts of massive shifts, which are taking place in a number of distinct industries at the same time, are giving rise to shifts, which are taking place in the minutest areas of each organisation, including the digital marketing strategies. As a beginning point for becoming aligned with the new digital marketing trends that are developing in the tourist industry, it is helpful to think about the many sorts of inputs that visitors acquire while they are on their trips. In India, business owners and entrepreneurs have traditionally been considered by governments and policy makers to be nothing more than extensions of the traditional responsibilities that people like them perform within families and society, specifically the responsibilities of nurturers and careers. In other words, these roles have been seen as extensions of the traditional responsibilities that people like them perform. In the modern society of today, the importance of safeguarding the health and happiness of company owners and entrepreneurs has been given a lot of attention. After developing an understanding of digital marketing, the following characteristics should be shown by a successful digital marketing campaign:



**Email Marketing:** It is essential that the outcomes of such actions be measurable in order to provide a basis for decisions about the conduct of future marketing operations. Consumers have the opportunity to learn about the most current deals that are being given by hotels via the use of email marketing. Sending an email to the consumer after a transaction that included two parties has been finished may be an effective strategy for maintaining a good relationship with that consumer after the transaction has been finalized. Customers are sent a unique mailer on their birthdays and anniversaries, which informs them that they are eligible for a discount on the services they have previously bought from the firm. Because of the competition, the customers have an incentive to shop while they are in the area because of the promotion that is being provided by the other businesses..

**Mobile-Friendly:** Everything that an organisation does digitally in the modern day should be compatible with mobile devices. The vast majority of people who use the internet do it on their mobile devices, and this fact should be reflected in all aspects of the decisions that are made about online marketing. The tourism sector is comprised of all of the individuals, businesses, and organisations that are engaged in the provision of services to vacationers, such as lodging establishments and dining establishments. The advent of marketing, the individuals who provided these services played a pivotal part in the success of the company. Their contributions were essential. The advent of the internet has led to the development of novel approaches to marketing the many services available to their respective target groups. Because of the lightning-fast growth of the internet, many aspects of the tourist business, in particular, have been thrown into disarray. Users may make purchases of tourism-related services online with the press of a button while simultaneously comparing offerings from companies located in a variety of countries. In order to be competitive and successful in the digital space, the following digital marketing activities are among the most important:

**Quality Website:** The most effective tactic is to segment lengthy articles into digestible chunks that people can quickly scan in order to get the information they need. In addition to this, it is essential to make certain that there is sufficient white space around the different photos, phrases, and buttons that can be seen on the website. When there is sufficient white space between items on a page, the reading experience is enhanced, and the reader is given the opportunity to concentrate on the parts of the page that are being read without being distracted by the other things on the page. The pricing lists, menus, and package deals of

many websites open in a separate window so as not to interfere with the experience that visitors are now having on the site. It is essential that the website be designed in such a manner that it gives consumers the ability to make purchases independently, without the need for any form of support. It has to be updated on a regular basis in order to stay up with the ever-evolving requirements and preferences of the clients. In order to reduce the likelihood of a higher bounce rate occurring, the navigation tab must to provide a distinct option for discounts and bundles. The functionality of the industry should be taken into consideration during the development and maintenance of a decent website since it is a reflection of the standards to which the company adheres.

**Search Engine Optimization:** The volume of traffic that is received by a website is strongly impacted by the optimization of the website for search engines. Companies have a duty to ensure that on-page and off-page. SEO operations are given an equal level of attention in order to maximise their website's search engine optimization. Utilizing a programme known as "Keyword Planner" is the first thing that has to be done in order to get started with effective search engine optimization (SEO). This will allow you to determine which keywords are most pertinent to the tourism business. Users need to take care when picking keywords to employ since the most prominent search engine, Google, is able to grasp synonyms. The overall quality of the backlinks should be prioritized above just striving to increase the number of backlinks that are there; this should be the primary focus of your efforts. This is because long-tailed keywords are more specific.

**Maintaining an Active Social Media Presence:** There is no denying that the travel and tourism sector is undergoing a sea change as a direct result of the rise of digital marketing. A significant portion of conventional modes of communication have already been rendered obsolete by the rise of social media. For instance, if we are thinking about going someplace new, we have a propensity to look at photographs that are already up on the internet, read evaluations that have been made by other people, and check out other people's tweets and postings. Businesses are now able to reach out to their customers and have direct conversations. A presence on these platforms entails much more than just advertising the most recent deals and amenities; it encompasses a great deal more ground. We have entered a new interactive era, in which businesses in the travel industry may take use of the networking capabilities provided by social media to advertise their companies at a cheap cost, therefore increasing the number of customers they serve and piquing the attention of the general public. Creating a group on one of these social media sites might have a low barrier to entry, but it does need consistent communication from the page. The most time-consuming aspect of social media is often the process of developing content in order to maintain an active presence. It is common knowledge that the majority of our shopping behaviours are influenced by social media. These days, going on vacation is more of a social activity than it ever been in the past. It would be in the best interest of travel businesses to take advantage of this ongoing desire by establishing long-lasting connections with customers. A good internet reputation for the travel firm may be established by assisting customers in selecting a destination and supplying them with information about the area where the destination is located.



## Research objective

The study intentions to measure the efficacy of digital marketing on the tourism industry through the satisfaction of the stakeholders of the industry in Tamil Nadu.

## Research Methodology

The study is an empirical study which has been carried out in Tamil Nadu with 100 tourism entrepreneurs. The stakeholders of the tourism industry like hotels, travels and hybrid (offering tour package with boarding, lodging and travel) are considered as sample respondents. They are selected using the convenient sampling technique.

## Findings and Results

### 1. Nature of the sample entrepreneurs

The nature of the sample respondents (business concern) determines their perception and satisfaction. In this aspect, the level of experience and the nature of the business are taken for analyzing the efficacy of the digital marketing.

Table 1  
Nature

Nature of samples units		N
Experience	upto 5 years	33
	6 - 10 years	37
	10 years and above	30
Nature of business	Travels	24
	Hotel	54
	Hybrid	22
Total		100

The above table shows that 33 respondents have upto 5 years 37 respondents are from 6 to 10 years of experience and 30 respondents have been established more than 10 years. Nature of the business shows that majority (54.0%) of the respondents firms are from hotel industry, 24.0% are travel companies and 22.0% are hybrid consisting of all the services including travel, boarding, lodging, etc.

### 2. Efficacy of digital marketing

The efficacy of the digital marketing on the tourism industry is measured trough the satisfaction of the respondents about the role of the digital marketing in success of their business. The respondents are asked to rank the factors related to the digital marketing supports their business promotion. Based on the difference in the mean scores is compared according to their experience and the nature of the business with the help of ANOVA test.

Table 2: Efficacy of the digital marketing according to the level of experience

Experience	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Upto 5 years	33	21.7273	3.44848	0.60030

6 to 10 years	37	19.5946	3.53128	0.58054
More than 10 years	30	21.2000	3.72688	0.68043
Total	100	20.7800	3.65032	0.36503

The mean score shows that the respondent firms established recently (upto 5 years) have opined that the digital marketing helps their business (21.7273). The means of the firms have 6 to 10 years' experience (19.5946) and having more than 10 years of experience (21.2000) are less than the new firms. The significance in the difference is shown in the following table.

Table 3: ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	86.896	2	43.448	3.420	0.037
Within Groups	1232.264	97	12.704		
Total	1319.160	99			

The above table describes that sum of the squares between the groups are 86.896 for the degree of freedom 2. Hence, the mean square is 43.448 and its F value is 3.420. The significance is found at 5% level (3.7%). It is concluded that the less experienced (upto 5 years of experience) feel the efficacy of the digital marketing is more than other firms. Further the nature of the business (travels, hotels and hybrid) and the efficacy of digital marketing is studied.

Table 4: Efficacy of the digital marketing according to the nature of business

Nature of business	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Travels	24	19.4167	3.94436	0.80514
Hotel	54	20.9815	3.18304	0.43316
Hybrid	22	21.7727	4.11654	0.87765
Total	100	20.7800	3.65032	0.36503

The mean of efficacy score of the hybrid business is found more (21.7727) than travels (19.4167) and hotel (20.9815). It is observed from the findings that the digital marketing is most helpful to the hybrid business in tourism industry as they have multiple services. The significance is tested as below.

Table 5: ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	68.482	2	34.241	2.656	0.075
Within Groups	1250.678	97	12.894		
Total	1319.160	99			

The sum of the squares is 68.482 for the degree of freedom 2 and the mean square is 34.241. The F value (2.656) from the result shows that the difference in the mean score according to the nature of business is insignificant (7.5%). It is concluded that there is no significant difference in the efficacy of the digital marketing according to the nature of business.

## Conclusion

The travel and tourism business was one of the first types of organisations to use digital marketing strategies with the goal of increasing the quality of tourism-related goods and services. This was one of the reasons why the industry was one of the first to use these strategies. Business owners in the tourism and travel sector are well aware of the need of developing a marketing strategy that is not only effective but also one of a kind in order to connect with prospective clients and sell the goods and services their companies provide. In addition to increasing our understanding of entrepreneurial marketing in the digital era, it is hoped that this study will result in new insights as well as some possible solutions that may be used by practitioners, government agencies, and other company owners. Internet advertising, affiliate marketing, and marketing done via social media platforms have been identified as the three types of marketing that have shown to be the most productive and successful. The transition toward digitization that took place elsewhere in the globe unquestionably had a considerable impact on the travel and tourist industry, which was one of the first businesses to experience the repercussions of this transformation. The purpose of the competition was to determine which business was capable of developing the most effective strategy and then putting that plan into action in order to guarantee that each and every one of their clients had a vacation and an experience that was enjoyable.

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