
Adoption of Digital Marketing Strategies in Tourism Industry: A Case Study of Pakistan

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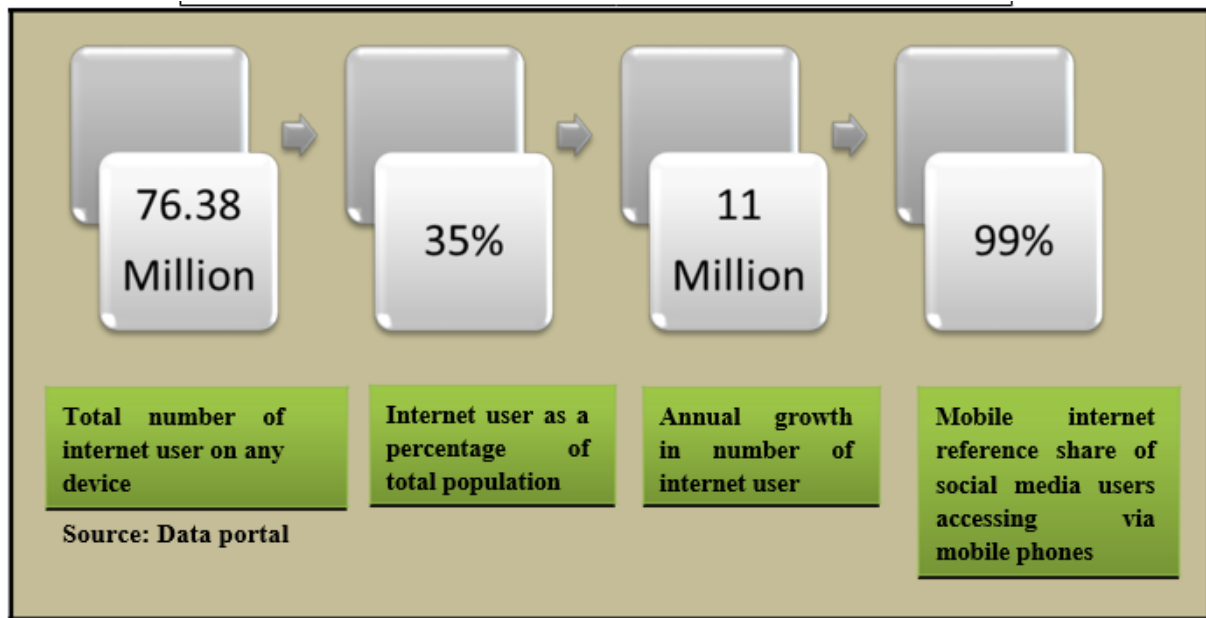
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Abstract: *The purpose of this paper is to Investigate digital marketing strategies adopt in tourism with a focus on opportunities for Pakistan, to stimulate developments in the tourism sector particularly the increase in tourist entrance and the growth of digital statistics in the digital era. Quantitative survey as a research methodology was adopted in this study, and the integrative literature review was the method used as well as content analysis to review studies in digital marketing strategies used in tourism relating to Pakistan. This paper exposes that digital media and its segments are among the trends in digital marketing and, thus, Pakistan provides the opportunity to market its attractions to tourists in this digital era. Future studies can explore quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the phenomenon of digital marketing strategies associated with tourism. Other countries within Pakistan to adopt similar digital marketing segments such as digital media to manage the digitization of marketing activities in the promotion of the tourism sector. This study examine digital marketing strategies and their segments to promote tourism with a focus on opportunities for Pakistan by specifically examining social. Media marketing in relation to tourist arrivals using integrative literature review and quantitative analysis methods.*

INTRODUCTION

Digital Marketing refers to the marketing of any product or service in digital form. For example, marketing using smartphones, computers, laptops, tablets, or any other digital devices. Digital marketing is a form of direct marketing that links consumers with sellers electronically using interactive technologies like emails, websites, online forums and newsgroups, interactive Television, mobile communications etcetera.(Cohen et al,2014). Digital marketing in Pakistan has been documented in reference to digital portals such as internet users were 76.38 million in Pakistan in January 2020.(Datareportal,2018-19).

The number of internet users in Pakistan increased by 11 million (+17%) between 2019 and 2020. Internet penetration in Pakistan rise by 35% in January 2020. There were 37.00 million social media users in Pakistan in January 2020. The number of social media users in Pakistan increased by 2.4 million (+7.0%) between April 2019 and January 2020. Social media penetration in Pakistan rise by 17% in January 2020. This is the use of Social media with a record of nearly 70 percent weekly activities on social media platforms and, therefore, this report highlights how important social media marketing is. (Data reportal, 2020).



Graph 1. Internet Overview In Pakistan 2020

Source : Data Reportal

Pakistan’s tourism sector has always had unlimited unutilized potential, but the greater part of the last decade was spent encouraging this potential. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimated that the total contribution of tourism toward Pakistan’s economy was about \$19.4 billion or 6.9 percent of the GDP, in 2017. Within a decade, this is projected to rise to \$36.1 billion. The direct contribution of travel and tourism in Pakistan is predicted to rise by 5.9% to Rs 986 billion in 2018. Further, the report stated that travel and tourism generated 1,534,000 jobs directly in 2018 (2.8% of total employment). (PTDC report, 2017).

In 2019, the contribution of travel and tourism to GDP (% of GDP) for Pakistan was 5.7%. Though Pakistan’s contribution of travel and tourism to GDP (% of GDP) fluctuated substantially in recent years, it tended to increase through the 2000 - 2019 period ending at 5.7% in 2019. which helped in the creation of nearly 4 million jobs. (Knoema, 2019). Pakistan Travel & Tourism 2019 key data points:

The increasing numbers of international tourists provide opportunities for Pakistan to manage marketing strategies in the era of digital marketing. Due to this development in the tourism sector particularly tourists as highlighted by WTTC (2019) as well as the growth of digital statistics in

the digital era in Pakistan, this paper is motivated to expand knowledge on digital marketing by exploring digital marketing strategies and their adoption in tourism with creating opportunities for Pakistan as a study by combining integrative literature review and quantitative analysis as a research methodology approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital marketing

Digital marketing consists of various channels which are mediums used by the marketer to promote their products or services. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2012) define digital marketing as “the application of the Internet and similar digital technologies in conjunction with traditional communications to achieve marketing objectives”. One of the important techniques in digital marketing is social media marketing (Chaffey, 2011). Digital marketing is also referred to as marketing online whether via websites, online adverts, opt-in emails, interactive kiosks, interactive TV or mobiles (Chaffey and Smith, 2008). Therefore, Digital marketing can also be understood as the process of promoting and selling products and services by leveraging the Internet tools and online marketing strategies, such as e-mail marketing, SEO, SEM, content creation, SMM, Email marketing, and mobile marketing.

Tourism

Tourism is defined as the social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes (UNWTO, 2008). Tourism is an activity to visit some places with a purpose to get the sport or rest, to finish the duty, etc. Spillane (1982). Mathieson and Wall (1982) also say that created a good working definition of tourism as the temporary movement of people to destination outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater to their needs. Tourism is the sum of phenomena relationship arising from the travel and stay of none residence, and so far they do not lead the permanent residence and are not connected with earning activity. Henniker and Kraft (1996), Then the definition that accepted by the international association of scientific expert in tourism.

THEORETICAL REVIEW:

The competitive advantage theory is adopted as a guide in this study to investigate digital marketing strategies and its adoption in the tourism sector with create an opportunities for Pakistan. Competitive advantage theory was developed by Porter (1990) and assumes that a nation’s prosperity is created by nation’s firms that are successful in the world market and competitiveness depends on the capacity to innovate and upgrade (Porter, 1990). Many scholars indicated that technology has effects on business. No matter the sort of your business, technology has both tangible and intangible effect that it will help you make money and produce the results your customers demand. Technological development effects on the culture, efficiency and relationships of a enterprises and new technology has create an opportunity to a gain competitive advantage.(Protor and miller 1985). Yasmin et al. (2015) declare that digital marketing refers to different promotional methods utilize to reach customers through digital sites such as use of internet. In using internet platforms,

businesses can create competitive advantages (Mandal et al., 2016).

The indicate digital growth in terms of internet and smartphone users indicates that innovations like digital marketing segments such as social media marketing through digital media platforms like Facebook can create competitive advantage in relative not only nations and enterprises but it can increase to tourism in terms of tourist arrivals. This paper applies competitive advantage theory to guide the main objective of investigate digital marketing strategies and its adoption in tourism by specifically examining social media marketing in relation to tourist arrivals.

Digital marketing and tourism

Digital marketing strategies have a very high potential impact in the tourism sector. In this sector, digital marketing strategies should seek to arouse in the tourist the desire to search more information about the tourism destination as well as the experiences that this destination can provide to them, with the main objective to inspire them to visit it.(Serra Cantallops and Salvi,2014).

The use of websites in tourism sector have a great importance, because tourists value the contents and information presented there. Moreover, websites have impact on tourists' decision making and destination image. With this in mind, tourism operators use websites to promote their products for their consumers, so they can access this information anywhere at any time.(Couture et al,2015).

Tourists are highly influenced by information that is available for them on internet, in particular, information expressed on comments or reviews made by consumers that are able to influence the tourist decision making process. These comments promote trust creation in tourists during the process of choosing a tourism destination, for the reason that tourists tend to trust on the reviews posted by their peers. Because of this, online tourists' reviews, referenced in the literature as electronic Word Of Mouth (e-WOM) can be seen as important for tourism destinations image formation process.(Morosen & Bowen,2018).

Social media can also be extremely useful in the tourism sector, since they represent an information source about tourists, which will allow understand tourists' preferences and how respond to these preferences. Therefore, social media play a vital role in tourists' decision-making. The use of social networks by tourists changed the way how tourists research and find information, because these platforms provide the collaborative production of information about tourism destinations and organizations operating in this industry.(Sun et al,2006).

Social media are also the place where consumers post photos, videos and their opinions about tourism products and services. This type of content generated by tourists can be defined as e-WOM. The concept fusion between social media and e-WOM rises the concept of social media word of mouth, or just s-WOM.(Litvin et al,2008).

Email is present in consumers' daily life and they check inbox frequently. This is a still very important digital marketing tool, because allows an active communication with customers, keeping in frequent contact with them. Email allows the personalized communication to send information to potential consumers, reason because it is used as marketing tool.(Sun et al,2008).

Nowadays, almost every tourist has smartphone and use it to booking hotels, purchase airline tickets, to search information about the destination and other travel activities. Moreover,

mobile devices are able to improve transactions, but also to provide guides even when the tourist is in the destination. So the use of smartphones and other mobile devices occur before and during the travel.

METHOD

Research Design

This study referred to a descriptive survey research design using the quantitative method. The researcher selected a quantitative method in order to explain the phenomena by collecting numerical data that analyzed mathematically (Aliaga and Gunderson, 2000). Questionnaires were prepared and distributed to 100 E-Tour operators. This study centered on assessing the digital marketing strategies tour operators „use to promote of tourism in Pakistan.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Karachi city involved tour operators based within Karachi City. The city is located in the cost line within the Sindh region. Karachi city covers 3,780 km with a total population of 14.91 million according to the census of 2017 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The choice for the study area was considered due to the fact that Karachi city is one of the largest cities and is the economical-hub of Pakistan. The city provides a high concentration of tour operators that arrange trips for tourists and visitors to the famous natural and cultural attractions of northern Pakistan areas.

Study Population

Goddard and Melville (2001) refer to population as any group that is the subject of the research interest. Study population involves a set of people, items, or objects under consideration in the specific study. The study population for this research study involves the entire tour operators within Karachi city.

Population Sample

The population sample for this research study involved 100 tour operators located within Karachi city. The sample makes 50% of the entire population and is believed to have a better representation of the rest.

Sampling Procedure

An easily done sampling procedure was employed to select tour operators in Karachi city. Easy random sampling is the basic sampling method assumed in statistical computation. The selection of tour operators is based on the fact that tour operators work closely with tourists and visitors in arranging and digital marketing natural and cultural tourism products of Pakistan.

Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data were collected in order to address the objectives of the study.

Primary Data Collection

Primary data was collected through questionnaires because it was the practical possible means to gather the required information for the study from a large number of participants in a short time.

Secondary Data Collection

Both published and unpublished documents were reviewed. The documents were obtained from TAAP, PDTC, and other tourism stakeholders. The documents, thereafter, were evaluated so as to get practical insights in relation to the problem in question.

Data Analysis

The statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for statistical analysis. The data set was screened and examined for incorrect data entry and missing values. The program enables the researcher to conduct statistical analysis of the findings presented in conjunction with the available literature.

Ethical Consideration

During the research study, the researcher ensured participants' confidentiality about the information they provided by establishing a good relationship, being sensitive to cultural bounds, and involving directors, managers, and marketing officers. The researcher discussed with participants the intention of the study before the research study was conducted. The researcher secured an introduction letter (Appendix 3) to introduce himself and request support from the participants' when conducting the research study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Evaluation of Marketing Strategies

Relating to research specific objective to evaluate digital marketing strategies tour operators use for marketing and promotion of Pakistan tourism products. During the process of analysis the given findings gathered and presented in table 1.1.

Evaluation of marketing strategies					
Marketing strategies	Yes	%	No	%	Total
International trade fairs and exhibition	56	56%	44	44%	100%
Online marketing, websites, emails	100	100%	0	0%	100%
Social media	78	78%	22	22%	100%
Outdoor billboards and posters	27	27%	73	73%	100%
Catalogues ,magazines, newspapers	28	28%	72	72%	100%
E-tourism and E-marketing	38	38%	62	62%	100%

Television and radio network	15	15%	85	85%	100%
International road shows	13	13%	87	87%	100%
Broachers,fylers,leaflets,business cards	78	78%	22	22%	100%
Travel trade	28	28%	72	72%	100%
Product innovation and development	34	34%	66	66%	100%
Search engine optimization	56	56%	44	44%	100%
Relationship marketing	67	67%	33	33%	100%
Local tourism fairs	65	65%	35	35%	100%

Source: field research

The evaluation of digital marketing strategies tour operators use for marketing Pakistan tourism products, the findings revealed that: 100% online marketing, websites and emails, 78% brochures, flyers, leaflets and business cards, 78% social media, 67% relationship marketing, 65% local tourism fairs, 56% international trade fairs and exhibition, 56% search engine optimization, 38% e-tourism and e- marketing, 34% product innovation and development, 28% travel trade, 28% catalogue, magazines and newspapers, 27% outdoor billboards and posters, 13% international road shows and 15% television and radio networks.

Efficient Marketing Strategies

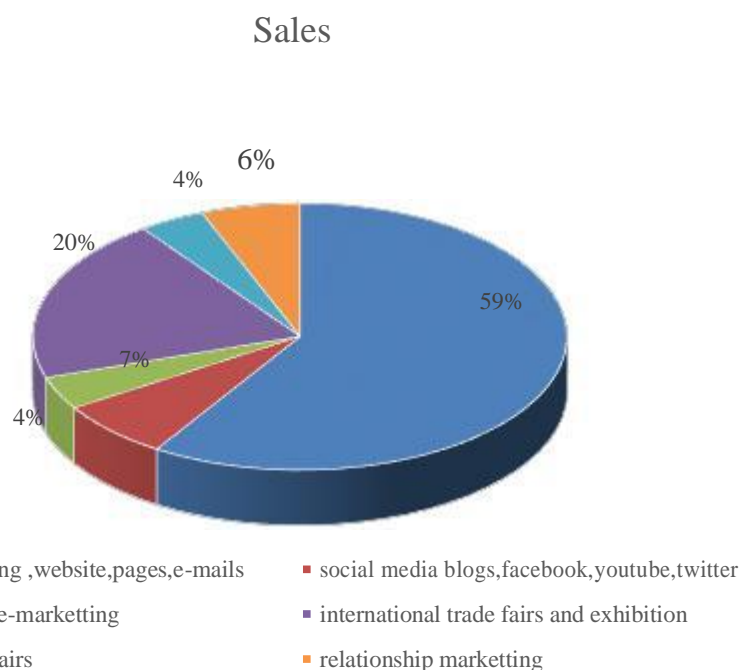
The findings of efficient digital marketing strategies the tour operators concentrate in marketing and promotion of Pakistan tourism products presented in table 1.2 and figure 1.1.

Efficient marketing strategies

Efficient market strategies	frequency	%	Valid %
International trade fairs and exhibitions	20	20.0	20%
Online marketing, websites ,emails, pages	59	59.0	59%
Social media ,blogs ,YouTube,facebook,instagram	7	7.0	7%
E-tourism & E-marketing	4	4.0	4%

Local tourism fairs	4	4.0	4%
Relationship marketing	6	6.0	6%
Total	100	100	100%

Source: field research



Source: Field Research

Related to marketing strategies the tour operators concentrate, table 1.2 and figure 1.1 both reveal the findings concerned the efficient digital marketing strategies the tour operators concentrate in marketing and promotion of Pakistan tourism products as: 57% online marketing, websites and emails, 27% international trade fairs and exhibition, 8% relationship marketing, 4% social media, 2% E-tourism and E marketing and 2% local tourism fairs. Based on the given percentages of the marketing strategies tour operators concentrate shows that online marketing, website pages and email score 57% indicating that is the digital marketing strategies large number of tour operators concentrate. This can be concluded that the potential of using Internet for marketing activities is derived from its general use as an information exchange system in the digital age that organization has supported the use of internet marketing to access to global consumer markets as well as growing the market share (Madu et al, 2002).Internet enable tour operators to acquire more customers to purchase since internet enable quick access of information to reach more people and less expensive means of communication. Due to technological revolution and competition among tour operators companies in marketing their products each of them strive to lead the market through wide interactions of simple marketing techniques with less cost in mind

with the intention to increase sales.

Effectiveness of Marketing Strategies

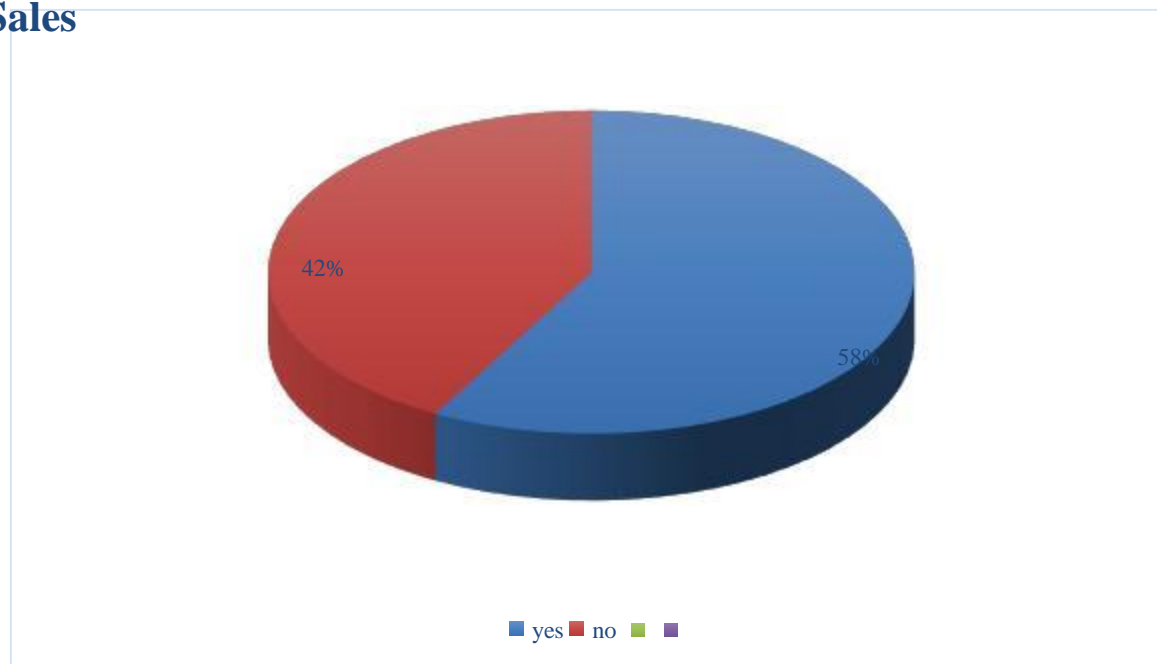
Second specific objective of this study was to determine effectiveness of digital marketing strategies tour operators use for marketing and promotion of Pakistan tourism products.

Effective marketing strategies

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
Yes	58	58.0	58%
No	42	42.0	42%
Total	100	100	100%

Source: field research

Sales



Source: Field Research

The interpretation of figure 1.2 and table 1.3 shows the findings on effectiveness of digital marketing strategies the tour operators use for marketing and promotion of Pakistan tourism products indicated that 56% agree the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies tour operator's use for marketing and promotion of Pakistan tourism for success of tourism business and 44% disagree about the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies tour operators use for the success of tourism business. According to the findings this can imply that among 56% of tour operators

digital marketing strategies they use are effectiveness to the success of tourism business and 44% among tour operators digital marketing strategies they use are not effective to the success of tourism business.

Achievement of Marketing Strategies

Another specific objective of the study was to examine the achievements of digital marketing strategies tour operators use for marketing and promotion of Pakistan tourism products.



Source: Field Research

Achievement of marketing strategies

	frequency	Percent	Valid percentage
Good	35	35.0	35%
Better	42	42.0	42%
Excellent	13	13.0	13%
Fair	9	9.0	9%
Poor	1	1.0	1%

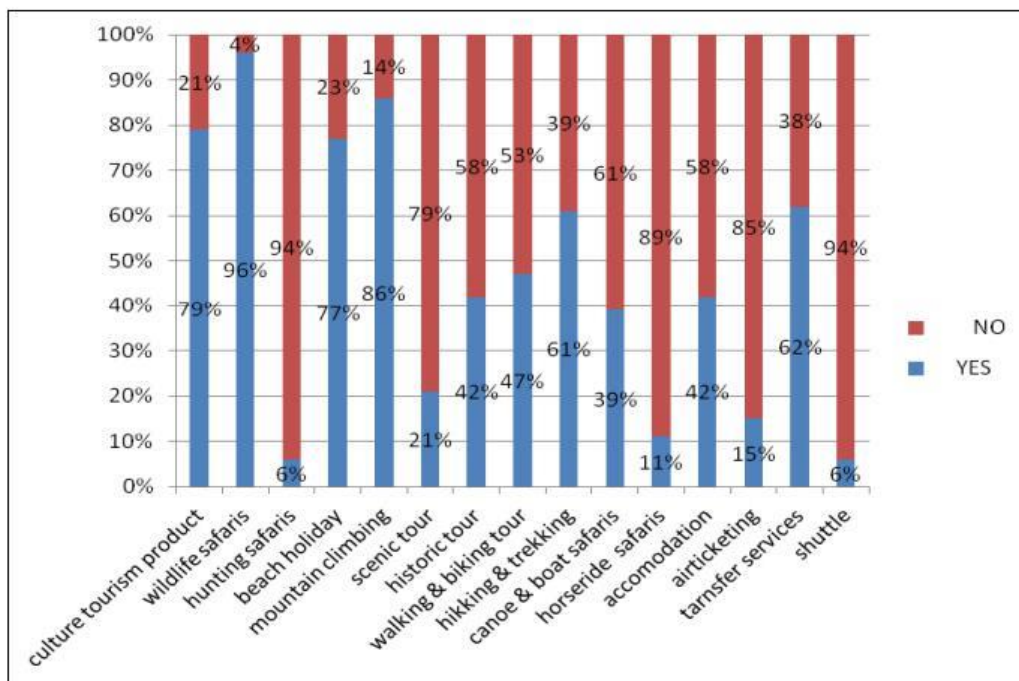
Total	100	100.0	100%
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Source: Field Research

The presentation of the findings from respondents concerned the achievement of digital marketing strategies tour operators use for marketing and promotion of Pakistan tourism products in table 1.4 indicate that: 40% better, 37% good, 13% excellent, 9% fair and 1% poor. These findings show the different level of achievement among tour operators which obtained through the implementation of digital marketing strategies for marketing and promotion of Pakistan tourism products. Further the illustration presented above also presented in figure 1.3 originated from Microsoft window excel.

Tourism Products and Services

The findings also disclosed the tourism products and services tour operators of Karachi city offered presented in figure 1.4



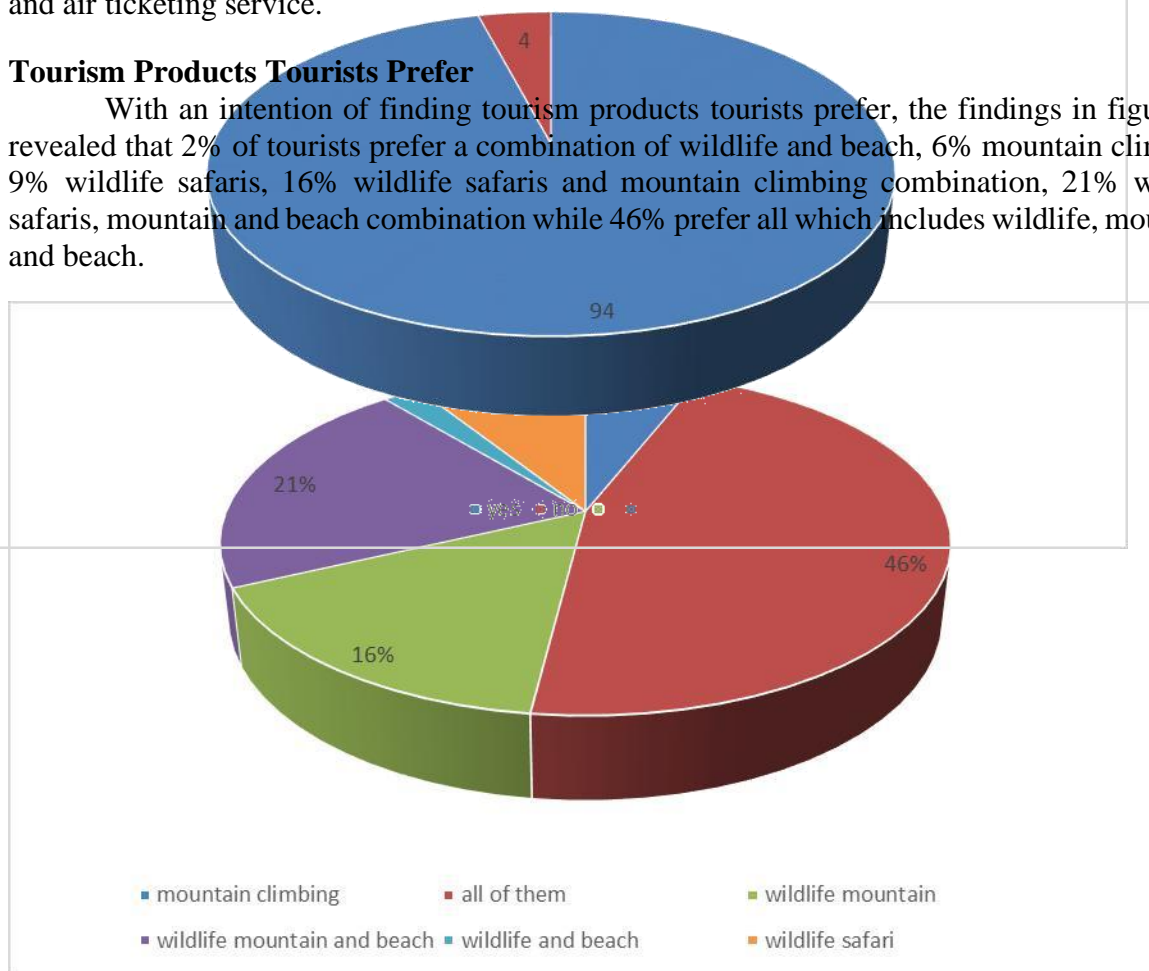
Source: Field Research

The results as can be observed on figure 1.4 indicate the tourism products and services tour operators offered in percentage as follows; 96% wildlife safaris, 86% mountain climbing, 79% cultural tourism, 77% beach holiday 62% transfer service, 61% hiking and trekking, 47%

walking and biking, 42% accommodation, 42% historical tour, 39% canoe and boat safari, 21% scenic tour, 15% air ticketing, 11% horse ride, 6% shuttle service and 6% hunting safaris. The above results can imply that tour operators offered most wildlife safaris, mountain climbing, cultural and beach holiday while the least products are shuttle service, hunting safari, horse ride, and air ticketing service.

Tourism Products Tourists Prefer

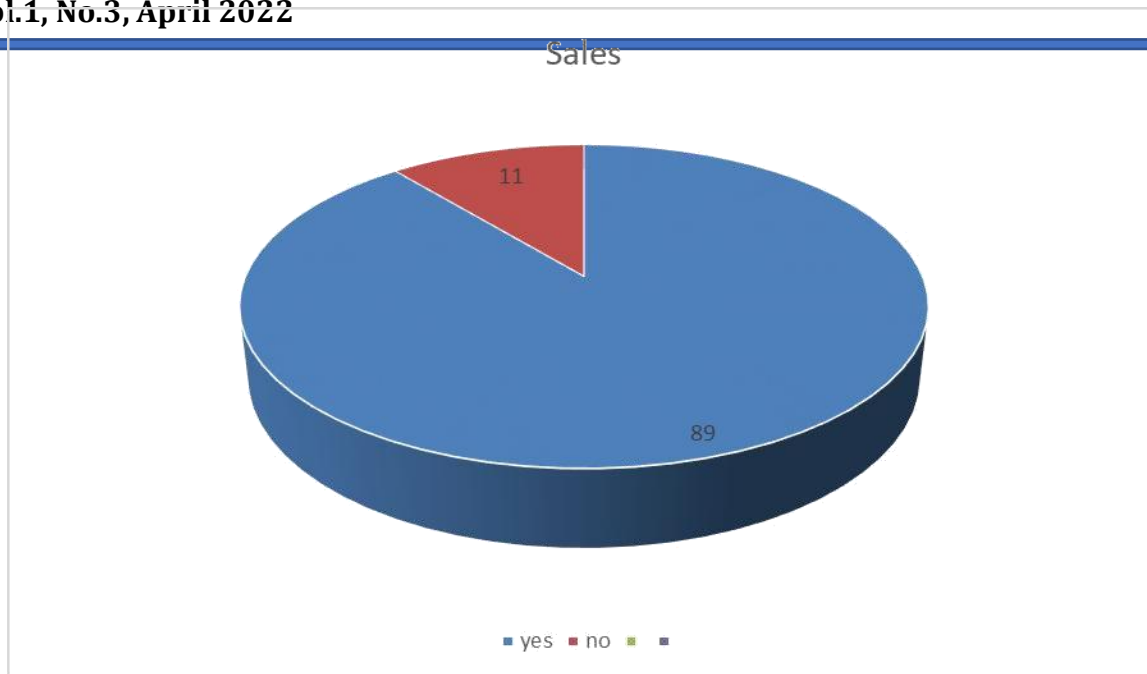
With an intention of finding tourism products tourists prefer, the findings in figure 2.1 revealed that 2% of tourists prefer a combination of wildlife and beach, 6% mountain climbing, 9% wildlife safaris, 16% wildlife safaris and mountain climbing combination, 21% wildlife safaris, mountain and beach combination while 46% prefer all which includes wildlife, mountain, and beach.



Source: Field Research

Market Sources

The study was also conducted focusing its direction on major source of market for tour operators. The researcher thus managed to disclose the findings through asking related questions to the selected respondents. As can be observed in figure 2.2, the researcher discovered tour operators markets for Pakistan tourism products. 93% of correspondents depend on foreign market, 5% of correspondents depend both local and international market while 2% of correspondents depend on local market. The result implies that foreign market is the most efficient market for large number of tour operators than local market.



Source: Field Research

Tourists' Satisfaction.

Tourist's satisfaction is among the important aspect for tourism business development. The study therefore disclosed the findings showing the level of satisfaction of tourists concern the tourism products and services offered by tour operators of Karachi city.

As indicated in figure 2.3, satisfaction for tourists varies among tour operators as indicated. Findings show that 50% satisfied while 46% are well satisfied and 4% are slightly satisfied. The result can implies that tour operators strive to satisfy tourists at high level while others remain at a lower level of satisfaction.

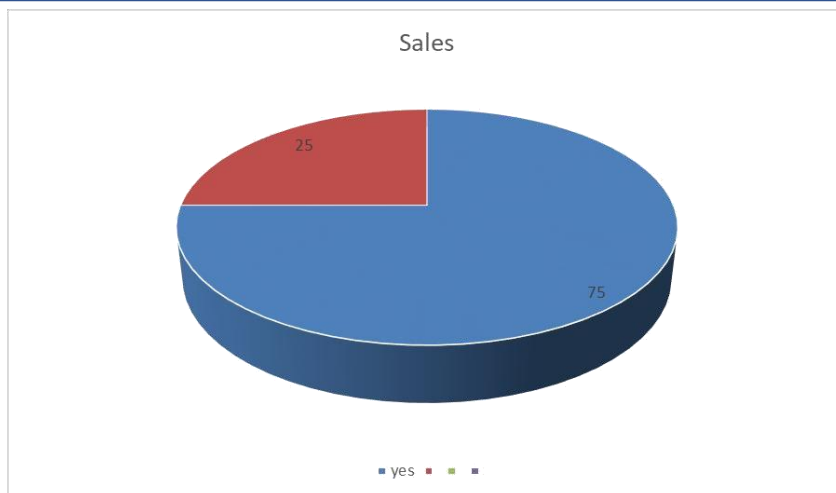


Source: Field Research

Figure 2.4 shows that 96% of (respondents) the tour operators participate in marketing of Pakistan tourism products locally and internationally while 4% do not. According to the Implications of the disclosed findings conclusively imply that 96% of tour operators participate in marketing Pakistan tourism products at both local and international level while 4% of tour operators do not according to the findings.

Digital Marketing Experts among Tour Operators

With the intention to identify whether the tour operators have digital marketing experts to handle all digital marketing activities, the findings presented in figure 3.1.



Source: Field Research

Findings presented in figure 3.1 reveal that 89% of tour operators have marketing experts while 11% of tour operators lack dog is digital marketing experts to handle all digital marketing activities. According to the findings above it implies that 89% of tour operators in Karachi city have digital marketing expert to handle digital marketing activities.

Reviews and Analysis of Marketing Strategies

During the process of data analysis the findings gathered which concerned with the reviews and analysis of digital marketing strategies implemented among tour operators, the result presented in figure 3.2

Source: Field Research

The findings from respondents concerned the reviews and analysis of digital marketing strategies implemented among tour operators show that 75% of tour operators in Karachi city reviews and analyzes the digital marketing strategies while 25% do not review and analyze digital marketing strategies. This implies that as per result shows in percentage the 75% of tour operators do reviews and analyze to determine the effective digital marketing strategies for marketing.

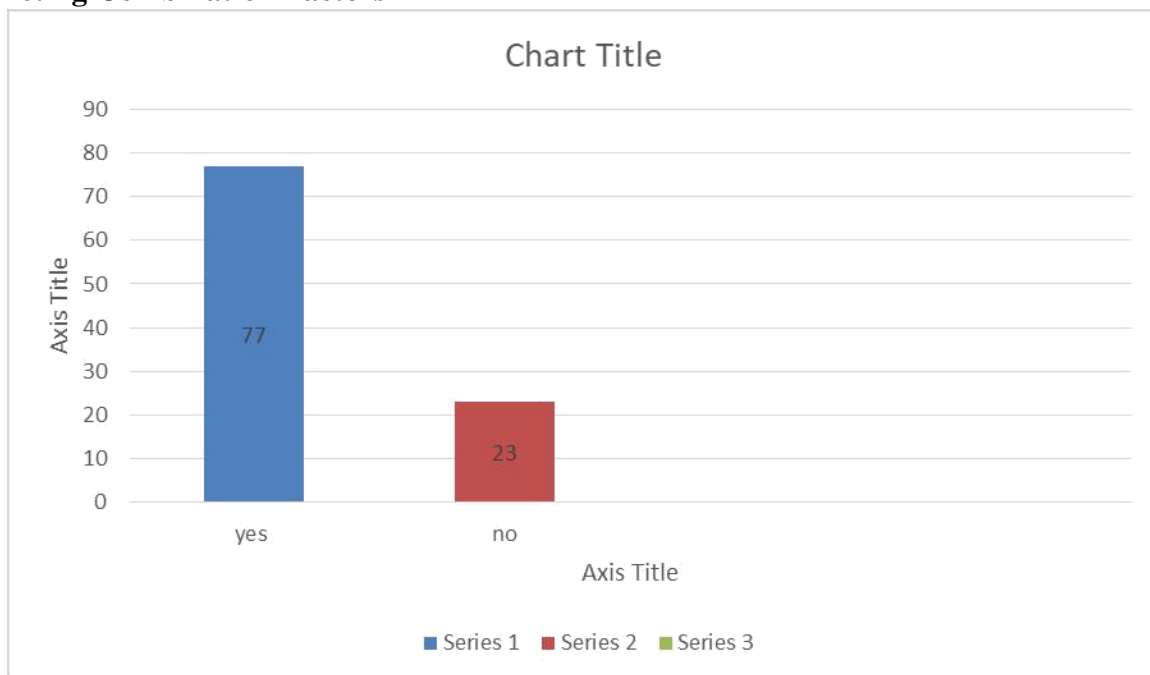
Lack of Digital Marketing Professionals

Further the study find out whether tour operators lack digital marketing professionals the findings presented in figure 3.4.

Source: Field Research

The findings disclosed that 77% of tour operators employ marketing professionals while 23% of respondents lack digital marketing professionals. According to the findings it can be conclude that 77% of tour operators within Karachi city have digital marketing professionals while 23% of tour operators lack digital marketing professionals.

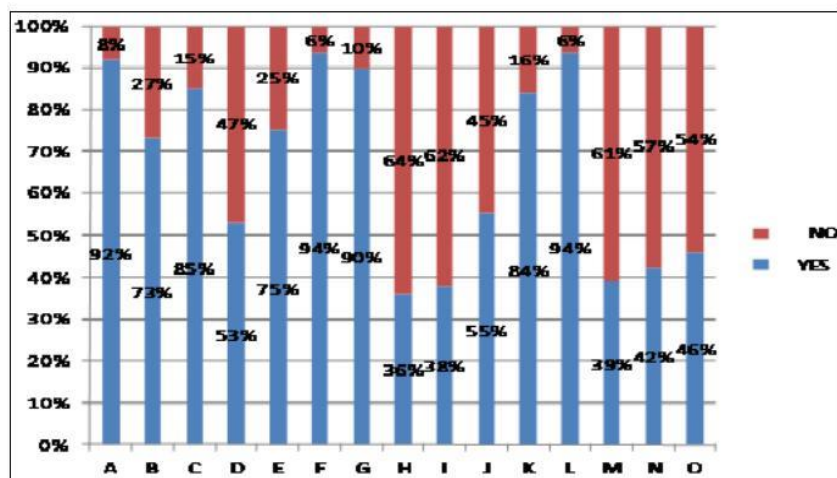
Marketing Combination Factors



This section involves the marketing related factors being associated with the contribution organization in marketing and promotion of Pakistan tourism products.

The findings from respondents concerned the statements A to O (Appendix2) disclosed

that;94% of correspondents agreed that some of tour operators lack digital marketing skills and techniques. 94% of correspondents agree that digital marketing is a critical problem affecting tour operators. 92% of respondents agree that tourism digital marketing is an expensive factor for tour operators demanding large amount of fund. 90% of correspondents agree that Pakistan tourism products and services are highly expensive. 85% of respondents agree that each tour operator focuses on satisfying needs and wants of customers.84% of respondents agree that social media are not yet fully utilized by tour operators in marketing and promotion of tourism products. 75% of respondents agree that e-marketing and e-commerce are not yet applied effectively by tour operators. 73% of respondents agree that tourists are well satisfied with products and services offered by the tour operators. 55% of respondents agree that most of tour operator`s websites are disorganized with poor contents about tourism products and services offered. 53% of respondents agree that language barrier contribute to poor marketing and promotion of Pakistan tourism products. 46% of respondents agree that Pakistan Tourism development corporation (PTDC) marketing strategies are helpful for tour operators.42% of respondents agree that local tourism fairs contribute on the expansion of tourism market and increase numbers of customers to purchase tourism products and services. 39% of respondents agree that Travel Agents Association of Pakistan (TAAP) supports tour operators companies in marketing and promotion of Pakistan tourism products. 38% of respondents agree that digital marketing strategies applied by PTDC are most useful strategies for development of tourism industry of Pakistan. 36% of respondents agree that PTDC works effectively in marketing and promotion of tourism products and services of Pakistan. Further illustration has been presented in figure 5.1.



CONCLUSSION

This study can conclude that in exploring digital marketing and tourism, there are opportunities for Pakistan as a study. The opportunities in digital marketing exists in arms of social media marketing, content marketing and mobile marketing which are driven by population (e.g. 68 percent of Pakistan`s population use smartphones), internet and mobile users as well as social media capacity as Facebook subscribers which implies that digital marketing like social media

marketing, creative content and mobile advertising can act as digital marketing trends, hence, assist to increase international tourist arrivals for Pakistan.

Implications

Practical implication from the outcome of this paper is that stakeholders in the tourism sector should consider digital marketing like social media marketing, creative content and mobile advertising as digital marketing trends in Pakistan tourism marketing.

The theoretical implication from the competitive advantage point of view, the literature shows that Karachi has the competitive advantage of population, smartphone users and internet users over other Pakistan cities. Hence, Karachi has the capacity to utilize digital marketing through text messaging and mobile advertising to encourage internet users to share tourism content within and outside Pakistan to enhance tourism growth.

Limitations of the study

The limitation of this study was on the use of literature review and quantitative analysis method as a research methodology.

Suggestions for further studies

This study suggests that future research may use mixed methods approach of qualitative and quantitative so as to have a deeper understanding of the digital marketing phenomenon in managing tourism businesses.

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