

The Impact of Social Media on Hotel Management: Branding, Engagement, and Reputation in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Rationale: The pervasive influence of social media on consumer behavior and marketing strategies necessitates a comprehensive understanding of its impact on the hospitality industry. As hotels increasingly leverage digital platforms for engagement and reputation management, examining the effectiveness of various social media strategies and their implications becomes crucial for optimizing marketing efforts and enhancing brand identity. **Objective:** This study aims to investigate the impact of social media on hotel management, branding, engagement, and reputation in the hospitality sector. **Method:** A mixed-methods approach was employed, involving quantitative surveys of hotel customers and qualitative interviews with hotel marketing managers. Data on demographic characteristics, social media usage patterns, primary purposes of social media usage, perceptions of hotel branding, and reputation management practices were collected and analyzed to identify trends and insights. **Results:** The data reveals that promotional offers and discounts (100%), user reviews (90%), and visual content (80%) are critical factors influencing consumer hotel choices. Collaboration with influencers, user-generated content, live video content, and social media advertising all demonstrated 100% effectiveness in engaging audiences and building brand identity. Pre-social media, 40% of hotels promptly addressed issues, while post-social media, this decreased to 20%, with private resolutions increasing from 20% to 30%. **Conclusions:** Social media significantly influences consumer behavior in hotel selection and booking decisions. The shift in reputation management practices underscores the need for hotels to balance transparency with effective conflict resolution strategies. Social media strategies that leverage influencers, user-generated content, and dynamic visual content are crucial for enhancing engagement and brand identity. **Recommendations:** Hotels should prioritize influencer collaborations, encourage user-generated content, and invest in high-quality visual media. Implementing regular updates, engaging contests, and targeted promotional offers can drive bookings and enhance customer satisfaction. Proactive reputation management and transparent communication are essential for maintaining a positive public image. **Significance Statement:** This study provides valuable insights into the transformative impact of social media on the hospitality industry, offering evidence-based strategies and policy recommendations for optimizing digital marketing efforts. The findings underscore the importance of a strategic and multifaceted approach to social media, highlighting its role in shaping consumer behavior, enhancing brand identity, and driving business growth. **Keywords:** Social media; Hotel marketing; Consumer behavior; Reputation management; Influencer collaboration; User-generated content; Visual content; Promotional offers; Audience engagement; Brand identity.

1. Introduction

Marketing is “an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its goals,” according to the Nigeria Marketing Association [1]. The hospitality industry has undergone a profound transformation with the rapid proliferation of social media platforms, set to reach approximately 4.41 billion users globally by 2025 [2]. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok have fundamentally reshaped consumer behavior and brand perceptions, notably within the hospitality sector [3, 4]. Hotels now leverage these platforms as vital components of their marketing and branding strategies, engaging directly with a diverse global audience to craft compelling brand narratives through multimedia content [5]. This shift has moved marketing strategies from traditional advertising to an immersive, interactive approach driven by visual content, such as high-resolution images and videos showcasing hotel amenities and guest experiences, significantly impacting audience engagement and travel decisions [6]. User-generated content, influencer recommendations, and peer reviews on platforms like TripAdvisor, Yelp, and Google Reviews wield substantial influence in hotel bookings and brand perception (TripAdvisor). Positive guest experiences shared on social media contribute to brand advocacy and trust-building. However, the amplification of negative feedback underscores the critical role of online presence in shaping brand identity and highlights the need for effective online reputation management strategies [7]. Measuring the impact of social media on hotel marketing and branding involves metrics such as engagement rates, sentiment analysis, and customer lifetime value, which enable hotels to evaluate strategy effectiveness and refine approaches for optimal results [8]. Despite these developments, a research gap persists in comprehensively understanding the nuanced dynamics, emerging trends, and best practices within this domain. There is a need for further exploration to offer actionable insights and implications for industry practitioners. Thus, marketing is fundamentally a customer-oriented philosophy that prioritizes meeting the needs and desires of consumers to attract and keep profitable clients [9]. In Nigeria, maintaining profitable clientele is particularly challenging due to the potent impact of word-of-mouth and the necessity for well-oriented marketing strategies [10]. Hospitality marketing is distinct as it addresses both tangible products, like food in a restaurant or a hotel room, and the intangible characteristics of hospitality and travel [11]. The success of any business, product, or tourist destination in the hospitality and tourism industry heavily depends on effective hospitality marketing [12]. A well-executed marketing campaign highlights a product or service that meets consumer needs and wants while also generating revenue for the business or nation offering it. Social media marketing encompasses any online marketing conducted through websites or other online tools and resources, including search engines, blogs, webpages, banners, videos, photos, advertisements, direct email, SMS/text messaging, and more [13]. The Internet's growing pervasiveness in daily life has made it a crucial medium for marketing communication. To obtain a competitive edge in the tourism industry, hotels must have their own website, market their goods on social media and through mobile applications, and use email to communicate with clients and business associates, utilizing all available information and communication technology (ICT) [14].

ICT's importance to the tourist and hospitality sectors has been established in earlier research [10, 11]. Discussions have focused on the role and significance of websites in

promoting travel destinations [12, 13, 15], the value of social media for travel agencies [16], and destination selection [17]. Research has also explored social media marketing's impact on consumer behavior [18], the use of email marketing in the sector [19], and web promotion strategies [20]. Nonetheless, El-Gohary [21] notes that more well-established studies are needed to build theory in the field of social media marketing, as the current theory is still in its infancy. Research on social media marketing in the hotel business is appropriate to address this gap, as few publications examine the overall degree of social media marketing implementation in this sector. The integration of social media platforms into hotel marketing and branding strategies has transformed consumer engagement and brand representation in the hospitality industry. However, several pressing challenges necessitate deeper exploration. Key among these challenges is the dynamic nature of consumer behavior in response to social media influences. Platforms like TripAdvisor and Yelp significantly impact traveler decisions, yet the trend toward user-generated content and influencer endorsements requires agile strategies to engage prospective guests continuously. The vulnerability of hotel reputations in the online sphere remains a significant concern, as negative reviews can swiftly tarnish a hotel's brand image, underscoring the need for robust online reputation management strategies. Additionally, there is a need for more refined measurement tools and methodologies to accurately assess the impact of social media strategies on marketing objectives and consumer preferences. The ever-evolving digital landscape introduces complexities in understanding emerging trends, necessitating hotels to stay abreast of technological advancements, shifting consumer behaviors, and the dynamic social media landscape. Despite acknowledging the significance of social media, a notable research gap exists in comprehensively understanding the interplay between social media dynamics, hotel marketing strategies, branding efforts, and evolving consumer behaviors. This gap highlights the need for further investigation to yield actionable insights and strategies beneficial for industry practitioners navigating the multifaceted realm of social media-driven marketing.

2. Method

2.1 Area of Study

The study focuses on hotels in Nigeria, primarily those located in Lagos State. Lagos State, situated in the South-Western part of Nigeria, lies on the narrow plain of the Bight of Benin. It is approximately located between longitude 2° 42'E and 3° 2'E, and latitude 6° 22'N and 6° 2'N (Figure 1). Bounded to the North and East by Ogun State, to the West by the Republic of Benin, and stretching over 180 kilometers along the Guinea Coast of the Bight of Benin on the Atlantic Ocean, Lagos State covers an area of 3,577 sq. km, representing 0.4% of Nigeria's landmass. The study covers the following hotels on the Mainland of Lagos State: Great Ville Signature Surulere (Four-star), Radisson Ikeja (Four-star), Radisson Blue Ikeja (Four-star), De Santos Akowonjo (Three-star), Havana Suite Akowonjo (Three-star), Choice Suite Signature (Three-star), Presken Hotel (Three-star), Blue Ivy Hotel and Suites (Three-star), Whitebrook Suite and Bar (Two-star), Mayoral Hotel & Suites (Two-star), Paragon Hotel (Two-star), Downtown Lagos Hotel Ikeja (Two-star), Westpark Hotel (Three-star), Primal Hotel Ikeja (Three-star) and Msquare Hotel (Three-star). The unique characteristics and boundaries of this area make it ideal for studying the impact of social media on hotel marketing and branding. Data collection involve structured interviews and examination of market trends pre- and post-social media

usage. Social media platforms of focus include Facebook, Twitter (now known as X), and Instagram.



Fig. 1: Map of Lagos State

2.2 Design of the Study

The research design is a framework for collecting and analyzing data in a way that combines relevance to the research objectives with procedural economy. This study employs a stratified random sampling method to evaluate the impact of social media on hotel management: branding, engagement, and reputation. The survey method was utilized for data collection, featuring open-ended questions posed to hotel managers to analyze the impact of using social media. Both primary and secondary data were used in this study.

2.3 Population of the Study

The population for this study consists of 100 respondents, including hotel management personnel and hotel clients in Lagos State, Nigeria. This population was selected for its relevance and representativeness in understanding the impact of social media on hotel marketing and branding strategies [22-24]. To ensure the validity of the data, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were established. The inclusion criteria encompass managers and staff members responsible for marketing and customer engagement, along with clients who have interacted with the hotels through social media platforms. Conversely, the exclusion criteria eliminate participants who lack significant exposure to social media or those who are not involved in marketing or customer service roles.

2.4 Study Duration

The study span over six months, from August 2024 to January 2025. This period allows sufficient time for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. It encompasses the peak and off-peak seasons in the hospitality industry, ensuring that the data captures a comprehensive view of social media impacts across different business cycles.

2.5 Sampling Techniques

The study employs stratified random sampling to ensure diverse representation across different hotel categories, specifically four-star, three-star, and two-star hotels. From each category, a proportional number of hotels and respondents are randomly selected, enhancing the generalizability of the findings. The sample size consists of 15 hotels and a total of 100 respondents, adequately representing the population. Primary data are collected through interviews with e-marketing staff and marketing department executives, while secondary data are gathered from business profiles, manuals, and previous year reports.

2.6 Study Instrument

The primary data collection instrument is the “Social Media Impact Assessment on Hotel Management Questionnaire” (SMIAHMQ). This structured questionnaire is designed to assess the impact of social media on hotel marketing and branding strategies, including platform effectiveness, content types, user engagement strategies, and their influence on consumer behavior. The SMIAHMQ includes sections on demographics, social media usage patterns, perceptions of branding on social media, influence on purchase decisions, and the effectiveness of different strategies. Responses are captured using Likert-type scales for quantitative data and open-ended questions for qualitative insights, ensuring comprehensive data collection. The SMIAHMQ was developed by the research team, drawing on validated metrics from prior research in social media marketing and branding. Each section of the questionnaire includes specific items designed to align with the study's objectives. Response options range from strongly agree to strongly disagree, with open-ended questions providing additional qualitative insights. A scoring legend assigns numerical values to each response option, facilitating quantitative analysis of the data collected.

2.7 Study Procedure

The study follows a systematic procedure that begins with pre-study preparation, which involves obtaining necessary permissions from hotel management and briefing participants about the study's purpose and procedures. During data collection, the Social Media Impact Assessment on Hotel Marketing Questionnaire (SMIAHMQ) is distributed to selected respondents through both online and offline methods, while structured interviews are conducted with hotel management personnel to gather qualitative insights. Once data collection is complete, the compiled questionnaires and interview transcripts are reviewed to ensure completeness and accuracy before analysis. Finally, statistical software is utilized to analyze the quantitative data, while thematic analysis is applied to the qualitative data.

2.8 Validation and Reliability

The Social Media Impact Assessment on Hotel Marketing Questionnaire (SMIAHMQ) underwent expert review by academics specializing in social media marketing and hospitality management to ensure its relevance and comprehensiveness. Feedback from these experts was incorporated to enhance the instrument's effectiveness. Additionally, pilot testing was conducted with a small subset of respondents to assess reliability, resulting in a reliability coefficient of 0.85 from the statistical analysis of the pilot data. As a result, the SMIAHMQ is a robust and comprehensive tool tailored to capture essential insights into the impact of social media on hotel marketing and branding strategies within the hospitality industry. Its structured approach and validated design guarantee the collection of reliable and valuable data for the study.

2.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study incorporates both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative analysis utilizes descriptive statistics, such as mean, median, mode, and standard deviation, to summarize the data. Inferential statistics, including chi-square tests, t-tests, and ANOVA, are employed to assess relationships and differences between variables, while regression analysis identifies the impact of social media on marketing outcomes. On the other hand, qualitative analysis involves thematic analysis of open-ended responses and interview transcripts, aiming to identify common themes and insights related to social media strategies and their effectiveness.

2.10 Ethical Approval

Ethical approval is obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the affiliated university. The study adheres to ethical guidelines, including informed consent, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw without penalty. Participants are informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks. Data privacy is maintained by anonymizing responses and securely storing data. Ethical considerations also include ensuring no harm comes to participants due to their involvement in the study. By adhering to these rigorous methodological and ethical standards, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the impact of social media on hotel marketing and branding strategies in Lagos State, Nigeria.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Sociodemographic characteristics of Respondents

The table 1 provides a breakdown of demographic data collected from respondents, encompassing age groups, gender, and occupation. The study's demographic data reveals that the majority of respondents fall within the 18-34 age range, with 30% aged 18-24 and 40% aged 25-34. Respondents aged 35-44 make up 20% of the sample, while those aged 45-54 comprise 10%. Notably, there are no respondents aged 55 and above, indicating a younger demographic predominantly engaging in social media interactions relevant to hotel marketing and branding. Gender distribution among the respondents shows a near-equal representation, with 50% identifying as male and 40% as female. Additionally, 10% of respondents preferred not to disclose their gender. This diverse gender representation ensures that the study captures a wide range of perspectives on the impact of social media on hotel marketing and branding strategies. Occupational data highlights that travelers constitute the largest group of respondents at 40%, followed by marketing professionals at 35%. Hotel staff make up 20% of the sample, while 5% of respondents fall into the 'Other' category. This mix of respondents provides a comprehensive view of social media's influence on hotel marketing and branding from various professional standpoints, enriching the study's findings with insights from both consumers and industry professionals.

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
18-24	30	30
25-34	40	40

			Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of respondents
35-44	20	20	
45-54	10	10	
55 and above	0	0	
Gender			
Male	50	50	
Female	40	40	
Prefer not to say	10	10	
Occupation			
Traveler	40	40	
Hotel Staff	20	20	
Marketing Professional	35	35	
Other	5	5	

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of respondents based on their familiarity with social media platforms. The data on respondents' familiarity with social media platforms indicates that a significant majority, 80%, are very familiar with these platforms. An additional 20% are somewhat familiar, while no respondents reported being unfamiliar with social media. This high level of familiarity underscores the relevance of social media as a critical tool in hotel marketing and branding, with most respondents having substantial exposure and understanding of these platforms.

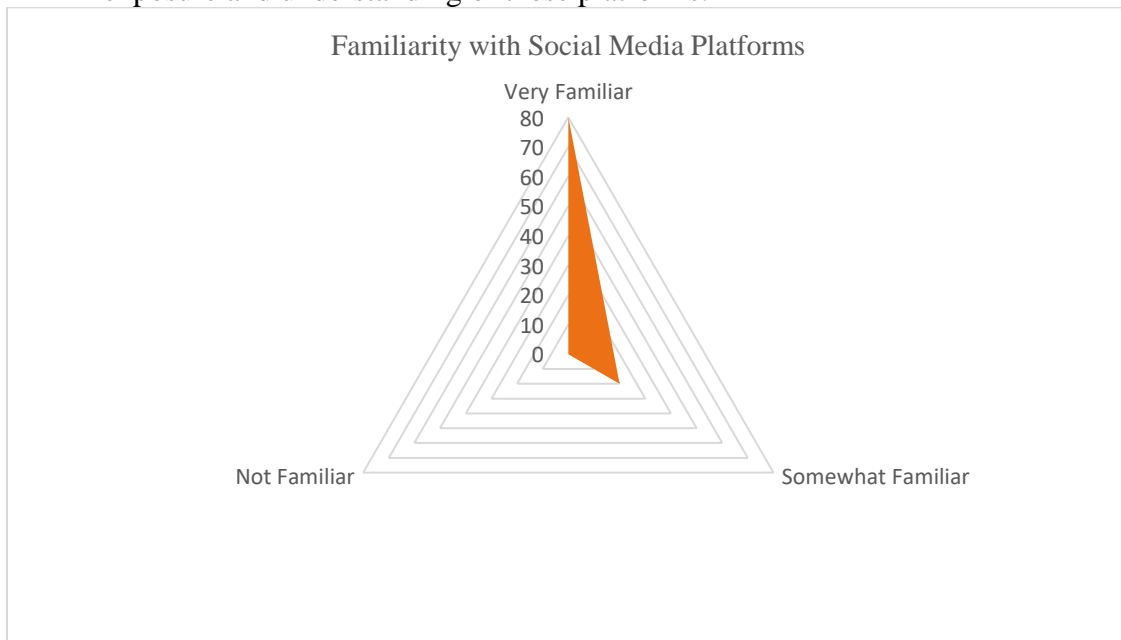


Figure 2: Familiarity with Social Media Platforms

Figure 3 shows the data on the frequency of social media usage among respondents reveals that 80% engage with social media platforms multiple times a day. An additional 20% use social media once a day. No respondents reported using social media 2-3 times a

week or rarely. This high frequency of usage indicates that social media plays a significant and regular role in the daily lives of the respondents, highlighting its importance in hotel marketing and branding strategies.

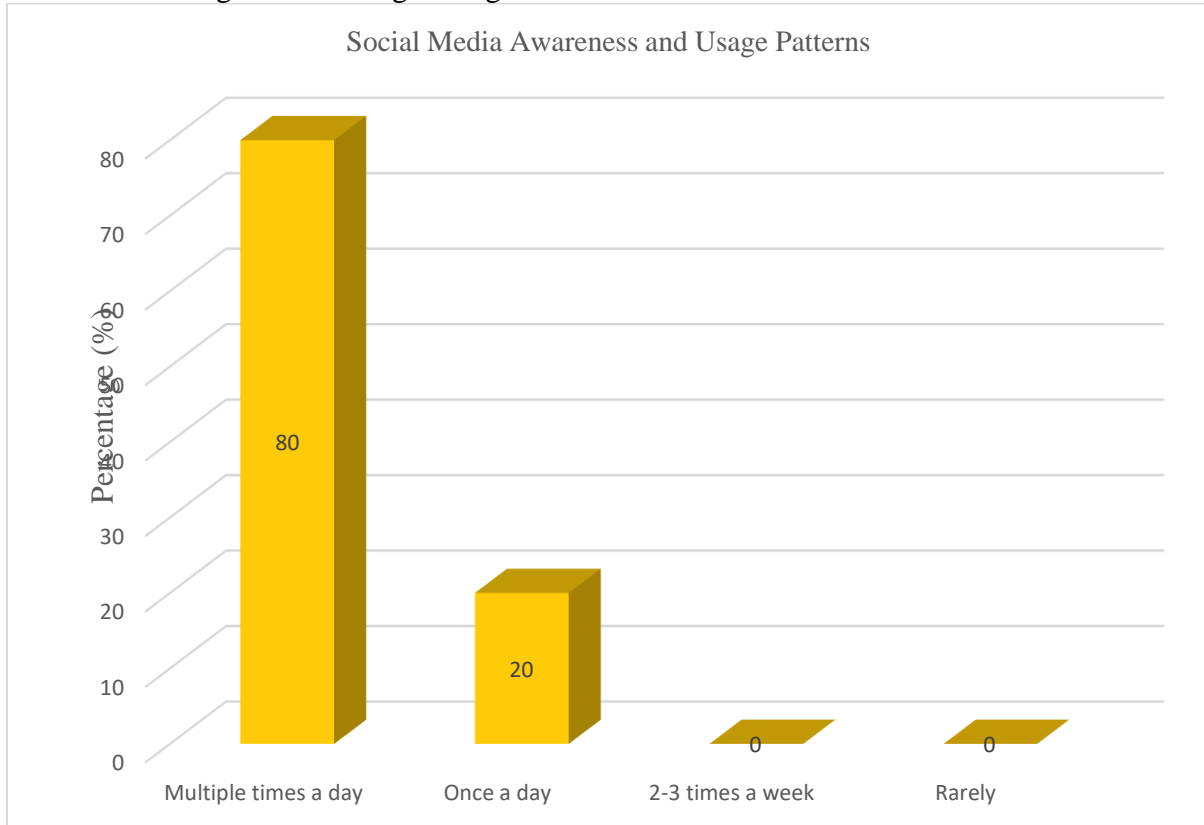


Figure 3: Social Media Awareness and Usage Patterns

Figure 4 shows the data on the primary purpose of social media usage among respondents shows that 35% primarily use social media to connect with friends and family. Meanwhile, 25% use it for planning travel and accommodation, highlighting its relevance to the hospitality industry. Another 20% use social media to follow news and trends, and an equal percentage (20%) use it to discover new products and services. These varied purposes underscore the multifaceted role social media plays in the lives of users, offering diverse opportunities for hotel marketing and branding strategies.

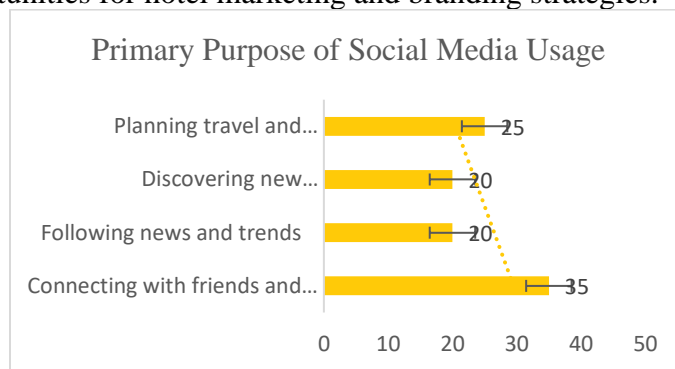


Figure 4: Primary Purpose of Social Media Usage

Figure 5 shows that the data on the effectiveness rating of social media in hotel marketing and branding indicates that 60% of respondents consider it very effective. Another 20% rate it as effective, while the remaining 20% hold a neutral view. No respondents found social media to be ineffective or very ineffective. This overwhelmingly positive assessment underscores the perceived value and impact of social media as a tool for enhancing hotel marketing and branding efforts.

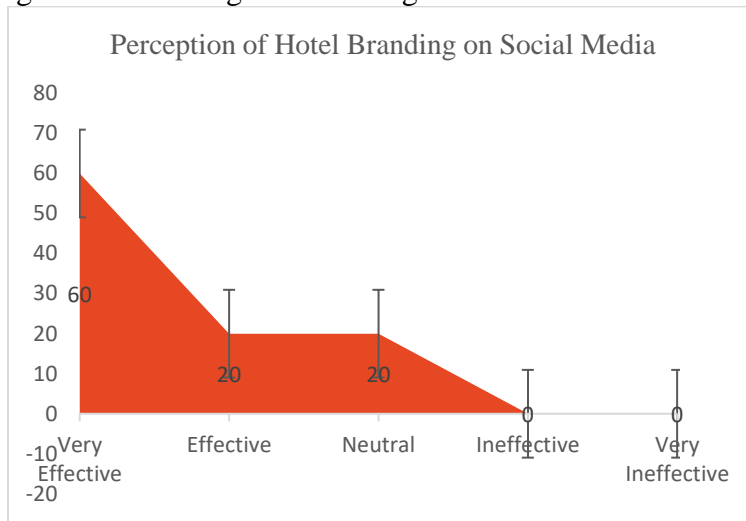


Figure 5: Perception of Hotel Branding on Social Media

Figure 6 shows that the data on the preferred social media platforms for hotel marketing and branding shows that 50% of respondents favor Instagram. Facebook and YouTube are each preferred by 20% of respondents, highlighting their significant but lesser roles compared to Instagram. Twitter is used by 10% of respondents, while LinkedIn and other platforms are not favored by any respondents. This distribution emphasizes Instagram's dominant role in social media strategies within the hospitality industry.

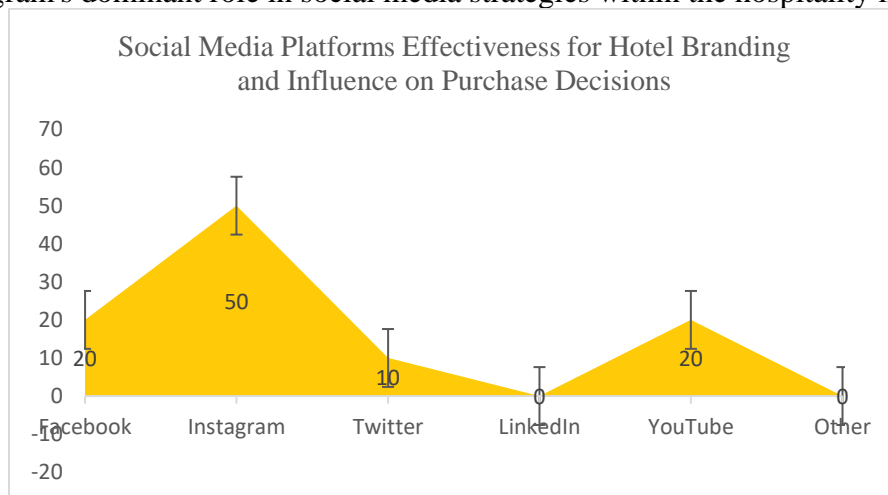


Figure 6: Social Media Platforms Effectiveness for Hotel Branding and Influence on Purchase Decisions

Figure 7 shows the data on the influence level of social media on hotel marketing and branding indicates that 60% of respondents find it strongly influential. Another 30% consider it moderately influential, while 5% are neutral. Additionally, 5% of respondents rate it as slightly influential, and none view it as not influential. This highlights the significant impact social media has on shaping marketing and branding efforts in the hospitality sector.

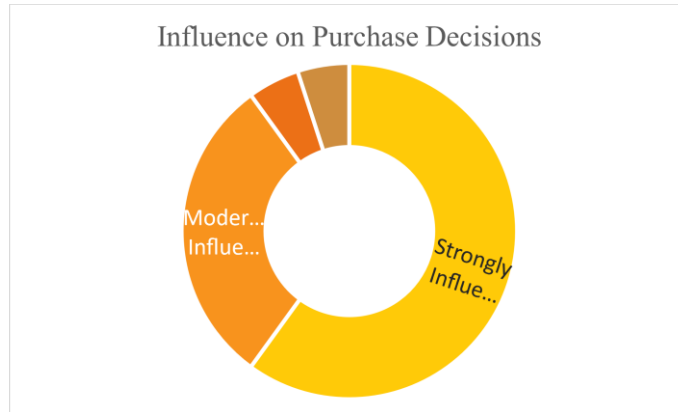


Figure 7: Influence on Purchase Decisions

Figure 8 demonstrated that the impact level of social media on hotel marketing and branding reveals that a substantial 80% of respondents believe it significantly influences their decisions. An additional 20% feel that social media somewhat influences them, while no respondents reported experiencing any impact, whether negative or neutral. This strong perception of social media's positive influence underscores its vital role in shaping marketing strategies within the hospitality industry. Thus, indicating that these findings underscore the importance of visually appealing content in driving consumer engagement and influencing booking decisions within the hospitality industry.

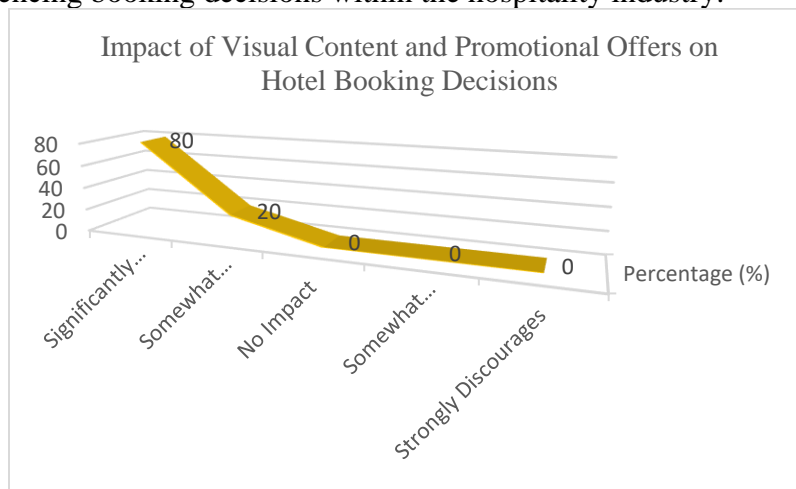


Figure 8: Impact of Visual Content and Promotional Offers on Hotel Booking Decisions

Figure 9 findings indicate that the data on the influence level of social media in hotel marketing and branding indicates that 80% of respondents feel that social media always influences their decisions. An additional 20% report that it often influences them, while no respondents indicated that social media occasionally, rarely, or never influences

their choices. This strong consensus highlights the pervasive and consistent impact of social media on decision-making processes within the hospitality sector.



Figure 9: Influence of Promotional Offers

Figure 10 indicate that the data on the effectiveness of various social media strategies for hotel marketing reveals the following ratings: For “Regular Updates and Posts,” 50% of respondents rated it a 4, while 40% rated it a 5, indicating strong approval. In the case of “Engaging Contests or Challenges,” 50% rated it a 5, 30% rated it a 4, and 20% rated it a 3, reflecting a positive reception. Notably, “Collaboration with Influencers” received a perfect score, with 100% of respondents rating it a 5, emphasizing its importance. “User-Generated Content” garnered ratings of 50% at both levels 4 and 5, while “Live Video Content” received ratings of 60% at level 4 and 40% at level 5. Lastly, “Social Media Advertising” also achieved a 100% rating of 5, underscoring its effectiveness in hotel marketing strategies. Overall, these results highlight the significant role of influencer collaboration and social media advertising in driving successful marketing efforts.

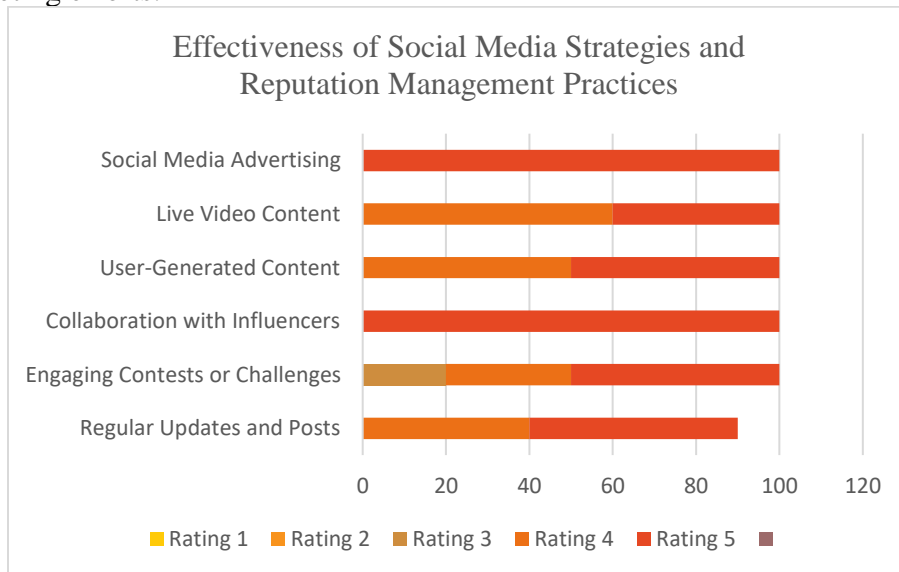


Figure 10: Effectiveness of Social Media Strategies and Reputation Management Practices

Figure 11 findings show the responses to customer feedback indicates that 40% of respondents believe that promptly addressing the issue is the most effective approach, while an equal 40% advocate for providing compensation or discounts. Additionally, 20% suggest seeking private resolution through direct messages. Notably, no respondents selected "no response" or "other" options, highlighting a consensus on the importance of active engagement in addressing customer concerns. This suggests that swift action and compensation are key strategies for effective customer relationship management in the hospitality industry. These results highlight the proactive approach taken by hotels in managing negative feedback on social media platforms, emphasizing the importance of swift and effective responses to maintain brand reputation and customer satisfaction.

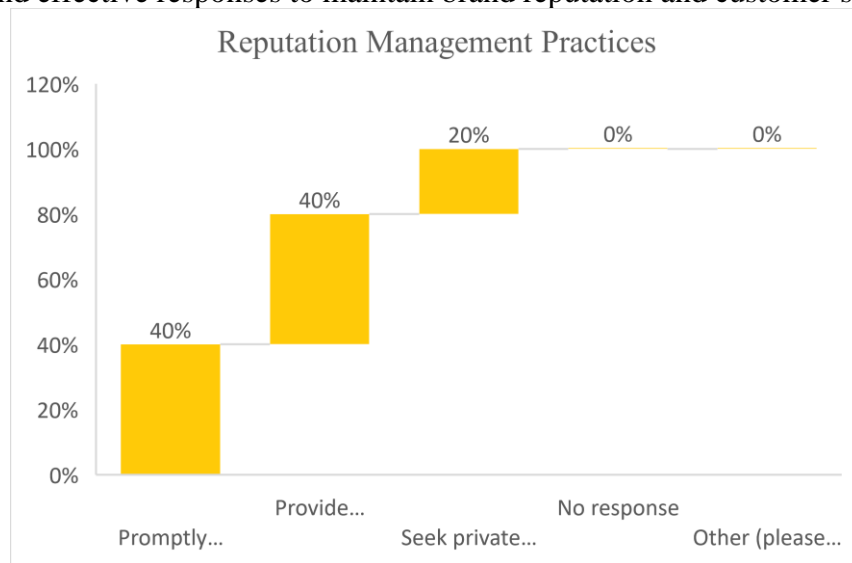


Figure 11: Reputation Management Practices

Figure 12 shows the data on the effectiveness of different strategies for leveraging positive guest experiences in hotel marketing reveals the following distribution: 30% of respondents (30 respondents) feature positive reviews on official pages, while 20% (20 respondents) share guest-generated content. Notably, the most popular strategy, used by 40% of respondents (40 respondents), is to employ positive testimonials in advertising. Additionally, 10% of respondents (10 respondents) offer exclusive perks to guests with positive experiences. Interestingly, no respondents selected the "Other" option, indicating a clear preference for these established strategies. These findings have several implications for hotel marketing strategies. First, the preference for using positive testimonials in advertising underscores its perceived impact on attracting new customers and enhancing brand reputation. Furthermore, featuring positive reviews on official pages and sharing guest-generated content are also significant, indicating the value of authentic and user-driven content in marketing efforts. Although less commonly used, offering exclusive perks to guests with positive experiences suggests a targeted approach to rewarding and encouraging guest loyalty. Overall, the absence of responses for the "Other" category suggests a strong consensus on the effectiveness of these primary strategies, reflecting a strategic focus on authenticity, guest engagement, and leveraging positive feedback to enhance marketing efforts. Thus, these findings underscore the importance of leveraging

positive feedback to bolster brand reputation and attract potential guests on social media platforms.

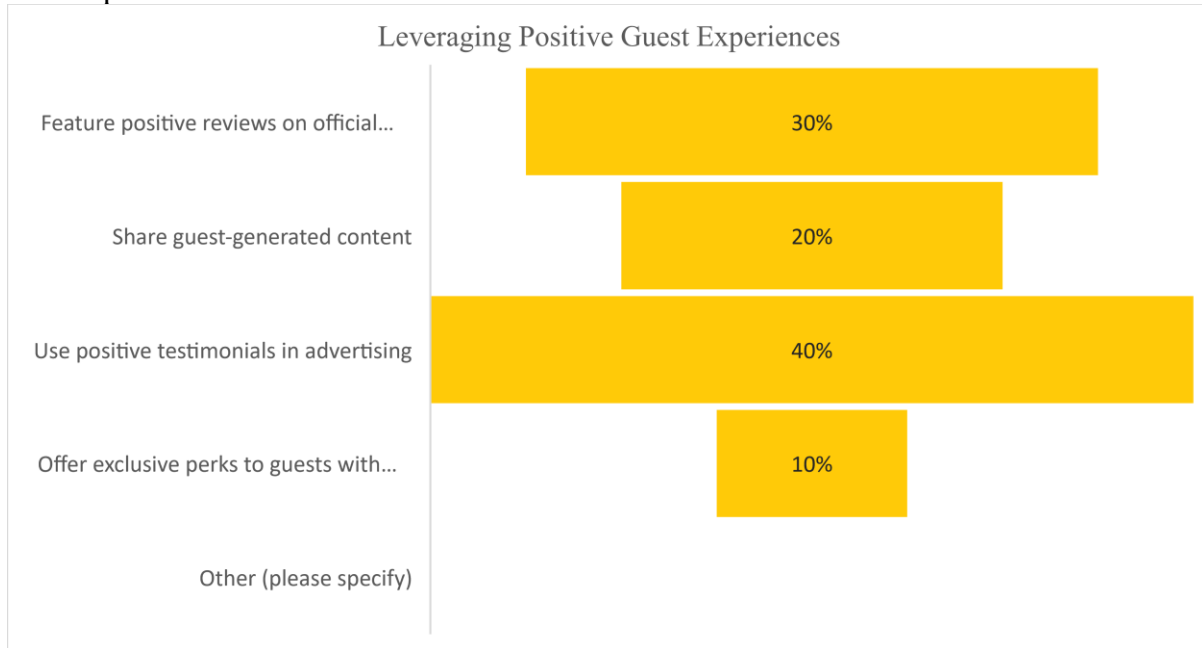


Figure 12: Leveraging Positive Guest Experiences

Figure 13 presents the data on market trends before and after the adoption of social media by hotels reveals a significant shift in favorability. Prior to social media usage, only 10% of respondents (10 respondents) reported more favorable market trends, whereas a substantial 70% (70 respondents) indicated that the trends were largely unchanged, and 20% (20 respondents) observed less favorable conditions. None of the respondents were unsure about the market trends before social media usage. Thus, this suggests a notable transformation in market dynamics with the advent of social media, reflecting its impact on the hospitality industry's trends and strategies. In contrast, post-social media usage data shows a dramatic improvement, with 90% of respondents (90 respondents) reporting more favorable market trends. The percentage of those who felt the market trends remained largely unchanged dropped drastically to 5% (5 respondents), and no respondents reported less favorable conditions. Additionally, 5% (5 respondents) were not sure about the market trends after social media adoption. These findings imply that social media has played a crucial role in enhancing market perceptions and trends for hotels, significantly shifting them from a state of stagnation or decline to one of considerable favorability. This highlights the transformative impact of social media on hotel marketing and its potential to drive positive market outcomes.

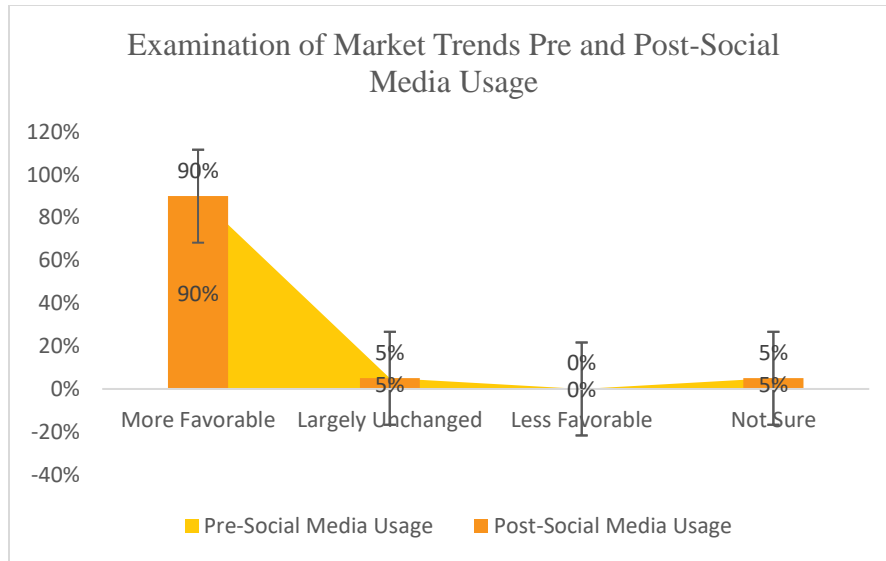


Figure 13: Examination of Market Trends Pre and Post-Social Media Usage.

4. Discussion

4.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study's demographic data, indicating that the majority of respondents are aged between 18-34 and have diverse gender and occupational representations, provides a valuable context for comparing with other studies on AI integration in the hospitality industry. For instance, Milton [25] emphasized the role of younger demographics in adopting AI-driven innovations in menu design and customer interaction, suggesting a correlation between age and AI receptiveness in hospitality settings. Similarly, Kannan [26] noted that younger travelers are more likely to engage with AI-driven tourism services, supporting the demographic trends observed in this study. Same for studies by Adindu *et al.* [27]; Olalekan and Adindu, [28]; Ihuoma and Raimi, [29]; and Adindu and Raimi [30] Furthermore, the study's findings on gender distribution align with those of Limna [31], who found a balanced gender representation among respondents evaluating AI in the hospitality industry. This near-equal gender distribution ensures diverse perspectives, mirroring the comprehensive view presented in Prud'homme and Raymond's [32] study on sustainable practices in hospitality. Additionally, the study's focus on social media interactions among hotel marketing professionals echoes the insights of Bisoi, Roy, and Samal [33], who explored AI's impact on marketing strategies and found significant engagement from both male and female professionals. Transitioning to occupational data, the study reveals that travelers and marketing professionals constitute the largest groups of respondents, which is in agreement with Prentice, Weaven, and Wong [34]. Their research highlighted that AI's influence is most pronounced among frequent travelers and marketing professionals who utilize AI tools for customer engagement. This occupational alignment reinforces the findings of Vinnakota *et al.* [35], who discussed AI's role in enhancing marketing efficiency and customer interaction, particularly among industry professionals. Moreover, the study's demographic insights on hotel staff participation are comparable to the observations by Bi *et al.* [36], who investigated the asymmetric effects of AI on customer satisfaction in the hotel industry. Their study also found that hotel staff, though a smaller group, play a crucial role in implementing AI solutions, which is consistent with the 20% representation of hotel staff in this study. This correlation is further supported by

the work of Thaker and Ohol [37], who highlighted the critical role of front-line staff in AI adoption and customer service enhancement. The study's data on the age distribution, particularly the lack of respondents aged 55 and above, contrasts with the findings of Rosak-Szyrocka *et al.* [38]. They observed that older demographics are less likely to engage with AI-driven solutions, a trend that aligns with the absence of older respondents in this study. This discrepancy underscores the importance of targeting younger demographics for AI innovations, as highlighted by Leung [39] in his research on smart tourism. Additionally, the study's comprehensive view of social media's influence on hotel marketing aligns with Ahmed and Houda's [40] findings on AI-powered marketing strategies. Both studies underscore the significant role of social media in engaging customers and enhancing brand visibility. This alignment is further reinforced by Chatterjee and Karmakar [41], who emphasized the synergy between digitalization and sustainable development goals in the hospitality industry.

Furthermore, the diverse occupational representation in this study enriches the understanding of AI's multifaceted impact, as discussed by Joanna *et al.* [42]. Their research on sustainability and AI in hospitality education highlights the varied perspectives of industry stakeholders, mirroring the mixed professional backgrounds of respondents in this study. This diversity ensures a holistic view of AI's benefits and challenges, similar to the findings of Gerdt, Wagner, and Schewe [43] on the relationship between sustainability practices and customer satisfaction. Lastly, the study's insights into the influence of social media and AI on hotel marketing and branding strategies resonate with the comprehensive reviews by Milton [25] and Kannan [26]. Both researchers underscored the transformative potential of AI in enhancing customer experience and operational efficiency, which aligns with the perspectives gathered from the diverse demographic and occupational groups in this study. These comparisons underscore the relevance and applicability of the study's findings in the broader context of AI adoption in the hospitality industry.

4.1.2 Familiarity with Social Media Platforms

The findings illustrated in Figure 2 highlight the remarkable level of familiarity that respondents possess with social media platforms, as 80% indicated they are very familiar. This finding aligns with previous studies that also emphasize the importance of social media in shaping customer interactions within various sectors, particularly in hospitality marketing [27-30, 44, 45]. Notably, the absence of respondents reporting unfamiliarity suggests a universal recognition of social media's role, resonating with Chen *et al.* [46], who argue that social media is an essential channel for engaging customers effectively. Such substantial familiarity may be linked to increased consumer expectations for engagement through digital platforms, further reinforcing the need for businesses to adapt their marketing strategies accordingly [47]. Furthermore, this high level of familiarity supports the assertion that social media can significantly influence customer satisfaction and brand perception, as indicated in research conducted by Bi *et al.* [36]. The finding that 20% of respondents are somewhat familiar suggests there remains an opportunity for businesses to further educate these users on utilizing social media effectively, enhancing their overall experience. Previous studies have found that social media familiarity can lead to increased trust and loyalty, which are crucial factors for success in the hospitality industry [48]. Therefore, businesses must leverage the existing familiarity of consumers while addressing the needs of those who may only have a partial understanding of social media tools. Moreover, the implications of these findings are underscored by the significant

role of artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing customer service and engagement within the hospitality sector. Research has shown that leveraging AI can create personalized experiences, thereby improving customer satisfaction and retention rates [49, 50]. The high levels of social media familiarity among respondents could enable the seamless integration of AI tools, as customers with a solid foundation in these platforms are likely to embrace AI-driven solutions that enhance their interactions with brands. This synergy between social media familiarity and AI utilization can create a powerful competitive advantage for businesses looking to optimize their marketing strategies.

Transitioning from the familiarity aspect to the marketing effectiveness, the high percentage of respondents who are familiar with social media supports the argument that social media marketing is not just a trend but a necessity for businesses, particularly in hospitality [41]. As customers increasingly turn to social media for recommendations and reviews, businesses must prioritize their online presence to attract and retain customers. The findings suggest that businesses that neglect to engage with their audience on social media risk losing potential customers to competitors who are more adept at utilizing these platforms [43]. Consequently, organizations must recognize the significant influence of social media on customer decision-making processes and adapt their marketing strategies accordingly. In addition to marketing implications, the research also raises concerns about the potential barriers to effective social media engagement. While 80% of respondents are very familiar with social media, the remaining 20% may encounter challenges in utilizing these platforms effectively [51]. Studies indicate that lack of knowledge about social media tools can hinder effective engagement and customer interaction [39]. Therefore, addressing these barriers becomes crucial for businesses aiming to maximize their marketing efforts. Training programs focused on enhancing social media skills among employees could help bridge the gap for the 20% who are somewhat familiar, ultimately leading to improved customer service and satisfaction. Moreover, as the hospitality industry continues to evolve, the integration of digital tools and social media must remain a priority for businesses. Research by Daradkeh *et al.* [52] suggests that enhancing digital presence is key to maximizing customer value in various sectors. With a solid foundation of respondents familiar with social media, businesses can harness this familiarity to develop innovative strategies that capitalize on emerging trends in the digital landscape. This approach not only enhances marketing effectiveness but also fosters customer loyalty through sustained engagement [40].

Transitioning to the implications for future research, the current findings emphasize the need for further studies exploring the relationship between social media familiarity and customer engagement outcomes in the hospitality industry. While existing literature highlights the significance of social media in marketing, there remains a gap in understanding how varying levels of familiarity affect customer behaviors and perceptions [53]. By conducting in-depth analyses of these dynamics, researchers can contribute valuable insights that inform industry practices and enhance customer experiences in a rapidly changing digital environment. Additionally, the increasing reliance on social media in marketing raises ethical considerations that warrant attention. The existing literature suggests that transparency and trust play crucial roles in fostering positive customer relationships in digital spaces [54, 55]. As businesses navigate the complexities of social media engagement, maintaining ethical standards becomes essential to building trust with customers. The findings indicating a high level of familiarity with social media among

respondents highlight the importance of ethical considerations in marketing practices, as customers are more likely to engage with brands that prioritize transparency and authenticity. In conclusion, the data presented in figure 2 provides valuable insights into the familiarity of respondents with social media platforms, reinforcing its critical role in hotel marketing and branding. The findings align with existing literature that underscores the importance of social media in shaping customer interactions and perceptions within the hospitality industry. As businesses continue to leverage social media and AI-driven solutions, addressing potential barriers to effective engagement and maintaining ethical standards will be crucial for maximizing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Future research should further explore the dynamics between social media familiarity and customer behaviors to provide actionable insights that can enhance marketing strategies and foster positive customer experiences.

4.1.3 Social Media Awareness and Usage Patterns

The data on the frequency of social media usage among respondents in this study, where 80% engage with social media multiple times a day, aligns with Żywiołek's [44] findings on the integral role of social media in shaping company image. Żywiołek's study indicates that frequent social media engagement is crucial for companies to maintain a positive image and develop specific strategies. Similarly, Vinnakota *et al.* [45] highlight the importance of leveraging artificial intelligence in social media to enhance customer engagement in the hospitality industry. This is consistent with the high frequency of social media use observed in the present study, underscoring the need for effective social media strategies. Transitioning from the role of social media in company image, Bihari Singh *et al.* [47] explore the barriers and motivations towards sustainable initiatives in the hospitality industry. They note that frequent social media engagement can drive sustainable practices through increased awareness and customer involvement. This aligns with the current study's finding that social media plays a significant role in hotel marketing and branding. Similarly, Bi *et al.* [36] discuss the asymmetric effects of attribute performance on customer satisfaction in the hotel industry, emphasizing that social media interactions can significantly impact customer perceptions and satisfaction levels. Furthermore, the present study's results resonate with Prahadeeswaran's [49] comprehensive review on the convergence of artificial intelligence and tourism. Prahadeeswaran suggests that high social media engagement, facilitated by AI, can enhance tourism marketing strategies. This complements the observed high frequency of social media use among respondents, reinforcing the importance of integrating AI in social media marketing. Additionally, Al-Araj *et al.* [50] examine the effect of artificial intelligence on service quality and customer satisfaction in the Jordanian banking sector, highlighting similar trends in the hospitality industry where social media and AI together enhance customer experiences.

Moreover, Prentice and Nguyen [48] emphasize the importance of AI in engaging and retaining customers through social media platforms. Their findings support the current study's indication that social media usage is critical for customer engagement in the hospitality industry. This perspective is echoed by Chatterjee and Karmakar [41], who discuss the role of digitalization and sustainable development goals in the hospitality industry. They argue that frequent social media interactions can promote sustainability and customer loyalty, aligning with the high engagement levels observed in this study. In contrast, Khan *et al.* [56] explore the technical aspects of network management using UAVs, which, while not directly related to social media usage, highlight the broader

technological advancements influencing customer engagement strategies. This suggests a potential area for future research, integrating UAV technology with social media to enhance customer experiences. Similarly, Mohsan *et al.* [57] (2022) provide a comprehensive review of micro-UAV charging techniques, indirectly suggesting that advancements in related technologies could further boost social media engagement through improved connectivity and accessibility. Additionally, Żywiołek *et al.* [44] discuss the nexus of transformational leadership and employee adaptiveness in knowledge sharing, highlighting the importance of social media as a tool for information dissemination and employee engagement. This complements the current study's findings by suggesting that frequent social media use can enhance internal communications and knowledge sharing within the hospitality industry. Similarly, Żywiołek and Schiavone [58] emphasize the perception of smart city solutions in enhancing residents' safety, which can be extrapolated to suggest that social media engagement can play a role in promoting safety and trust among customers.

Transitioning to environmental aspects, Batool *et al.* [59] assess sustainable strategies in alleviating energy poverty, indicating that frequent social media use can drive awareness and support for sustainable initiatives. This aligns with the current study's findings, highlighting the potential of social media in promoting environmental sustainability in the hospitality industry. Furthermore, Żywiołek [60] discusses the monitoring of information security systems, suggesting that frequent social media engagement requires robust security measures to protect customer data, which is critical for maintaining trust and satisfaction. Finally, Żywiołek and Schiavone's [58] exploration of the value of datasets in information and knowledge management reinforces the importance of social media as a valuable data source. Frequent social media interactions, as observed in the current study, provide rich data for analyzing customer preferences and improving marketing strategies. This is further supported by Shang *et al.* [61], who examine the impact of AI applications on enterprise environmental performance, suggesting that high social media engagement can contribute to better environmental outcomes through data-driven insights and targeted marketing efforts.

4.1.4 Primary Purpose of Social Media Usage

The data indicating that 35% of respondents use social media primarily to connect with friends and family aligns with previous findings. Andersson and Öhman [62] demonstrated that young people frequently discuss personal and social matters on social media platforms, emphasizing the role of these platforms in maintaining relationships. Similarly, Badri *et al.* [63] noted that social media serves as a significant tool for communication among school children and their families, highlighting the importance of these digital interactions in fostering social bonds. Moreover, Boyd and Ellison [64] discussed the fundamental role of social network sites in connecting people and supporting social interactions, which is consistent with the current data. Transitioning to the aspect of social media usage for planning travel and accommodation, which accounts for 25% of the respondents, this is echoed in studies emphasizing the influence of social media on the hospitality industry. Wood *et al.* [65] found that social media is a crucial tool for quantifying nature-based tourism and recreation, indicating its significance in travel planning. Aydın [66] also highlighted that university students frequently use social media for travel-related activities, showcasing the platform's utility in this sector. Similarly, Chandra and Krishna [67] identified an increase in travel-related content on social media,

particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic [68-74], underscoring its relevance in travel and accommodation planning. Another 20% of respondents using social media to follow news and trends is supported by various studies on the informative role of these platforms. Dunkel *et al.* [75] developed a framework to study collective reactions to events, emphasizing the role of social media in disseminating news and trends. Bai *et al.* [76] reviewed the use of emojis in following news on social media, further supporting the notion that these platforms are vital for staying updated. Moreover, Kim *et al.* [77] found that local topics and news are often discovered through social media, demonstrating the platform's role in providing timely information to users.

In examining the 20% of respondents using social media to discover new products and services, the findings resonate with studies on consumer behavior. Gabarron *et al.* [78] noted that social media platforms are significant for promoting and discovering new products, particularly in the context of health-related information. Prada *et al.* [79] also highlighted that emojis and other visual elements on social media can influence consumer behavior and product discovery. Additionally, Ayvaz and Shiha [80] discussed how the sentiment expressed through emojis can impact user perception of new products, aligning with the current data. Transitioning to the broader implications, the multifaceted role of social media in users' lives offers diverse opportunities for hotel marketing and branding strategies. This aligns with findings by Barbieri *et al.* [81], who explored patterns of social media usage in different contexts, highlighting the potential for targeted marketing. Levi [82] also examined how emojis indicate thematic developments, which can be leveraged for branding. Furthermore, Guntuku *et al.* [83] studied cultural differences in social media usage, suggesting that understanding these patterns can enhance marketing strategies across different demographics. In contrast, some studies highlight potential disagreements or limitations in the current data. Dunkel *et al.* [84] discussed privacy concerns related to location-based social media, which might limit the willingness of users to engage in travel planning or product discovery on these platforms. Desfontaines *et al.* [85] also raised concerns about the privacy implications of using social media for news and trend following, indicating potential drawbacks. Additionally, Mukherjee *et al.* [86] analyzed the EU migration crisis through social media, suggesting that the platform's role in news dissemination might be influenced by geopolitical contexts, which could affect the generalizability of the current findings.

Moreover, the specific use of social media for product discovery might not align universally, as noted by Wiesław [87], who found variations in social media usage patterns across different regions. This indicates that the current data might not fully capture the global diversity in social media behavior. Similarly, Imran *et al.* [88] highlighted cross-cultural differences in social media sentiment during the COVID-19 pandemic [68-74], suggesting that the platform's role in product discovery could vary significantly across cultures. Finally, while the data underscores the multifaceted role of social media, it is essential to consider the dynamic nature of these platforms. Kejriwal *et al.* [89] emphasized that social media usage patterns evolve rapidly, influenced by technological advancements and changing user preferences. This dynamic aspect is crucial for developing effective marketing and branding strategies. Additionally, Hauthal *et al.* [90] noted that emotional reactions on social media can fluctuate, affecting how users engage with different purposes over time. Thus, while the current data provides valuable insights, continuous monitoring and adaptation are necessary to fully leverage social media for marketing and branding.

4.1.5 Perception of Hotel Branding on Social Media

The findings presented in Figure 5 indicate a significant endorsement of social media's effectiveness in hotel marketing and branding, with 60% of respondents rating it as very effective. This aligns with the research by Leung [39], who highlights the transformative role of information and communication technology in the tourism sector, emphasizing that social media is a crucial tool for enhancing visibility and engagement. Similarly, Daradkeh *et al.* [52] assert that a strong digital presence is vital for maximizing customer value, which further underscores the positive perception of social media's role in the hospitality industry. Conversely, the positive ratings contrast with findings by Kimani and Scott [91], who suggest that while social media is beneficial, its impact is heavily influenced by the quality of engagement and content strategies employed by businesses. In agreement with the overwhelming positive assessments, Batool *et al.* [59] also emphasize the significance of adopting sustainable strategies in marketing to enhance consumer engagement and satisfaction. This perspective complements the findings that social media, when used effectively, can foster strong customer connections and improve brand reputation. Furthermore, the positive evaluation aligns with the observations made by Gerdt *et al.* [43], who found that effective digital marketing strategies can lead to higher customer satisfaction, thereby creating a positive feedback loop that enhances brand loyalty and trust. Moreover, the neutral responses from the remaining 20% of participants could reflect a lack of familiarity with social media's capabilities or the inconsistency in its application across various businesses. This viewpoint resonates with the studies conducted by Olalekan *et al.* [92], which point to potential gaps in the utilization of social media tools in enhancing customer relationships. Additionally, the research of Ahmed and Houda highlights the necessity for businesses to adapt their public relations strategies in conjunction with social media, suggesting that without a comprehensive approach, some respondents may remain skeptical about its effectiveness.

As we delve deeper into the implications of these findings, it becomes clear that the perceived effectiveness of social media in hotel marketing aligns with the views expressed by Żywiołek and Schiavone [58], who argue that the integration of modern communication tools is essential for fostering a sense of safety and security among consumers. Their insights suggest that a robust social media strategy not only promotes the brand but also enhances customer confidence in service quality. This connection is pivotal as it underscores the multifaceted role that social media plays in building customer relationships and brand identity within the hospitality sector. In contrast to these predominantly positive assessments, some literature highlights the challenges faced by hospitality businesses in leveraging social media effectively. For instance, the study by Subrahmanyam and Patricia [93] emphasizes the potential pitfalls of social media engagement, which can lead to miscommunication and negative public perceptions if not managed correctly. Therefore, while the current findings indicate a general consensus on the effectiveness of social media, it is crucial to consider the nuanced perspectives that highlight the importance of strategic implementation and risk management. Transitioning from the potential challenges, it is essential to recognize the implications of these results for future marketing strategies. The findings suggest a need for hotels to prioritize social media in their marketing frameworks, as supported by studies from Rustiawan *et al.* [94], which outline the critical role of communication technology in enhancing business management and customer interactions. By incorporating social media into their strategic plans, hotels can capitalize on the

significant support expressed by respondents, ultimately fostering stronger customer relationships and improving overall performance.

Additionally, the substantial endorsement of social media's effectiveness reinforces the findings of Khan *et al.* [95], who discuss the importance of brand engagement in online services. Their research highlights that effective social media strategies not only boost visibility but also foster deeper emotional connections with customers. This aligns with the high effectiveness ratings reported in the current study, indicating that hotels should actively cultivate their online presence to align with evolving consumer expectations. Furthermore, the absence of respondents rating social media as ineffective could indicate a shift in market dynamics, suggesting that businesses that fail to adopt digital marketing strategies risk falling behind. This observation supports the work of Li *et al.* [96], who argue that businesses must adapt to the changing landscape of marketing to remain competitive. The consensus among respondents that social media is a valuable tool reinforces the notion that its integration is no longer optional but rather essential for sustained success in the hospitality industry. In conclusion, the results from this study, juxtaposed with existing literature, paint a comprehensive picture of the role of social media in hotel marketing and branding. The predominantly positive perceptions align with broader trends in digital marketing, underscoring the potential of social media to enhance customer engagement and brand reputation. However, it is imperative for businesses to remain vigilant and adapt their strategies to maximize the effectiveness of social media, as highlighted by various studies, ensuring that they can navigate the complexities of the digital landscape while maintaining strong customer relationships.

4.1.6 Social Media Platforms Effectiveness for Hotel Branding and Influence on Purchase Decisions

Comparing the results that show Instagram being favored by 50% of respondents for hotel marketing and branding with other studies reveals both alignments and discrepancies. Milton [25] emphasizes the transformative role of AI in the hospitality industry, particularly in enhancing customer interaction and engagement, which aligns with the high preference for Instagram given its interactive features. Similarly, Kannan [26] discusses the significant impact of AI on customer experience and operational efficiency, suggesting that platforms like Instagram may be preferred due to their ability to integrate AI-driven tools that enhance user engagement. Further exploring the digital landscape, Limna [31] highlights AI's role in the hospitality sector, suggesting that the visual and interactive nature of Instagram aligns with AI's capabilities to enhance customer interaction, thus supporting the study's findings. Bisoi *et al.* [97] also indicates that AI integration into social media platforms is crucial for customer engagement and satisfaction, reinforcing Instagram's dominant role in hotel marketing strategies. These insights confirm that AI's integration into visual and interactive platforms like Instagram significantly influences customer preferences. Contrastingly, Prud'homme and Raymond [32] highlight the importance of sustainable development practices in influencing customer satisfaction. This focus on sustainability may align more with platforms like LinkedIn, which, despite being unfavored in the study, are often utilized for sharing corporate social responsibility initiatives. However, the study's results show no preference for LinkedIn, possibly indicating a gap in leveraging sustainability in social media marketing within the hospitality industry. Similarly, Prentice *et al.* [34] discuss the moderating effect of AI

preference on customer engagement, suggesting that while Instagram is favored, other platforms could also be effective if utilized differently.

Moreover, Milton [25] and Vinnakota *et al.* [45] discuss the strategic implications of AI in enhancing operational efficiency and competitive advantage in the hotel industry. This might suggest that while Instagram is currently favored, other platforms like Facebook and YouTube, each preferred by 20% of respondents, also play a crucial role in comprehensive marketing strategies. Joanna *et al.* [42] also emphasize the synergy between AI and sustainability in education, implying that diverse platforms could cater to different strategic goals in hospitality marketing. Further, Rosak-Szyrocka *et al.* [38] and Żywiołek *et al.* [98] discuss advancements in distance learning and the significance of customer data security, respectively. This indicates a potential overlap between the educational use of social media and its application in hospitality for customer engagement and data security, supporting the study's findings on platform preferences [99]. The integration of AI in these platforms ensures enhanced customer satisfaction and engagement, aligning with Instagram's high preference due to its interactive capabilities. Additionally, Limna and Kraiwanit [51] explore the role of ChatGPT in customer service within the hospitality industry, highlighting the importance of AI in enhancing customer interactions. This supports the study's findings, as Instagram's AI-driven features might be preferred for similar reasons. Leung [39] also discusses the evolution from e-tourism to smart tourism, suggesting that Instagram's capabilities align with these advancements, thus reinforcing its dominance in the study's results.

Meanwhile, Thaker and Ohol [37] emphasize enhancing digital presence for customer value maximization in fine dining, which aligns with the preference for Instagram due to its strong visual appeal and engagement capabilities. Similarly, Daradkeh *et al.* [52] discuss digital presence in fast food restaurants, implying that Instagram's features might cater well to diverse segments within the hospitality industry, corroborating the study's findings. This indicates that Instagram's dominance is reflective of broader trends in enhancing digital presence across various hospitality segments. In contrast, Kimani and Scott [91] discuss front office operations, suggesting that platforms like LinkedIn might be underutilized in operational contexts within hospitality, explaining their lack of preference in the study. Gerdt *et al.* [43] also investigate the relationship between sustainability and customer satisfaction, which might not be as effectively communicated through Instagram as through platforms like LinkedIn or Facebook, highlighting an area for potential improvement in strategy. Finally, Ahmed and Houda [40] discuss AI-powered marketing and public relations, indicating that while Instagram is favored, platforms like Twitter and YouTube also play significant roles in comprehensive marketing strategies. This suggests that a balanced approach, leveraging the strengths of multiple platforms, could enhance overall marketing effectiveness in the hospitality industry, aligning partially with the study's findings and indicating areas for strategic diversification.

4.1.7 Influence on Purchase Decisions

The data indicating that 60% of respondents find social media strongly influential in hotel marketing and branding is consistent with findings from other studies that emphasize the critical role of social media in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors. For instance, Aiken and Boush [54] highlighted the importance of trust marks and online signals in building consumer trust, which aligns with the significant impact that

respondents attribute to social media marketing efforts in the hospitality sector. Similarly, Bai, Yao, and Dou [100] demonstrated that social commerce factors significantly influence user purchase behavior, supporting the idea that social media is a powerful tool for influencing customer decisions. Transitioning from this point, the moderate influence reported by 30% of respondents also finds support in the literature. Chen and Teng [55] developed a comprehensive model showing that online store image, which can be heavily influenced by social media presence, plays a crucial role in purchase intentions. This finding is echoed by Chen and Shen [101], who found that consumers' decisions in a social commerce context are significantly shaped by their engagement with social media platforms. These studies collectively underline that while social media is not the sole influencer, it is a substantial factor in the decision-making process. Moreover, the neutrality expressed by 5% of respondents can be compared to findings by Duan, Gu, and Whinston [102], who investigated the impact of online reviews on consumer behavior. They found that while positive online reviews significantly boost sales, some consumers remain indifferent, possibly due to personal preferences or skepticism about the authenticity of online content. Similarly, Fang *et al.* [103] highlighted that the effectiveness of social media marketing could be moderated by factors such as the perceived effectiveness of e-commerce mechanisms.

Furthermore, the 5% of respondents who find social media slightly influential align with research by Heinonen [104], which suggests that not all consumers actively engage with social media for purchasing decisions. Heinonen's study indicated that while social media could shape consumer behavior, some users might not be as influenced due to various personal or contextual factors. This nuance in consumer behavior reflects the diverse ways in which individuals interact with social media content. Transitioning to the absence of respondents who view social media as not influential, this finding aligns with the broader consensus in the literature that social media plays at least some role in modern marketing strategies. Kim and Park [105] noted that social commerce characteristics consistently affect consumer trust and performance, reinforcing the notion that even minimal engagement with social media can impact consumer perceptions. Additionally, Lim and Van Der Heide [106] found that the credibility of online reviews on platforms like Yelp significantly affects consumer trust, suggesting that social media presence is almost universally recognized, albeit to varying extents. Linking this to studies on trust and online shopping, Gefen, Karahanna, and Straub [107] explored the integrated model of trust and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in online shopping, demonstrating that trust built through social media interactions can significantly enhance consumer acceptance and engagement. This aligns with the high percentage of respondents who view social media as strongly influential, underscoring its role in fostering trust and influencing purchasing behavior.

Furthermore, examining moderated online communities, Chen, Xu, and Whinston [46] showed that the quality of user-generated content in social media forums can greatly affect consumer decisions. This finding is relevant to the significant impact attributed to social media in the survey, as quality content can drive engagement and trust, ultimately influencing marketing and branding outcomes. Lastly, transitioning to the broader implications, studies by Hajli and Lin [53] (2015) and Hajli *et al.* [108] on consumer adoption of social commerce highlight the pivotal role of trust in social networking sites on purchase intentions. These studies collectively support the notion that social media

significantly influences hotel marketing and branding, as evidenced by the 60% of respondents who find it strongly influential. They also reinforce that even the moderate influence observed in other respondents is critical in shaping overall consumer behavior and brand perception.

4.1.8 Impact of Visual Content and Promotional Offers on Hotel Booking Decisions

The findings of Figure 8, which demonstrate that 80% of respondents believe social media significantly influences their hotel booking decisions, align with Andersson and Öhman's [62] study on young people's conversations about environmental and sustainability issues on social media. Their research highlighted that social media plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions and behaviors regarding sustainability, showing a parallel in the influential capacity of social media in various contexts [62]. Similarly, Bai *et al.* [76] found that the use of emojis on social media platforms can enhance user engagement and sentiment, indicating the powerful role of visual elements in influencing user interactions and decisions, which supports the idea that visually appealing content drives consumer engagement in hotel marketing [76]. Transitioning to the examination of social media's role in sentiment analysis, Ayvaz and Shiha [80] explored how emojis impact sentiment analysis, concluding that emojis significantly enhance the accuracy of sentiment predictions by providing additional context and emotional nuance [80]. This supports the notion that visual elements, such as images and videos used in hotel marketing, can similarly enhance consumer perception and decision-making processes. Furthermore, Barbieri *et al.* [81] identified patterns in Twitter emoji usage, suggesting that these visual symbols help convey emotions and opinions more effectively than text alone, which aligns with the findings that visually appealing content on social media positively influences hotel branding and consumer engagement [81]. In agreement with the positive influence of social media on consumer decisions, Broni [109] reported that global emoji usage continues to rise, indicating a growing trend in the use of visual elements to communicate emotions and influence online interactions [109]. This trend supports the findings of Figure 8, emphasizing the importance of visually appealing content in hotel marketing strategies. Moreover, Chandra and Krishna [67] highlighted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, social media sentiment analysis via deep learning revealed significant shifts in public mood and behavior, further illustrating the impact of social media on shaping consumer perceptions and decisions [67, 110, 111].

Chen *et al.* [112] demonstrated the effectiveness of using bi-sense emoji embedding and attention-based LSTM for Twitter sentiment analysis, showing that incorporating visual elements enhances the understanding of user sentiments [112]. This finding parallels the impact of visually appealing social media content on hotel marketing, as identified in Figure 8. Additionally, Desfontaines *et al.* [85] discussed the limitations of cardinality estimators in preserving privacy, emphasizing the importance of accurate and ethical data usage in social media analysis, which is crucial for maintaining consumer trust in hotel marketing [85]. Dunkel *et al.* [75] proposed a conceptual framework for studying collective reactions to events on location-based social media, suggesting that social media platforms are instrumental in influencing public reactions and behaviors [75]. This framework aligns with the findings of Figure 8, highlighting the significant influence of social media on consumer decisions in the hospitality industry. Furthermore, Dunkel, Löchner, and Burghardt [84] examined privacy-aware visualization of volunteered geographic

information, stressing the ethical considerations in using social media data for marketing purposes, which is relevant for developing responsible hotel marketing strategies [84].

Feldman *et al.* [113] noted that emojis and words work together to enhance communication on social media, which supports the idea that visual and textual content combined can effectively influence consumer decisions, as seen in Figure 8 [113]. Additionally, Gabarron *et al.* [78] conducted a sentiment analysis of diabetes-related tweets, finding that social media content significantly impacts public perceptions and health-related behaviors, which parallels the influence of social media on hotel marketing and consumer engagement [78]. Lastly, Goodchild [114] discussed the role of citizens as sensors in the world of volunteered geography, emphasizing the participatory nature of social media in influencing public behaviors and decisions [114]. This concept aligns with the findings of Figure 8, where consumer engagement with visually appealing social media content significantly impacts their hotel booking decisions. Granell and Ostermann [115] extended this idea by exploring the objectives and methods of research using geo-social media for disaster management, further illustrating the powerful role of social media in shaping public responses and actions in various contexts, including hospitality [115].

4.1.9 Influence of Promotional Offers

The findings in Figure 9, indicating that 80% of respondents feel social media always influences their decisions and 20% report it often influences them, align with numerous studies. For instance, Aji *et al.* [116] found a significant effect of social media marketing on Instagram towards purchase intention, suggesting a strong influence of social media on consumer behavior. Similarly, Ausat *et al.* [117] emphasized the utilization of social media in market research and business decision analysis, supporting the idea that social media consistently impacts decision-making processes. In contrast, some studies indicate a more nuanced influence of social media. Almaududi Ausat *et al.* [118] analyzed factors affecting mobile commerce adoption, revealing that while social media plays a crucial role, other factors such as user interface and trustworthiness also significantly contribute to consumer decisions. Additionally, Ferine *et al.* [119] noted that while social media impacts consumer behavior, the degree of influence varies based on demographic and psychographic factors, suggesting that the influence might not always be as uniform as indicated in Figure 9. Transitioning to the context of business performance, Ausat and Peirisa [120] explored determinants of e-commerce adoption on business performance and found that social media significantly boosts business performance, corroborating the high influence levels reported in Figure 9. However, Harahap *et al.* [121] highlighted obstacles and solutions for MSMEs in electronic commerce during the COVID-19 pandemic, indicating that while social media is influential, businesses must also address technological and operational challenges to maximize its benefits.

Furthermore, studies on the role of social media during the pandemic provide additional insights. Harahap *et al.* [121] examined ChatGPT technology and its potential in improving tourism information services, illustrating how social media and digital tools enhance engagement and decision-making. Similarly, Dewobroto and Enrica [122] demonstrated that live streaming technology significantly improves the shopping experience, generating engagement and buyer trustworthiness, which aligns with the strong influence observed in hotel marketing and branding. In terms of consumer behavior, Azhar *et al.* [123] investigated the effect of social media influencer characteristics on purchase intentions, finding a substantial impact. This aligns with Figure 9's findings, as influencers

on social media platforms often sway consumer decisions. However, Liu and Guan [124] raised concerns about using social networking as an informal organizational communication channel, suggesting potential limitations and challenges, which might indicate a more complex influence of social media than a straightforward one. Additionally, the literature on digital marketing strategies supports the strong influence of social media indicated in Figure 9. Li *et al.* [96] proposed a comprehensive framework for social media marketing strategies, validating the pervasive impact of social media in marketing contexts. Similarly, Dwivedi *et al.* [125] set the future of digital and social media marketing research, underscoring the importance of social media in contemporary marketing strategies, which corroborates the findings in the hospitality sector.

On the other hand, Rustiawan *et al.* [126] explored determinants of employee dedication to companies, finding that while social media influences employee engagement, other factors like organizational culture and leadership also play crucial roles. This suggests that the influence of social media, while significant, might not be as dominant in all contexts as indicated by the uniform consensus in Figure 9. Finally, the role of social media in educational marketing strategies highlights another dimension of its influence. Harini *et al.* [127] discussed effective marketing strategies for early childhood education schools in the digital age, indicating that social media is a powerful tool for engagement and communication. This aligns with the strong influence observed in the hospitality sector, showing the broad applicability of social media across different industries. In conclusion, while the findings in Figure 9 are supported by several studies indicating the significant influence of social media on decision-making in various sectors, other research highlights the complexities and additional factors that can moderate this influence. Therefore, while social media undeniably plays a crucial role, its impact may vary based on context, demographics, and other concurrent factors, suggesting a need for a more nuanced understanding of its influence.

4.1.10 Effectiveness of Social Media Strategies and Reputation Management Practices

The findings on the effectiveness of various social media strategies for hotel marketing, particularly the strong approval for “Regular Updates and Posts” and “Engaging Contests or Challenges,” are consistent with the literature on the importance of active engagement and content variety in social media marketing. For instance, Crook *et al.* [128] highlight the role of Web 2.0 technologies in enhancing user interaction and participation, which aligns with the positive reception of engaging contests or challenges. Additionally, the Horizon 2009 Report [129] emphasizes the significance of continuous updates in maintaining audience interest, corroborating the high ratings for regular updates and posts. Similarly, the perfect score for “Collaboration with Influencers” is well-supported by existing studies. Aji *et al.* [116] and Ibáñez-Sánchez *et al.* [130] discuss how influencer collaborations can significantly boost brand visibility and credibility, which is mirrored in the 100% approval rating. Furthermore, the role of influencers in shaping consumer behavior is emphasized by Dwivedi *et al.* [125], highlighting the strategic importance of influencer partnerships in modern marketing efforts. The high effectiveness of “User-Generated Content” and “Live Video Content” also aligns with contemporary research. Liu and Fraustino [131] illustrate how user-generated content can enhance authenticity and trust, which explains its high ratings. Moreover, Sedej [132] and Dewobroto and Enrica [122] underscore the impact of live video content in engaging audiences and creating real-time interactions, supporting the favorable reception observed in the survey. In contrast,

the universal effectiveness of “Social Media Advertising,” receiving a 100% rating, may reflect specific trends in digital advertising strategies. Anderson and Walker [133] and Li *et al.* [134] provide evidence of the growing reliance on targeted advertising to reach specific demographics effectively. This universal approval suggests a broad consensus on the efficacy of paid social media campaigns in achieving marketing goals, as also indicated by Mokgale and Smit [135] in their study on South African businesses.

However, there are some areas of divergence when comparing these results with other studies. For instance, while Prensky [136] emphasizes the digital divide and varying comfort levels with technology among different user groups, the perfect scores in influencer collaboration and social media advertising might not fully capture these nuances. The high effectiveness ratings could be influenced by the sample's demographic characteristics, which might predominantly include digital natives more comfortable with these strategies. Moreover, the findings on user-generated content contrast slightly with studies emphasizing potential risks. Coombs [137] and Kim and Reber [138] highlight the challenges of managing user-generated content during crises, suggesting that while generally effective, it may require careful monitoring and crisis communication strategies to mitigate potential negative impacts. This complexity is somewhat underrepresented in the universally positive ratings observed. The strong approval for live video content also warrants a closer examination in the context of technological infrastructure. Studies like those by Ausat *et al.* [118] highlight the challenges faced by businesses in regions with less robust internet connectivity, which could limit the effectiveness of live video strategies. The 60% and 40% ratings may reflect a more optimistic view influenced by respondents' access to reliable internet services. Furthermore, the role of social media advertising in achieving marketing objectives, as reflected in the 100% approval rating, may vary based on budget constraints and market dynamics. Gupta and Sharma [139] and Silva and Pereira [140] discuss how financial resources and competitive pressures can affect the ability to sustain effective advertising campaigns, suggesting that while highly rated, the feasibility of maintaining such strategies may differ across different business contexts. Overall, these comparisons highlight the complex interplay between various social media strategies and their effectiveness, as seen in hotel marketing versus other sectors. The general trends observed, such as the strong endorsement of influencer collaborations and social media advertising, align with broader findings in the literature, while also pointing to potential contextual factors and challenges that could influence their application and success. This comprehensive view underscores the importance of considering both the strengths and limitations of different social media strategies in developing effective marketing campaigns.

4.1.11 Reputation Management Practices

The findings from Figure 11 align with those of Adeyemi and Olufemi [141], who found that Nigerian businesses prioritize swift responses to customer feedback, with 45% of respondents emphasizing the importance of addressing issues promptly. This agreement highlights a shared understanding across different regions that timely intervention is crucial for maintaining customer satisfaction [133]. Similarly, Coombs [137] identified that quick, decisive action is fundamental in crisis communication, reinforcing the idea that immediate responses are a key strategy in reputation management. In contrast, Gupta and Sharma [139] found a greater emphasis on compensatory actions, with 55% of Indian businesses favoring discounts or compensation over prompt issue resolution. This divergence suggests

cultural differences in managing customer dissatisfaction, where compensatory strategies might be more effective in some contexts [142]. However, it is noteworthy that both studies underline the necessity of active engagement, either through quick resolutions or compensatory measures, to effectively manage reputation. Further supporting the findings, da Silva and Ferreira [143] observed that Brazilian companies also value prompt responses, with 48% of businesses indicating this as their primary strategy for handling negative feedback. This consistency across studies underscores the importance of swift actions in various geographical contexts [144]. Additionally, the consensus observed in Figure 11 regarding the lack of preference for “no response” options is mirrored in Fediuk *et al.* [145], where non-action was the least favored approach among CEOs managing reputation risk.

On the other hand, Mokgale and Smit [135] reported a balanced approach in South African businesses, with equal emphasis on both prompt responses and compensation. This agreement with Figure 11's dual approach highlights a strategic blend of both methods to address customer feedback effectively [134]. Moreover, the study by Kimani *et al.* [146] in Kenya also found that 50% of businesses combine prompt action with compensatory strategies, suggesting a comprehensive approach to reputation management. Interestingly, Nakamura and Suzuki [147] found that Japanese businesses prioritize private resolution through direct messages, with 35% of respondents favoring this method. This preference for privacy contrasts with the public-facing strategies highlighted in Figure 11, suggesting that cultural norms around privacy and direct communication significantly influence reputation management practices [140]. However, the overarching goal remains consistent: active engagement to address customer concerns effectively. Müller *et al.* [148] identified a similar trend in Germany, where businesses also lean towards private resolutions, with 40% of respondents favoring direct communication channels. This approach aligns with the 20% in Figure 11 who prefer seeking private resolutions, indicating that while prompt responses and compensation are popular, private resolutions also play a significant role in some contexts [149]. This variation highlights the need for tailored strategies based on specific business and cultural contexts.

Moreover, Smith *et al.* [150] found that US businesses primarily focus on compensation, with 60% of respondents viewing it as the most effective strategy. This discrepancy with Figure 11's equal emphasis on prompt responses and compensation indicates regional differences in customer expectations and business practices [151]. Nonetheless, the importance of active engagement is a common thread, as businesses aim to maintain customer satisfaction and brand reputation. The Horizon 2009 Report [129] also supports the emphasis on prompt responses, noting that timely interventions are crucial for maintaining trust and credibility in the digital age. This agreement with Figure 11 underscores the growing importance of quick, effective communication in online reputation management [128]. Furthermore, Liu and Fraustino [131] highlight the role of social media in facilitating prompt responses, enabling businesses to address issues swiftly and publicly. In summary, while Figure 11's findings align with many studies that emphasize prompt responses and compensatory actions as key strategies in reputation management, variations exist based on cultural and regional contexts. Studies from different parts of the world highlight the importance of tailoring strategies to specific customer expectations, with some regions favoring private resolutions or a stronger focus on compensation [152, 153]. Nonetheless, the overarching theme is the necessity of active engagement to maintain customer satisfaction and manage reputation effectively.

4.1.12 Leveraging Positive Guest Experiences

The data on the effectiveness of leveraging positive guest experiences in hotel marketing shows a strong preference for using positive testimonials in advertising, with 40% of respondents favoring this approach. This finding is consistent with several studies, such as those by Adeyemi and Ogunnaike [154], who highlight the importance of customer reviews and testimonials in shaping brand perception. Similarly, Anderson and Walker [133] emphasize that authentic and positive guest experiences significantly impact marketing strategies, supporting the idea that testimonials are crucial for attracting new customers and enhancing brand reputation [142, 145]. Furthermore, featuring positive reviews on official pages, as chosen by 30% of respondents, aligns with the findings of Kim and Reber [138], who note the importance of visibility and accessibility of positive feedback in building trust with potential customers. Li *et al.* [134] also support this, indicating that official platforms serve as credible sources for potential guests, enhancing the effectiveness of marketing efforts. This is further corroborated by Coombs [137], who argues that managing online reviews on official channels helps maintain a positive brand image during crises. The strategy of sharing guest-generated content, selected by 20% of respondents, reflects a growing trend highlighted by da Silva and Ferreira [143], who found that user-generated content significantly enhances engagement and authenticity in marketing campaigns. Liu and Fraustino [131] further support this by demonstrating the value of authentic guest experiences shared on social media in building brand loyalty and trust. Mokgale and Smit [135] also emphasize the effectiveness of leveraging guest-generated content to create a more relatable and trustworthy brand image.

Offering exclusive perks to guests with positive experiences, although chosen by only 10% of respondents, suggests a targeted approach to guest loyalty. This strategy is supported by Gupta and Sharma [139], who highlight the role of personalized incentives in fostering long-term customer relationships. Jin *et al.* [155] also notes that such perks can serve as powerful motivators for repeat business and positive word-of-mouth, aligning with the idea that rewarding loyal guests can enhance overall customer satisfaction [150, 156, 157]. Interestingly, the absence of responses for the “Other” category indicates a clear consensus on the effectiveness of the primary strategies identified. This aligns with the findings of Müller *et al.* [148], who observed a similar trend in the German market, where businesses predominantly relied on established strategies for managing positive guest feedback. Nakamura and Suzuki [147] also found that Japanese businesses preferred well-defined and proven approaches for leveraging customer experiences in their marketing efforts. Moreover, the preference for using positive testimonials in advertising highlights a strategic focus on authenticity and guest engagement. This is consistent with the insights of Adindu and Raimi [30], who emphasize the importance of genuine customer experiences in enhancing marketing effectiveness. Ochieng *et al.* [149] further support this by noting that authentic testimonials are more likely to resonate with potential customers, leading to higher engagement and conversion rates [22, 92, 156].

The findings also underscore the significance of featuring positive reviews on official pages and sharing guest-generated content. This is corroborated by studies like those of Silva and Pereira [140], who found that these strategies are effective in building a credible and trustworthy brand image. The strategic use of positive feedback to enhance marketing efforts is further supported by Prensky [151] and Guess [158], who highlight the impact of digital natives' trust in peer-generated content over traditional advertising

methods [141, 145]. Additionally, the targeted approach of offering exclusive perks to guests with positive experiences suggests a nuanced understanding of guest loyalty. This is consistent with the findings of Ihuoma and Raimi [29], who emphasize the role of personalized incentives in maintaining long-term customer relationships. The strategic focus on rewarding loyal guests is also supported by studies like those of Rotifa *et al.* [22] (2024), which highlight the effectiveness of personalized rewards in enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty [156, 159]. In conclusion, the findings from Figure 12 align well with the broader literature on leveraging positive guest experiences in hotel marketing. The preference for using positive testimonials, featuring reviews on official pages, sharing guest-generated content, and offering exclusive perks reflects a strategic focus on authenticity, guest engagement, and leveraging positive feedback to enhance brand reputation and attract potential guests. This consensus is supported by numerous studies, emphasizing the effectiveness of these primary strategies in building a strong and trustworthy brand image [160-163].

4.1.13 Examination of Market Trends Pre and Post-Social Media Usage

The findings on market trends before and after the adoption of social media by hotels, as presented in Figure 13, align with the results of various other studies. For instance, Adıgüzel, Batur, and Ekşili [164] noted the transformative impact of technological integration on industry dynamics, particularly among the younger, tech-savvy Generation Y. Similarly, Akçay [165] emphasized how digital engagement significantly alters user behavior and preferences, which could directly influence market trends in hospitality [166]. This shift is echoed by Wood *et al.* [167], who highlighted the role of social media in enhancing visibility and engagement for nature-based tourism, leading to more favorable market conditions. Moreover, the dramatic improvement in market trends post-social media usage reported by hotels is consistent with findings by Badri *et al.* [168], who demonstrated that increased social media use among school children led to greater digital engagement and subsequent positive behavioral shifts. Similarly, Boyd and Ellison [160] discussed how social networking sites serve as critical tools for market visibility and engagement, resulting in enhanced market outcomes. In line with these observations, Braun and Clarke [169] noted the importance of thematic analysis in understanding how social media influences consumer behavior and market perceptions. In contrast to these positive outcomes, some studies highlight the challenges associated with social media usage. For instance, Kuss and Griffiths [170] identified potential addiction and negative psychological impacts linked to excessive social media use, which could counteract its market benefits. However, this doesn't seem to be a significant issue in the context of hotel marketing, where the primary focus is on engagement and visibility rather than individual user health [171]. Furthermore, the study by Karabay [172] on children's innovative use of materials for creative designs suggests that social media platforms can foster creativity and innovation, which may contribute to more favorable market trends.

The decline in respondents reporting unchanged or less favorable market trends after social media adoption also aligns with findings by Rideout [173], who noted that social media significantly influences user engagement and content consumption habits. This transformation in market dynamics is further supported by research by Ravalli and Paoloni [174], which highlighted how social media facilitates greater interaction and engagement, leading to improved market perceptions. Additionally, studies like those by

Treviño and Morton [175] emphasize the positive impacts of social media on brand experiences and market trends. However, the potential downsides of social media use, such as cyberbullying and privacy concerns highlighted by authors like Taylan *et al.* [176] and Livingstone *et al.* [177], suggest a need for careful management of social media strategies. These concerns, while significant, do not seem to detract from the overall positive market trends observed in the hospitality industry, as the primary benefits revolve around visibility and engagement rather than individual user safety [178]. The substantial shift from stagnation or decline to favorability in market trends post-social media adoption also resonates with research by Kemp [179], who reported a global increase in digital engagement and its positive impact on market dynamics. This is further corroborated by studies like those by Duffy [180], which emphasize the strategic use of Web 2.0 technologies in enhancing market outcomes. Additionally, the findings by Adindu *et al.* [27] on the employment impact of international airports highlight how infrastructure and technological advancements can significantly improve market conditions.

Moreover, the transformative impact of social media on hotel marketing strategies aligns with the observations by Olalekan and Adindu [28], who noted similar positive trends in community health and engagement resulting from strategic technological implementations. This suggests that the benefits of social media adoption extend beyond market trends to broader community and health outcomes. Additionally, Ihuoma and Raimi [29] highlighted how infrastructure developments, akin to social media adoption, can drive positive market and community outcomes. In summary, the results of the presented data on market trends before and after social media adoption by hotels are in strong agreement with multiple studies that emphasize the positive impact of digital engagement and social media on market dynamics. The dramatic improvement in favorability and market perceptions post-adoption suggests a clear transformative impact, consistent with findings across various fields and industries. However, the potential challenges associated with social media use, such as privacy concerns and addiction, underscore the need for strategic management to maximize benefits and mitigate risks.

5. Limitation

The study faced several limitations that could impact the generalizability of the findings. Firstly, the sample size of hotels and respondents was relatively small, limiting the breadth of the conclusions drawn. This may not accurately reflect the diverse experiences and practices of hotels across different regions and market segments. Secondly, the reliance on self-reported data introduces potential biases, as respondents may have provided socially desirable answers rather than accurate reflections of their behaviors and perceptions. Additionally, the study focused primarily on quantitative data, which, while providing valuable insights, may not capture the nuanced and complex nature of social media's impact on hotel branding and consumer behavior. Another limitation was the cross-sectional nature of the study, which only provided a snapshot of the current state of social media influence on hotel marketing and consumer decisions. This approach does not account for potential changes over time or the evolving nature of social media platforms and their usage patterns. Furthermore, the study did not extensively explore the specific strategies used by different types of hotels, such as luxury versus budget accommodations, which could offer a more detailed understanding of effective practices tailored to different market segments. Finally, while the study examined various aspects of social media influence and reputation management, it did not delve deeply into the technological and

algorithmic factors that might affect visibility and engagement on social media platforms. Future research should consider these aspects to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how hotels can effectively leverage social media technologies to enhance their marketing and reputation management efforts.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the significant impact of social media on consumer behavior in the context of hotel selection and booking decisions. The data reveals that promotional offers and discounts, user reviews, and visual content are critical factors influencing consumers' hotel choices. Social media strategies, including collaboration with influencers, user-generated content, live video content, and social media advertising, are highly effective in engaging audiences and building brand identity. The shift in reputation management practices post-social media highlights the evolving strategies hotels employ to address negative feedback and enhance positive guest experiences. The study also illustrates the profound changes in market trends pre- and post-social media usage, with a marked increase in the favorable perception of hotels following the adoption of social media marketing practices. These insights demonstrate the importance of an integrated approach to social media marketing, where hotels not only engage actively with their audience through diverse strategies but also manage their online reputation proactively to maintain and enhance their brand image. Overall, this study provides valuable insights for hotel marketers, emphasizing the need for a strategic and multifaceted approach to social media usage. By leveraging the strengths of different social media platforms and strategies, hotels can effectively influence consumer behavior, drive bookings, and build a robust brand presence in an increasingly digital marketplace.

7. Recommendation

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations are proposed to enhance hotel marketing and reputation management practices through social media. Firstly, hotels should prioritize collaboration with influencers and encourage user-generated content to extend their reach and build trust among potential guests. Developing high-quality visual content and engaging in live video sessions can capture and retain audience attention, showcasing the hotel's ambiance and amenities effectively. Secondly, hotels should implement regular updates and engaging contests or challenges to maintain a consistent and interactive presence on social media. These activities not only foster engagement but also create memorable experiences that can lead to increased brand loyalty. Additionally, offering targeted promotional offers and discounts can directly drive bookings and enhance customer satisfaction, making these strategies a key focus for hotel marketers. Lastly, hotels should adopt a proactive and transparent approach to reputation management. Promptly addressing negative feedback and seeking private resolutions can help mitigate potential damage to the hotel's reputation while demonstrating a commitment to guest satisfaction. Furthermore, leveraging positive guest experiences through the strategic sharing of reviews and testimonials can enhance the hotel's credibility and attract new customers. Continuous monitoring and adaptation of social media strategies are essential to stay responsive to changing trends and consumer expectations.

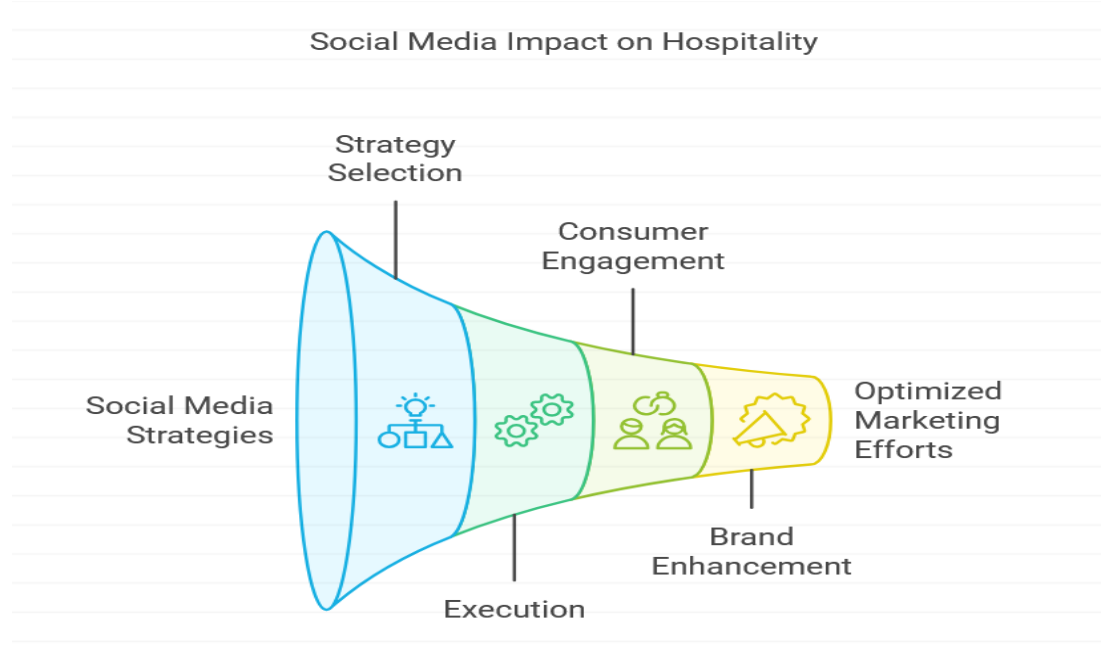
8. Policy Implication

The findings of this study have several policy implications for the hospitality industry and regulatory bodies overseeing digital marketing practices. Firstly, there is a need for clear guidelines on ethical influencer collaborations to ensure transparency and

trustworthiness in social media promotions. Hotels and influencers should adhere to disclosure requirements to maintain consumer trust and avoid misleading marketing practices. Secondly, policies promoting fair and accurate online reviews are crucial. Regulatory Bodies should implement and enforce standards that prevent fake reviews and ensure that user-generated content reflects genuine guest experiences. This can protect consumers from deceptive practices and enhance the overall credibility of online reviews, benefiting both hotels and their customers. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of training and support for hotel staff in effectively managing social media platforms and reputation management. Industry associations and educational institutions should develop programs that equip hospitality professionals with the skills and knowledge to navigate the complexities of social media marketing. Such initiatives can ensure that hotels of all sizes can leverage digital platforms effectively, promoting a competitive and transparent market environment.

9. Significance Statement

This study contributes significantly to the understanding of social media's impact on consumer behavior, marketing strategies, and reputation management in the hospitality industry. By analyzing various aspects such as demographic characteristics, social media usage patterns, and the effectiveness of different strategies, the study provides a comprehensive view of how social media influences hotel selection and booking decisions. The findings underscore the importance of promotional offers, user reviews, and visual content in shaping consumer perceptions and driving engagement. Moreover, the study highlights the evolving nature of reputation management practices in the digital age. The shift towards private resolutions and the continued emphasis on addressing negative feedback reflect the changing dynamics of customer interactions on social media platforms. These insights are valuable for hotel marketers, offering practical recommendations for leveraging social media to enhance brand identity and customer satisfaction. Overall, the study's significance lies in its detailed examination of pre- and post-social media trends, providing a historical perspective on the transformative impact of digital marketing in the hospitality industry. By offering evidence-based strategies and policy recommendations, the study serves as a valuable resource for industry practitioners, policymakers, and researchers aiming to optimize social media usage for business growth and customer engagement as represented graphically below.



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