

## **DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES OF HOMESTAYS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON TOURIST BOOKING BEHAVIOUR**

Aastha Singh<sup>1</sup>, Ranjit Kumar<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Ayush Saxena<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research scholar, N.W.I.M.S.R, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune,  
aasingh.1897@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Independent Researcher, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Sarsaul, Kanpur Nagar,  
ranjitbu@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, School of Hotel Management and Tourism, Lovely Professional  
University, Phagwara, Punjab, saxenaayush2@gmail.com

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### ***Abstract***

*This is a review paper analyzing the digital marketing approaches embraced by homestays and its impact on tourist booking behaviour. As the tourism business has been digitalized very fast, the business has moved to Airbnb and Booking.com, which offers a wider market to the homestay operators, which has increased the intensity of competition and the need to implement proper online strategies. The review provides a synthesis of the latest empirical research that has identified the effect of social media marketing, the role of search engine optimization (SEO), influencer endorsements, online reviews, and personalization based on AI on the attitudes, formation of trust, and booking intentions of tourists. There is an indication that electronic word-of-mouth in websites such as TripAdvisor, plays a major role in lowering perceived risk and increasing purchase confidence. Digital interaction, influencer marketing, and a convenient booking system make destination image and behavioral intention even stronger. The results highlight that the aspects of authenticity and quality content, as well as tailored interaction, are essential factors influencing booking choices in the rural and urban homestay settings.*

**Keywords:** *Electronic Word-of-Mouth, Social Media Marketing, Tourist Destination Booking, Booking Decisions, Artificial Intelligence (AI).*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The fast digitalization of the tourism sector has notably changed the patterns of service promotion by accommodation providers and their decision to book the services by tourists.

Homestays have been gaining popularity in the recent years as an alternative to the traditional hotel context where they provide personalized experience, cultural immersion, and is often cheaper in comparison [1], [2]. Homestay platforms like Airbnb and Booking.com have been a boost to the expansion of homestay businesses by offering international exposure and easy access to potential customers. With the competition in the accommodation industry rising, the digital marketing approach is now an essential tool that the homestay owners are using to meet, connect, and transform potential travellers [3]. Digital marketing involves various online resources and methods that include social media marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, online collaboration with influencers, email marketing, and online reputation management. Instagram and Facebook are the social networking sites that allow homestay operators to present the visually pleasing images, the guests testimonials, the local experiences, and the promotional offers [4]. These channels can be used to communicate with possible customers directly, hence trust and emotional bond. Moreover, regarding TripAdvisor, user-made reviews play a very important role in the perception of tourists and their negative impact on uncertainty during the decision-making process [3].

Tourist booking behaviour has changed not depending on the travel agents but doing online self-research and comparison. New customers are keen on getting real information on the web, peer reviews, and clear pricing when they make a booking. The digital marketing strategies are key in influencing the attitude, value perception, and booking intentions [5]. The availability of mobile-friendly websites, safe payment gateways, online tours, and AI-assisted suggestions improve customer experience and have a favourable influence on buying behaviour. In the case of homestays, they usually have marketing budgets that are relatively small compared to extensive global hotel chains, so inexpensive digital channels are a chance to compete on the global arena. The presence of an effective digital presence not only improves the occupancy rates but enhances brand image and stimulates both regular visits and a positive word-of-mouth promotion [6].

#### **A. Rise of digital marketing in tourism**

The hospitality and tourism industry has established digital marketing as a critical component of its success. As traveler behavior evolved online, tourism businesses were compelled to adapt or risk being outdated. Every step of the travel process is increasingly influenced by digital platforms, from how travelers plan trips and share their experiences to how they

research places [7]. Email campaigns, social media marketing, content-driven engagement, and search engine optimization (SEO) are important elements that have enabled businesses to reach larger audiences and provide individualized experiences. TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and other platforms have developed into effective storytelling tools. Travelers may now be visually inspired by locations in ways that were previously impossible with traditional advertising [8].

Big businesses are not the only ones undergoing this digital revolution in the travel and tourism sector. Additionally, it has made it possible for smaller businesses, such as boutique hotels or regional tour operators, to compete internationally and get more awareness. Additionally, by offering insights into traveler preferences, seasonality, and developing patterns, data analytics have improved decision-making even more. Businesses that have used digital marketing in the tourist industry have claimed improved consumer engagement, greater conversion rates, and stronger brand loyalty, as has been noted in several studies [9]. Digital marketing is essential in the tourism industry, as it has the potential to improve marketing and increase consumer engagement by addressing a variety of critical factors:

- **Increasing awareness of destinations:** Through social media and paid advertising, digital marketing may help promote places and draw in new tourists.
- **Direct interaction with customers:** Social media enables tourism companies, hotels, and visitor sites to engage with consumers directly, respond to their inquiries, and provide feedback, thereby contributing to the brand's credibility.
- **Personalized experiences:** Customer data analysis enables the provision of tailored travel experiences according to their preferences, including the recommendation of travel packages or activities that align with their interests.
- **Content marketing:** Tourism businesses may draw clients and increase awareness of travel locations and their offerings by producing interesting material, such as blogs, articles, and videos. As a result, they are able to establish a trustworthy relationship with the audience.
- **Ratings and reviews:** The legitimacy of travel services is increased by digital platforms that provide reviews and ratings from customers. Consumers are able to read about other people's experiences, which aids in their decision-making.

- **Search engine optimization (SEO):** To boost traffic and booking rates, travel agencies should optimize their websites to show up in search results related to travel and tourism.
- **Online bookings:** Online reservations for hotels and flights are made quick and convenient by digital marketing, allowing passengers to book at any time and from any location.
- **Social strategy:** Through interactive content, social media campaigns may be utilized to target certain demographics and raise awareness of travel destinations.

#### **B. Digital marketing strategy for homestay**

The homestay digital marketing approach is linked to priority in presenting unique and personal experiences in the form of high-resolution images, local search, and social media narrations. The main ones are the maximization of a specialized site as the direct bookings, the management of your Google Business Profile as the search of local shops, collaboration with micro-influencers, and usage of Instagram/Facebook as the engagement [4], [10]. The best digital marketing tools to use with homestays are the following ones:

- **Develop a Highly Visual Website & Direct Booking Engine:** Develop a convenient and quick-load website containing very good pictures and videos to demonstrate the distinctiveness and comfort of your house [11].
- **Master Local SEO and Google Maps:** Create and optimize your Google Business Profile using correct and up-to-date details, which includes location-rich keywords, in order to feature in the local search [12].
- **Social Media Storytelling:** Share behind the scenes, local culture, and real stories of the guests on Instagram and Facebook. Create channel video content using Reels and Tik Tok, which in many cases is more successful than a static image [13].
- **Leverage User-Generated Content (UGC):** Ask guests to leave reviews and banner your home as this will create trust and genuineness [14].
- **Online Reputation Management:** Work proactively on your online presence to ensure that you ask and respond to the reviews in a timely manner on Google, TripAdvisor, and Booking.com [15].
- **Collaborate with Micro-Influencers:** Collaborate with travel content creators who fit your desired guest picture and provide them with a free stay in exchange of authentic content.

- **Utilize Email Marketing:** Establish an email list to notify about updates, special offers, and remind the past guests that they can make repeat bookings [16].
- **Leverage Online Travel Agents (OTAs):** Although concentrating on the direct booking, post on the websites such as Airbnb and Booking.com to maximize the exposure, mentions CCS Hospitality Marketing [9].
- **Paid Advertising:** Specific Google Ads and Meta Ads will be effective in attracting certain groups and boosting the number of bookings at the most successful times of the year [4].

### C. Influence of Digital marketing on tourist Destination booking

The concept of digital marketing has been a revolutionary approach in influencing the destination booking behaviour of the tourists. As online platforms grow at a high rate, travellers are using digital platforms to find out, compare and make final decisions about their travel plans. The social media (Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube) are crucial in creating awareness of new tourist spots through the provision of visually attractive content, 360-degree videos, and prompt contact with the prospective travellers [17]. Such platforms not only attract attention, but also build trust due to user generated contents, shared experiences, and peer recommendation. Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) is a very important part of digital marketing that affects the booking decisions [6]. Tripadvisor and Google Reviews are online review platforms where real feedback was left by other visitors in the past and thus tourists are able to evaluate the quality of the destination, safety, services and even the entire experience [16]. These types of digital reviews considerably decrease the perceived risk and increase confidence, which has a direct effect on the intentions to book. Favorable reviews, good quality images, and authentic reviews create the impression and motivate the new customers to visit the restaurant and book again [18].

Online advertisement also enhances destination marketing. The data-driven search history and preferences of particular traveler groups drive the targeted advertisement, which is personalized and aimed at them. This one on one strategy boosts the level of engagement and enhances the transformation into real bookings [19]. Online advertising improves the level of decision making and probability of destination choice by matching the promotional messages with the motivations of the travelers. In addition, easy-to-use booking apps and destination websites also play an important role in determining the behavioural intentions of the tourists. Clear pricing, user-friendly navigation, and safe payment gateway, as well as an interactive

functionality, enhance purchasing behaviour and provide a smooth booking experience [20]. By incorporating the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (like the recommendation engine and chatbots), the process of decision-making is further simplified, as they point to those attractions and services that meet the preferences of tourists. The AI-led personalization exposes the destination features that are most relevant and thus, influences the booking intention and satisfaction rate in a positive way [21].

In addition to the digital interfaces, the policymakers and destination managers should complement marketing activities by improving infrastructure and superstructure development to achieve service quality that is equivalent to digital promises. Credibility and satisfaction of a tourist are reinforced by accurate information, quality visuals and quality service delivery [5]. In cases where digital marketing plans are backed by quality in the ground experience, they not only boost booking numbers but also revisit intentions and positive word-of-mouth marketing. To sum up, digital marketing has a great impact on the process of tourist destination booking as it promotes awareness, instills trust, and makes the communication process more personal and the process of decision-making easier. By means of powerful incorporation of social media interaction, online reviews, precise adverts, AI-driven customization, and infrastructure sustenance, destination marketers can tactical lead to tourist influx and lasting destination devotion [22].

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

(Chauhan et al., 2026) [13] uses the Theory of Planned Behavior as a framework to investigate how influencer endorsements affect homestay intentions. The results indicate that subjective norms have a lesser but still substantial influence on homestay intentions, while rural image perception is the most potent predictor. Instead of directly influencing behavior, influencer endorsements improve the perception of the place. By showing that cognitive assessments take precedence over normative demands in the setting of rural tourism, the study contributes to the Theory of Planned Behavior. The practical ramifications highlight how important it is for homestay hosts and destination marketers to employ image-building techniques and real storytelling in order to successfully sell rural travel.

(Das et al., 2025) [23] evaluates how digital marketing has changed consumer travel and destination preferences by using data from 24 research found in prestigious resources such as Scopus, PubMed, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. It was

underlined the significance of social media in influencing travel preferences, with 74% of travellers relying on it for their search. Peer-shared visual information influences about 52% of destination selections, whilst real-time booking tools expedite the decision-making process by 38%. The choice of location was greatly influenced by psychological elements including social proof, self-congruity, FOMO (fear of missing out), and trust building. 73% of travel decisions were influenced by short-form video content, and 89% more people searched for destinations when influencer marketing and hashtags were used together. Reservations increased by 57% when they received high reviews on websites like Facebook and Google. Emerging technologies including artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots and augmented reality (AR) filters improved user engagement and expedited pre-booking procedures by 112% and 39%, respectively. To maximize engagement, the successful tactics placed a strong focus on data-driven personalization, micro-influencer partnerships, and content quality optimization. This study demonstrated the revolutionary potential of digital marketing in the travel industry, highlighting technical innovation, personalization, and authenticity as critical success factors.

(Hussein et al., 2025) [24] investigates the role of digital marketing strategies in improving the appeal of emerging tourism destinations. It looks at how digital marketing has changed over time, what makes it up, and how it affects traveler behavior. The study emphasizes how digital advertising, social media, and search engine optimization (SEO) affect traveler choices and raise awareness of lesser-known locations. Important obstacles, such as inadequate digital infrastructure, inadequate resources, and inadequate technical proficiency, are additionally addressed. In order to overcome these challenges and improve tourist marketing, the research also offers insights into creative alternatives like utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) and top-notch digital content.

(Karim, 2025) [25] Through an analysis of operators' operational and demographic features, their use of digital platforms, and the effects of these tools on bookings and visibility, this research seeks to understand the role of digital media in promoting homestays in Mirik. The findings of regression analysis verified that booking conversion rates and digital engagement were positively correlated. Poor internet access, a lack of professional content, and a lack of expertise in digital marketing were among the difficulties identified. Nevertheless, the majority of respondents demonstrated a strong interest in digital training and recognized the potential of digital strategies to enhance visibility and support business development in rural

destinations such as Mirik. According to the study's findings, digital media platforms are crucial for the expansion of homestays in places like Mirik. As a result, homestay operators who regularly update their digital content, use a variety of social media platforms, and receive more online inquiries are more likely to land big reservations through digital channels.

(Rohsianti et al., 2025) [26] Examine how digital marketing influences the choice to remain at Homestay ortega svarih. Understanding how digital marketing components, such as online visibility, social interaction, reviews, promotions, and instructional content, affect consumer decisions is crucial in the digital age since marketing through online platforms has become crucial to grabbing consumers' attention. Digital marketing tactics, such the usage of social media and online booking platforms, and their influence on guests' decisions to stay are among the primary variables examined. Multiple linear regression was used for data analysis in order to ascertain the connection between stay decisions and digital marketing factors. The analysis's findings indicate that the decision to remain at a sharia homestay is positively impacted by digital marketing via social media (Instagram) and search engine optimization (SEO). This study suggests that email marketing be developed as a digital marketing strategy since it may be a successful method of reaching new customers, guests, and providing information about special deals.

(Fathulliansyah et al., 2024) [27] Analyze Tanah Laut Regency's tourism industry's growth, paying particular attention to the actual state of the region's coastline tourist attractions. The primary goal of this study is to investigate sustainable tourism activities at Tanah Laut Regency's Takisung and Batakan beaches. The rationale is that a tourist strategy that can balance the three facets of the economy, society, and environment is known as sustainable tourism. Because it is tailored to the research goal—namely, investigating novel theories—this study employs a qualitative technique. Empirical observation is the foundation of qualitative research, which commences with observation, the identification of patterns, the formulation of provisional hypotheses or propositions, and the eventual discovery of theory. Stakeholders still have a limited knowledge of the notion of sustainable tourism, particularly the Tanah Laut Regency Tourism Office. Numerous environmental variables, both internal and external, contribute to strategic management's failure to adopt or practice sustainable tourism. Promotional programs continue to employ traditional leaflet print media, which are

wasteful and useless in reaching potential visitors, because there is still a lack of information regarding marketing strategies.

(Hu & Zhang, 2024) [22] The creation of intelligent tourism that relies on the Internet of Things (IoT) is its most fundamental guarantee requirement. The idea behind contemporary tourism intelligent application in China is to fully satisfy the information demands of visitors and customer experience. B&B is growing rapidly as a result of the shift to a new consumer lifestyle and the growth of ethnic village tourism. Additionally, travelers are choosing to remain at home instead of hotels. Thus, this paper first provides a more thorough explanation of the development process and marketing state of home stays, followed by a discussion of its many issues, all based on the IOT application as the starting point. The marketing environment of homestays is then thoroughly examined to determine their benefits using the TP theory of ethnic villages, Porter's five forces analysis model, and the SWOT analysis technique of ethnic villages. For B&Bs, the HTOE model creates a marketing mix plan that takes into account the real circumstances of ethnic village growth.

(Armutcu et al., 2023) [28] suggests a comprehensive model for the antecedents of tourists' behavioral intentions in their destination selection, which can be found in the tourist destination online content (TDOC). Important hints that affect tourists' behavioral intentions (intention to visit the place and eWOM) are provided by the high caliber and easily navigable online material. Thus, this study examines how satisfaction and digital marketing interactions influence the behavioral intentions of Eastern-originated visitors while they are choosing a place. Results indicate that tourists' behavioral intentions are directly impacted by their views of TDOC, and that the link between tourists' TDOC perceptions and behavioral intentions is mediated by visitor satisfaction. Additionally, the findings indicate that eWOM intentions and the intention to visit a tourist site are significantly influenced by satisfaction and digital marketing interactions. For businesses, marketers, and policymakers, knowing how visitors see destination selection is essential since it will help them create effective plans to boost destination visits.

(Dhankhar et al., 2023) [29] Examine the effects of digital marketing on traveler purchasing patterns in the Indian travel and tourism industry. This will assist marketers in analyzing the purchasing behavior of tourists and tailoring their approaches accordingly. Tourism organizations are obligated to adopt advanced strategies and techniques in order to connect with their target audience, as a result of the significant changes in the environment and

intense competition. The first service sector to use information technology to market its goods and services was tourism. According to the traditional AIDA theory, tourists employ digital technology at every stage of the buying process. Using a straightforward convenience sampling technique, self-structured questionnaires were dispersed throughout the Delhi-NCR sample region. A total of 400 replies were gathered from 485 questions. The data was assessed using the PLS-SEM approach, reliability testing, and descriptive analysis. The results showed that digital marketing significantly influences the purchasing decisions of visitors and that different digital media platforms in India influence the behavior of tourists.

(Yu & Wang, 2020) [30] Many tourists are prepared to contemplate homestays as an accommodation option. Travelers give greater weight to the location, surroundings, and amenities at urban homestays than they do to rural tourism when making purchases online. In order to investigate the influence of urban homestay buying behaviors, this study examined the influencing elements for urban homestay accommodations based on online visitor reviews and comments. The degree to which travelers paid attention to and trusted internet reviews was evaluated using interviews and descriptive analysis with those who planned to book homestay accommodations online. It was discovered that while choosing a homestay, travelers preferred to read internet reviews and paid close heed to unfavorable suggestions. As a result, it was shown that internet reviews significantly influenced online buying patterns for urban homestay accommodations.

### **III. RESEARCH GAP**

Despite the fact that previous studies have investigated digital marketing in the tourism industry and its impact on consumer behaviour, few studies have examined homestay-specific digital marketing and its effectiveness in influencing tourist booking behaviour within the framework of a broad study. Majority of the previous studies focus on either general destination marketing, or separate tool like social media, SEO, or influencer marketing, without coordinating these techniques effectively on cognitive, emotional and behavioural response in the homestay setting. Moreover, little is known about comparative information about rural homestays and urban homestays. The synthesis of the impact of AI-driven personalization, online reputation management, and platform dependency (e.g., Airbnb) on the intention to book is also under insufficiently synthesized. Therefore, this theoretical and practical gap has to be filled through a condensed assessment of strategic integration and behavioural implications.

#### **IV. OBJECTIVES**

1. To study the role of digital marketing in tourism.
2. To study the digital marketing strategy for homestay and tools use with homestay.
3. To study the influence of digital marketing on tourist destination booking.
4. To study the various literature's perspective on digital marketing strategies of homestays and their effect on tourist booking behaviour.

#### **V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The review paper will have a systematic literature review framework to review the digital marketing strategies of homestays and how it affects tourist booking behaviour. Applicable peer reviewed articles of journals, conference papers as well as indexed publications were gathered using known academic databases. The following selection criteria targeted the studies that talked about digital marketing in the tourism industry, homestay advertising, online consumer behaviour, and the intentions of online destinations reservations. Qualitative and quantitative studies were taken into account to cover all the theoretical models, including the Theory of Planned Behavior, and to obtain the results in terms of empirical evidence concerning the SEO, social media use, and online reviews. The literature that was gathered was critically reviewed, compared and synthesized to find patterns, strategic tools, behavioural determinants and new technological trends that affected homestay booking decisions.

#### **VI. DISCUSSION**

The review reveals that digital marketing has completely transformed the competition within the homestay industry. The social media like Instagram and Facebook are some of the effective storytelling tools that promote destination image and emotional commitment. Indirectly, influencer endorsement affects the booking intentions through the increased perception of the image of rural and cultural activities. The management of online reputation is core in influence of purchase decision. TripAdvisor and Booking.com reviews are known to cause a significant decrease in perceived risk, and negative reviews are especially influential in terms of evaluation. When optimized through SEO and Google Business, the location becomes more visible in particular to small and rural homestays with a tight budget. Chatbots, AI-powered tools, and personalized recommendations enhance the customer experience and data conversion rates, as they match the offers with the preferences of the

traveler. Nevertheless, challenges like a lack of digital literacy, poor infrastructure, and reliance on Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) are limiting to the complete strategic application. In sum, digital engagement is positively related to the development of trust, satisfaction, and a booking intention, which proves the strategic relevance of integrated digital marketing to homestays.

## **VII. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Develop visually rich, mobile-friendly websites with secure and simple direct booking engines.
- Strengthen local SEO and optimize Google Business Profiles for better search visibility.
- Actively manage online reputation by responding promptly to reviews and encouraging user-generated content.
- Utilize authentic storytelling and micro-influencer collaborations to enhance destination image.
- Integrate AI tools (chatbots, personalized recommendations) to improve customer engagement and decision-making.
- Balance OTA presence (e.g., Airbnb) with strategies that promote direct bookings.
- Provide digital marketing training programs for homestay operators, especially in rural areas.
- Invest in high-quality visual content (photos, short-form videos) to strengthen emotional appeal and trust.
- Use data analytics to understand tourist preferences and tailor promotional campaigns accordingly.

## **VIII. CONCLUSION**

As it is observed in the review, online marketing techniques are instrumental in determining tourist booking behaviour in the homestay industry. With the growing interest in digital platforms in the travel planning process, homestay operators should deliberately take advantage of the online tools to increase visibility, credibility and interaction. Empirical studies always show that social media storytelling, search engine optimization, influencer collaboration, and effective online reputation management play a tremendous role in the cognitive consideration and trust development of the tourists. Favorable Internet reviews,

especially those of Google review systems and TripAdvisor, have a major effect on perceived value and uncertainty in the decision to make a reservation. Additionally, personalization made with the help of AI, interactive websites, and booking engines that function without delays contribute to the improved user experience and higher conversion rates. Research also confirms that online interaction is directly proportional to increased occupancy rates, especially in outlying and developing destinations. Nonetheless, issues of poor digital capabilities, poor infrastructure and use of traditional marketing channels are still obstacles to many homestay operators. Altogether, to become sustainable competitors, it is crucial to incorporate real-life content, personalization based on data, and technological advances. Besides the increased booking through digital marketing, long-term customer loyalty and positive electronic word-of-mouth alongside destination development are an added benefit in an ever competitive tourism market-place.

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