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E-MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACT ON TOURIST SATISFACTION: A MODERATED MEDIATION STUDY

Abdelrehim Awad^{1,2*}, Talaat Rashad Shma², Adel Fathy Fares Aziz³, and Ahmed Hegazy^{2,4}

¹ Department of Business Administration, College of Business, University of Bisha, Bisha 61922, Saudi Arabia. Email: aawad@ub.edu.sa, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-3649-430X>

² Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Commerce, Al-Azhar University, Nasr City 11884, Cairo, Egypt. Email: tshma@ub.edu.sa, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-4631-3108>

³ Lecturer of Business Administration, Canadian International College (CIC), Egypt. Email: dradelfares@kemetue.com Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-3094-8144>

⁴ Business Faculty, Champlain College Saint-Lambert, Quebec, Canada. Email: ahegazy@champlaincollege.qc.ca, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-7069-5967>

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Corresponding Author: Abdelrehim Awad
aawad@ub.edu.sa

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of social media and e-marketing on tourist satisfaction in Saudi Arabia's Asir region with a focal point on Customer Knowledge Management (CKM) as a mediator and social media interaction as an intermediary. A descriptive-analytic approach was utilized, and data were collected through structured questionnaires from 500 tourists taking part in e-tourism activities that yielded 465 valid responses. Data analysis was carried out using the help of SPSS with the application of descriptive and inferential statistics in the form of regression and Sobel tests for mediation analysis and moderation analysis. The findings suggest that e-marketing and social media have a significant and positive effect on tourist satisfaction, with CKM as an intervening factor. Social media usage also increases this relation with its role as a moderator. Gender and nationality were found to be significant control variables determining satisfaction, whereas age wasn't. This study contributes to the meager literature on emerging destinations for tourism in Saudi Arabia by examining the mediating function of CKM and the moderating effect of social media engagement in the context of the Asir region.

KEYWORDS: E-marketing, Social Media, Customer Knowledge Management, Tourist satisfaction, Saudi Arabia, Asir Region.

1. INTRODUCTION

The swift progress in digital technologies has significantly reshaped the worldwide tourism sector. Digital marketing and social platforms have become influential instruments that allow companies to connect with, involve, and maintain their customer base in more tailored manners (Bilgin, 2018; Puspaningrum, 2020; Awad & Aldabousi, 2024). Social media platforms have experienced significant changes, becoming a crucial factor in shaping the overall travel experience. These platforms create vibrant and engaging environments for tourists and industry stakeholders alike (Jibril *et al.*, 2024). These strategies prove to be especially impactful in the tourism sector, as tailored marketing greatly improves customer experiences (Moro & Rita, 2018). In the tourism sector, especially in areas with significant potential like Asir in Saudi Arabia, the importance of these digital marketing strategies is becoming increasingly clear. The Asir region, celebrated for its rich cultural heritage and stunning natural landscapes, has garnered notable interest as part of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, a national initiative focused on economic diversification and decreasing reliance on oil revenues through the promotion of sectors such as tourism. Tourism businesses in Asir can utilize e-marketing and social media platforms to harness customer data, boost interactions, and refine service personalization, which are essential for elevating tourist satisfaction. This transformation centers around Customer Knowledge Management (CKM), which includes processes like knowledge creation, storage, and dissemination. In the Asir region, CKM empowers tourism businesses to harness insights from customer interactions, allowing them to create personalized experiences that resonate with the area's distinctive cultural and natural attractions. Analyzing feedback from social media enables businesses to refine their services and marketing strategies, ensuring they connect more effectively with both local and international tourists. Additionally, engaging on social media significantly enhances the impact of digital marketing strategies, cultivating deeper connections between companies and their clientele. Digital tools are increasingly relied upon in the tourism sector. However, little is known about how customer knowledge management connects digital marketing with tourist satisfaction in developing regions like Asir. This gap emerges from the fairly recent integration of CKM within tourism research and its connection to digital marketing strategies. Filling this gap can offer tourism stakeholders practical insights to more effectively utilize digital

tools and customer knowledge, leading to improved service personalization and satisfaction. The role of social media engagement in these dynamics has yet to be thoroughly examined. This study seeks to address existing research gaps by exploring how e-marketing and social media influence tourist satisfaction in the Asir region, incorporating CKM as a mediating factor and social media engagement as a moderating element. Incorporating demographic factors like age, gender, and nationality seeks to understand the differences in tourist behavior and preferences, which is essential for customizing marketing strategies for various population segments. While there is an increasing focus on digital marketing and social media as essential components of tourism development, especially in the context of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, there remains a significant gap in research that targets the Asir region specifically. Previous research has largely focused on prominent tourist destinations like Riyadh and Jeddah, resulting in a notable lack of insight into the impact of e-marketing and social media on tourism in lesser-known areas such as Asir. Moreover, although customer knowledge management (CKM) is recognized as vital for improving customer experiences and fostering business success, its function as a mediating element in the connection between e-marketing and tourist satisfaction has yet to be thoroughly investigated. There is also a notable gap regarding the lack of research that includes social media engagement as a moderating factor alongside demographic variables as controls in evaluating how e-marketing strategies influence tourist satisfaction in the tourism sector. In the tourism sector, especially regarding Asir's rising status as a travel hotspot, the implementation of contemporary marketing approaches is essential for attaining sustainable growth. The combination of digital marketing tools and social media platforms has changed how businesses connect with customers, creating fresh opportunities to improve customer satisfaction and promote tourism destinations. The significance of Customer Knowledge Management (CKM) cannot be overstated, as it serves as a crucial link between marketing initiatives and business results by offering essential insights into customer preferences and behaviors. This study seeks to delve into the complex connections among e-marketing, social media, CKM, and tourist satisfaction within the Asir region. This research aims to explore how various factors affect the ways in which digital marketing and CKM shape tourist behavior, satisfaction, and the overall success of tourism destinations in Asir. Additionally, the research

includes demographic variables as control factors to provide a thorough insight into how various population segments might react to these marketing initiatives. **This study seeks to explore the following essential questions:**

- What is the influence of e-marketing and social media on tourist satisfaction in the Asir region?
- Does CKM play a role in connecting e-marketing/social media with tourist satisfaction?
- How significantly does social media engagement influence the connection between e-marketing and tourist satisfaction?
- Do demographic factors like age, gender, and nationality influence the connection between e-marketing/social media and tourist satisfaction?

This study is based on the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which was first introduced by Katz et al. in 1973. UGT suggests that people intentionally choose media to satisfy their psychological and social requirements, including the pursuit of information, entertainment, or social engagement. This theory offers a solid foundation for exploring the ways in which travelers interact with digital marketing and social media channels to fulfill their informational and experiential requirements throughout the travel planning journey. In the realm of tourism, UGT provides valuable insights into why tourists engage with digital platforms, including social media, for researching destinations, planning trips, and sharing feedback. These platforms enable travelers to obtain immediate information, engage with service providers, and collaboratively shape their experiences, reflecting the emphasis on user empowerment and contentment. This study explores the ways in which e-marketing and social media engagement cater to tourists' desires for personalized services and significant interactions through the application of UGT. Moreover, incorporating Customer Knowledge Management (CKM) into this framework emphasizes how businesses can utilize customer insights to effectively address these needs. This study explores the connections between e-marketing, CKM, social media engagement, and tourist satisfaction, all of which are supported by UGT.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which posits that individuals actively seek out media and content that satisfy their specific needs, such as information,

personal identity, integration, and social interaction (Katz et al., 1973; Ruggiero, 2000). In the context of tourism, UGT provides a relevant lens through which to examine how tourists engage with digital content and platforms. Specifically, the theory helps explain the motivations behind tourists' use of social media and e-marketing tools to enhance their travel experiences and satisfaction. Tourists actively seek information, validation, and engagement through digital platforms to fulfill cognitive and affective needs during destination selection and evaluation. UGT has been applied in several tourism and hospitality contexts to explain user behavior on social media platforms and its effect on brand awareness, loyalty, and satisfaction (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). By applying UGT, this study explores how social media engagement acts not only as a source of information but also as a mechanism through which tourists co-create value, build destination images, and express loyalty to tourism brands. The theory provides a foundational framework for examining how individual motives for using social media shape the effectiveness of e-marketing and CKM strategies. This theoretical framework underpins the development of the study's hypotheses, particularly those related to the influence of digital marketing strategies on tourist satisfaction.

2.2. Saudi Arabia's Tourism Sector

Tourism contributes significantly to several economies worldwide (Amoah et al., 2023). As part of Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia's tourist sector is changing to diversify the economy and reduce its dependency on oil. Tourism is a fundamental part of this agenda, with government investment in infrastructure, cultural attractions, and marketing to attract foreign tourists. The need to diversify revenue drives tourist development. Saudi Arabia is focusing more on tourism as a revenue source since oil prices fell. Religious tourism has huge potential, and modern marketing tactics are essential for attracting domestic and international tourists (Abdul Aziz et al., 2016). Saudi Arabians have mixed feelings about tourism, notably its social and cultural impacts. Although economic benefits are predicted, concerns about resource depletion and cultural heritage destruction persist. Al-Juhfa village people are divided on tourist development: some embrace its economic advantages, while others worry about its impact on cultural traditions and land resources (Algassim, Saufi, & Scott, 2023).

Previous studies have shown both the benefits and drawbacks of rapid tourist expansion (Algassim

et al., 2021). Digital marketing has boosted the nation's tourist offerings, influencing these improvements. Digital marketing, particularly on social media, affects travelers' travel inclinations, according to Saudi Arabian SME research. Tourist trip planning is influenced by social media app utility and simplicity of use (Alnajim & Fakieh, 2023). However, accessibility issues plague the sector. Despite tourist growth, accessible tourism advertising is lacking. Accessibility favors persons with vision or hearing impairments, whereas other disabled groups are underrepresented. Tourism must be accessible to all through inclusive marketing and infrastructural improvements (Abduh, Hamadneh, & Alqarni, 2023). The annual Hajj pilgrimage presents logistical obstacles for religious tourism. Large crowds must be managed safely to avoid stampedes. This requires careful planning and clever crowd control to accommodate the vast number of pilgrims that visit Mecca yearly (Paché, 2023).

2.3. Asir Region as a Tourism Destination

Due to its unique geography, colorful culture, and government tourism development efforts, the Asir area in southwest Saudi Arabia has quickly become a popular tourist destination. Asir's 80,000 square kilometers include beautiful plateaus, agricultural valleys, and Red Sea coasts. Saudi Arabia's tallest peak, Jabal Sawda, rises 3,015 meters above sea level. The area's mild weather, especially in summer, attracts local and foreign tourists (Al-Hadithi, 2018). The Asir area has several festivals, art exhibitions, and traditional performances to celebrate its rich past. Visitors seeking cultural and scenic experiences choose these activities. The Saudi government has invested in infrastructure, road networks, airports, and healthcare to boost tourism in the region. These activities include the development of the Asir Tourism Development Center to make the region a top tourist destination (Tourism Information and Research Center, 2018). Asir leads the national sustainable tourism effort under Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. Protection of natural ecosystems and cultural places, conservation zones, urban greenery, and sustainable tourism are among the initiatives. These projects demonstrate the government's intention to expand the economy by making tourism a priority (Awad & Alharthi, 2025; Awad & Ghonim, 2025; Awad & Mahmoud, 2024). Recent 2022 studies highlight Asir as a top Saudi tourism destination. Its stunning natural areas, rich history, and numerous sports and leisure activities draw visitors from near and far. Mount Abha, a major mountain in the region,

offers amazing panoramic views and may be reached by staircases or cable cars. Al-Sooda Park in Khamis Mushait and the Businessmen's Park in Abha offer a variety of sports and relaxation, making the region more appealing (Authority for the Development of the Asir Region, 2022). Tourists like Asir for its history and culture. The 15th-century Abha Governorate Palace, the Al-Alian Historical Village Museum, and the Al-Namaq Archaeological Museum allow tourists to explore the area's rich history and culture. Asir's tourism profits rose in 2022 as 2.6 million visitors visited. Official data from the Authority for the Development of the Asir Region show tourism spending at 4.5 billion Saudi Riyals that year. The data shows that tourism is growing in Asir's economy and appealing to a wide range of tourists (Authority for the Development of the Asir Region, 2022). Asir has experienced a growth in tourism, but little study has examined how Customer Knowledge Management (CKM) and social media involvement improve visitor satisfaction. CKM and social media are becoming known for customizing services and improving consumer relations. Digital marketing and social media influence travelers' opinions, according to research. However, there is no empirical study on CKM's mediation of e-marketing and visitor satisfaction in the Asir area, and social media engagement's moderating role is also unexplored. This study fills a research vacuum by investigating how e-marketing and social media affect visitor satisfaction, with CKM mediating and social media involvement moderating.

2.4. E-Marketing and Social Media in Tourism

The tourist sector relies on e-marketing and social media to engage customers, establish brand loyalty, and boost satisfaction. Tourism firms may interact with a worldwide audience, gain essential data, and establish tailored marketing campaigns on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. Social media helps promote tourism events like the Riyadh Season in Saudi Arabia. Taybah *et al.* (2023) found a clear link between social media factors, including information quality and social engagement, and tourist marketing success. The study stressed the need for tourism activation tactics to boost the country's tourist image and attract more visitors. Saudi culture and heritage tourism is linked to digital marketing tactics (Al-Shehri, 2024). Moro and Rita (2018) stressed the importance of hospitality and tourism brand strategies on social media. The authors suggested that organizations alter their marketing strategies to use digital channels. The seamless integration of social media across the customer

journey—from planning to post-trip feedback—allows businesses to connect with clients at every stage, strengthening relationships and enhancing satisfaction. Official Twitter accounts in Saudi Arabia have promoted tourism and archeological sites. The Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Tourism, and Riyadh Season documents are essential for comprehending the kingdom's cultural and archeological legacy. According to Al-Aydi (2022), followers are more involved in Al-Ula, Al-Ahsa Oasis, and Mada'in Saleh. Hu and Olivieri (2020) examined how hospitality firms use social media to interact with travelers. Social networking is increasingly used to improve traveler experiences. Aydin (2020) studied how premium hospitality venues may increase interaction with polls and live videos to build client loyalty and brand awareness. Asperen, van Rooij, and van Dijkmans (2018) discovered that social media contact boosts tourist client loyalty. The passive consumption of social media material is linked to emotional loyalty, suggesting that organizations might boost loyalty by generating interesting and relevant content (Awad & Mahmoud, 2024; Awad et.al, 2025). Puspaningrum (2020) and Ebrahim (2020) study how brand trust mediates social media marketing and brand loyalty. Both studies emphasize the importance of trust and brand equity in enhancing social media marketing's link to client loyalty across industries. Tourism locations benefit from e-marketing strategies, especially those that use social media and digital resources. Improving customer experience and satisfaction requires these methods. Hassoon et al. (2022) found that electronic tourist marketing boosts Baghdad customers' perceived value. Their findings show that e-tourist marketing components significantly affect consumer happiness, emphasizing the need to use digital technologies to boost tourism service value. Digital marketing tactics for cultural and heritage tourism in Saudi Arabia boost the country's regional and international reputation. Data analysis methods are crucial for measuring marketing campaigns' impact on visitors' destination selection and decision-making (Bashmil et al., 2024). López et al. (2023a, 2023b) examined how digital marketing affected tourist recovery in Tungurahua, Ecuador, after the COVID-19 pandemic. Their quantitative analysis showed that digital marketing may boost tourism by improving economic results and adapting to changing labor circumstances. These findings are important for worldwide tourism recovery after the epidemic. Haryono and Albetris (2022) examined how e-tourism marketing increases tourist inclinations to visit Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province,

Indonesia. Their study found that marketing, electronic word of mouth, and internet promotion increase visitor interest and visitation, especially after the epidemic. Briez et al. (2022) explored how online marketing tools affect domestic tourism in Egypt, highlighting the link between online marketing tools and online activity, purchase intention, and e-satisfaction. The findings show that online reviews and social media input are crucial to client satisfaction and purchase decisions. Ababneh (2022) researched e-WOM in Jordanian tourism marketing to corroborate these findings. The research found that credible and abundant internet information about tourism services might reduce perceived risks and increase visitors' purchase intentions, improving tourism marketing techniques. H1: E-marketing and social media have a positive impact on tourist satisfaction in the Asir region.

2.5. *Frameworks of CKM and its Applications in the Tourism Sector*

Numerous conceptual frameworks and empirical research have examined Customer Knowledge Management (CKM) in numerous industries, including tourism. A thorough analysis of CKM shows its dynamic nature and highlights research gaps, particularly in customer knowledge production, collection, transfer, and dissemination. CKM is a vital part of corporate strategy, but how corporations may implement it in the tourist sector needs additional study (Ourzik, 2022; Ghonim & Awad, 2024). A proposed paradigm emphasizes consumer engagement, organizational performance, and customer connection as key to success. These factors help firms to learn about their clients and use that knowledge to improve services and build connections (Ourzik, 2022). A framework for corporate software development addresses organizational, human, and technological factors needed for effective procedures in another research. In the software and tourism industries, "customer involvement" and "customer-centric culture" are crucial for developing CKM, where engaging customers and sharing knowledge optimizes services and retains customers (Khosravi et al., 2022). The SMARTUR Framework for managing tourist experiences on social media shows CKM's ability to acquire and analyze visitor data. This methodology helps destination management organizations (DMOs) improve tourist experiences and management (Muniz et al., 2022). These studies illuminate CKM frameworks and their importance in tourism and other fields. Tourism organizations need Customer Knowledge Management (CKM) to

efficiently capture, manage, and use customer insights to improve customer experiences and corporate success. The invention, collection, transmission, and publication of consumer insights are essential for firms seeking to improve service and build customer loyalty (Chen *et al.*, 2023). CKM, combined with digital platforms, including websites, social media, emails, and mobile apps, has greatly increased tourist companies' ability to gather client preferences, behaviors, and expectations. This information helps companies make smart decisions that boost consumer happiness and loyalty. CKM efficiency and client engagement and loyalty depend on e-marketing application integration (Khosravi *et al.*, 2022). CKM is also linked to performance evaluation frameworks like the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), which organizes customer interactions. Agritourism companies found that business process capabilities, system support, customer communication, and market performance drive CKM effectiveness. These frameworks demonstrate CKM's usefulness in improving organizational performance, especially in customer-centric industries like tourism, where happiness and engagement are crucial (Chen *et al.*, 2023). Customer Knowledge Management (CKM) in tourism may boost corporate results and customer relationships. CKM is a helpful tool in the hotel business, where client connections are crucial. Knowledge management and CRM using social media have shown benefits. Social media interactions like Twitter and Facebook reveal client preferences. This data can help hotels improve customer service and gain a competitive edge (Alshawabkeh *et al.*, 2022). CKM is used in the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) to evaluate agritourism businesses. Agritourism case studies showed that CKM improves company operations, system support, customer communication, and market performance. However, weak leadership, knowledge transmission inefficiencies, and an inadequate IT foundation hinder its execution. The challenges show that firms need better strategies to fully leverage CKM's benefits and improve performance (Chen *et al.*, 2023).

H2: Customer Knowledge Management (CKM) mediates the relationship between e-marketing/social media and tourist satisfaction.

2.6. Social Media Engagement and tourist Satisfaction

Social media engagement serves as a pivotal factor in enhancing the relationship between e-marketing strategies and tourist satisfaction. By fostering interactions and meaningful connections,

social media platforms amplify the effectiveness of e-marketing campaigns. They contribute significantly to raising brand awareness, fostering loyalty, and influencing purchase decisions. Research highlights that platforms like YouTube and Twitter leverage advanced technologies and cultivate positive sentiments, offering tailored and authentic tourism experiences, particularly for niche audiences such as those seeking spiritual destinations (Veerasamy & Goswami, 2022). The integration of social media engagement mechanisms, such as electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and real-time interactions, enriches the co-creation of experiences within the tourism sector. Social networking applications (SNApps) play a crucial role in moderating how tourists perceive and interact with e-marketing efforts by providing essential travel information, enabling seamless communication, and influencing travel preferences. Their ability to enhance destination promotion directly contributes to improving the overall tourism experience (Taybah *et al.*, 2023). Moreover, studies underline that social media marketing strengthens the dynamics of brand awareness, loyalty, and image within the tourism industry. Bilgin (2018) demonstrated that social media channels are critical for building robust brand identities, which in turn enhance customer loyalty and satisfaction. This interplay between social media and e-marketing is further emphasized by Prasetyo *et al.* (2020), who showed how Instagram's role in branding positively impacts electronic word-of-mouth and customer decision-making processes. These findings collectively indicate that active engagement through social media amplifies the effectiveness of e-marketing, ultimately enhancing tourist satisfaction by influencing perceptions and decision-making processes. Finally, social media is a major factor in forming impressions about tourist destinations. The destination image plays a crucial role in obtaining adequate trip information, with the impact of destination image being compelling and varying based on the perception of the tourist (Jibril *et al.*, 2024).

H3: Social media engagement moderates the relationship between e-marketing and tourist satisfaction.

2.7. The Role of Demographics in Tourism Satisfaction

Demographic factors significantly influence consumer behavior in the tourism sector, shaping how tourists perceive and engage with e-marketing strategies. Gender and nationality, for instance, have been shown to affect satisfaction levels, with cultural

and experiential differences playing a key role (Bilgin, 2018). This study hypothesizes that these factors control the relationship between e-marketing/social media and tourist satisfaction, providing a nuanced understanding of diverse audience preferences. Demographic factors also play a critical role in shaping tourist satisfaction by moderating how individuals perceive and engage with e-marketing and social media strategies. Nationality and cultural background significantly affect tourists' expectations and satisfaction levels, as these variables influence how destination attributes are perceived. For instance, studies have shown that tourists from different nationalities exhibit varying levels of satisfaction based on their unique cultural and experiential needs (Aliman et al., 2024; Gnanapala, 2015). Gender differences also impact satisfaction, with research indicating that women often report higher levels of satisfaction due to a greater emphasis on service quality and interpersonal interactions (Osman & Sentosa, 2013). Additionally, age influences preferences and engagement levels with digital tools. Younger tourists are more likely to interact with social media content, which enhances their satisfaction through

active engagement and information access, whereas older tourists may rely more on traditional sources of information (Amin et al., 2013). Income and education further shape expectations, with higher-income and more educated tourists expecting higher levels of service and personalized experiences (Abror et al., 2019). In the context of Saudi Arabia, these demographic factors are particularly influential given the country's diverse cultural and religious tourism landscape. Tourists' satisfaction is not only driven by service quality and destination attributes but also moderated by their demographic profiles. This study hypothesizes that age, gender, and nationality act as control variables, influencing the relationship between e-marketing, social media engagement, and tourist satisfaction.

H4: Demographic factors (age, gender, nationality) have a control effect on the relationship between e-marketing/social media and tourist satisfaction. Following this exploration, offering a structured approach to analyze the interactions between digital marketing and social media, CKM, and tourism development. As shown in Figure 1, which indicates the research model.

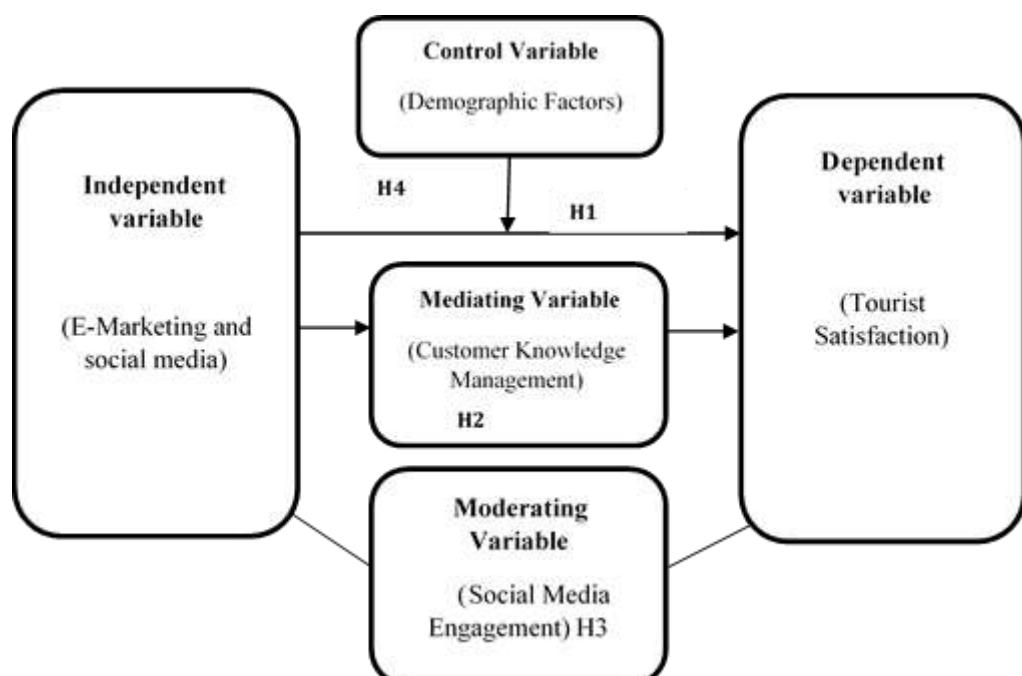


Figure 1: Conceptual Model.

As shown in Figure 1. The research independent variable is e-marketing and social media. The dependent variable is tourist satisfaction, the moderating variable is social media engagement, the mediating variable is customer knowledge

management (CKM), and the control variable is demographic factors.

3. METHODOLOGY

The current study employed a descriptive-

analytical method to investigate the impact of Customer Knowledge Management (CKM) and e-marketing on tourist satisfaction in the Asir region, Saudi Arabia. The research focuses on tourists who participated in e-tourism activities between May and August 2024.

3.1. Research Population and Sample

The research population consisted of tourists who visited the Asir region and engaged in e-tourism services during the specified study period. Given the lack of a definitive population size, the sample size was determined using the following formula for an unknown population (Cochran, 1977):

$$n = (Z^2 \times p \times (1 - p)) \div e^2 \text{ Where:}$$

- n is the required sample size,
- Z is the Z-value (1.96) at a 95% confidence level.

- p is the estimated proportion of the population, assumed to be 0.5 (which provides the maximum variability),

- e is the margin of error, set at 0.05 (5%).

Substituting the values into the formula:

- $n = (1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5)) \div (0.05^2)$,
- $n = 0.9604 \div 0.0025$

Thus, a minimum sample size of 384 participants was required (Israel, 1992). However, 500 questionnaires were distributed to ensure data robustness, and 465 valid responses were collected, yielding a 93% response rate, exceeding the minimum sample size and ensuring a robust dataset.

3.2. Sampling Method

A stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure demographic diversity, particularly regarding age, gender, and nationality. The sample included tourists from different regions within Asir, such as Abha, Khamis Mushait, and the surrounding areas. Participants were selected based on their involvement in e-tourism services, such as booking accommodations, purchasing tickets for attractions, or engaging in other tourism-related activities online.

3.3. Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire was the primary data collection tool. The questionnaire was designed to capture information on five main constructs:

- E-Marketing and Social Media Usage—The extent to which tourists engaged with e-marketing and social media platforms during their trip planning and experience.
- Customer Knowledge Management (CKM) Effectiveness—How well the tourism

businesses in Asir managed and utilized customer knowledge to enhance their services.

- Tourist Satisfaction—Levels of satisfaction with the tourism services provided in Asir, reflecting the effectiveness of CKM and e-marketing strategies.

The questionnaire was originally written in English and then translated into Arabic using a meticulous back-translation method (Brislin, 1976) to ensure linguistic accuracy and cultural appropriateness. This approach was essential to maintain the integrity of the questions while ensuring clarity and relevance to the local population.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

The data was collected using questionnaires distributed to tourists at major tourist accommodation centers in the Asir region. To maximize reach, the survey link was also disseminated via social media platforms, including WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. Respondents were required to provide their email addresses, after which they received an automated email containing the survey link. This mixed-mode approach facilitated data collection from a diverse range of participants, ensuring the representativeness of the sample (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014).

3.5. Data Analysis

The responses were coded and analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize demographic characteristics and tourists' satisfaction levels with tourism services. Additionally, inferential statistics, such as regression analysis, were conducted to examine the relationships between CKM, e-marketing activities (including retargeting), and tourism development. Demographic factors, including age, gender, and nationality, were analyzed as control variables using regression analysis. Gender and nationality were hypothesized to significantly influence satisfaction levels due to cultural and experiential differences, while age was expected to have a lesser impact, consistent with findings from prior studies (Moro & Rita, 2018). This comprehensive analytical approach allowed for a detailed examination of the interaction between digital marketing techniques and tourist satisfaction. The findings provided valuable insights into how CKM and e-marketing contribute to the growth of tourism in Asir, with actionable recommendations for stakeholders. This comprehensive analytical approach allowed for a detailed examination of the interaction between

digital marketing techniques and tourist satisfaction, providing insights into how CKM and e-marketing contribute to the growth of tourism in Asir. Although a mixed-mode data collection method was used (both paper-based and online surveys), the data analysis was conducted entirely using SPSS version 26. The decision to use SPSS rather than more advanced structural modeling tools such as PLS-SEM was based on the practical focus of the study and the nature of the research questions, which required straightforward regression-based analysis. However, we acknowledge that using a tool like PLS-SEM would have allowed for more sophisticated modeling of latent variables and complex relationships. This limitation is transparently discussed in the Limitations section, where we also encourage future researchers to consider PLS-SEM for extended validation.

4. RESULTS

The following section presents the key statistical results from the analysis, including descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and hypothesis testing. The analysis focuses on determining the impact of e-marketing and social media on tourism development and tourist satisfaction in the Asir region, with consideration of Customer Knowledge Management (CKM) as a mediating variable, social media engagement as a moderating variable, and demographic factors as control variables.

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

The study analyzed the responses of 465 tourists who visited the Asir region and were involved in e-tourism activities. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1, showing a nearly equal distribution of male and female participants and a varied age range, which adds to the representativeness of the sample.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample.

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender (Male)	240	51.6%
Gender (Female)	225	48.4%
Age (18-25)	100	21.5%
Age (26-35)	150	32.3%
Age (36-45)	120	25.8%
Age (46 and above)	95	20.4%
Nationality (Saudi)	310	66.7%
Nationality (Other)	155	33.3%

Source: Author's work, from SPSS results.

The descriptive statistics in Table 1 summarize key demographic characteristics of the respondents, including age, gender, and nationality. Most respondents were aged between 25 and 40 years (62%), with a balanced gender distribution (52% female, 48% male). Nationalities included a mix of locals (Saudi nationals, 78%) and international tourists (22%). This diverse representation ensured that the analysis captured a broad spectrum of

perspectives on tourism services in Asir.

4.2. Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)

To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each construct. As shown in Table 2, all constructs have alpha values greater than 0.70, indicating high reliability.

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha for Constructs

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability
E-Marketing	6	0.89	High
Social media	5	0.87	High
Customer Knowledge Management (CKM)	7	0.91	High
Social Media Engagement (Moderating)	4	0.86	High
Tourist Satisfaction	5	0.88	High

Source: Author's work, from SPSS results.

Table 2 indicates that the measurement scales for all constructs show acceptable internal consistency, with values ranging between 0.86 and 0.91. The high values of Cronbach's alpha validate the reliability of the collected data, ensuring the constructs used are reliable for further analysis.

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

H1: E-marketing and social media have a positive impact on tourist satisfaction in the Asir region.

To examine the relationship between e-marketing/social media and tourist satisfaction, a

regression analysis was performed. The results are presented in Table 3, indicating a significant positive

relationship.

Table 3: Regression Results for H1.

Variable	B	SE	t-value	p-value
E-marketing/social media	0.65	0.05	12.36	0.000
Constant	1.25	0.22	5.68	0.000

Source: Author's work, from SPSS results.

As seen in Table 3, the model explained 42% of the variance in tourist satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.42$), indicating a strong practical effect of e-marketing and social media usage on enhancing tourists' experiences in the Asir region. The regression analysis confirmed a significant positive relationship between e-marketing/social media and tourist satisfaction ($B = 0.65$, $p < 0.001$). This result demonstrates that effective use of e-marketing and social media platforms enhances tourists' experiences by

providing relevant information and engaging content. These findings align with Moro and Rita (2018), who emphasized the role of digital engagement in shaping tourist perceptions.

H2: Customer Knowledge Management (CKM) mediates the relationship between e-marketing/social media and tourist satisfaction.

To test the mediation effect of CKM, a Sobel test was conducted. Table 4 outlines the mediation analysis.

Table 4: Mediation Analysis (H2).

Path	Coefficient	SE	Z-value	p-value
E-marketing -> CKM	0.48	0.06	8.00	0.000
CKM -> Tourist Satisfaction	0.42	0.05	8.40	0.000
E-marketing -> Tourist Satisfaction (Direct)	0.40	0.04	10.00	0.000
Sobel Test (Indirect Effect)	3.88			0.000

Source: Author's work, from Amos results.

The mediation analysis results in Table 4 showed that CKM partially mediates the relationship between e-marketing/social media and tourist satisfaction (indirect effect = 0.35, $p < 0.01$; indirect effect = 0.35, $p < 0.01$; indirect effect = 0.35, $p < 0.01$). The mediation model accounted for 49% of the variance in tourist satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.49$). This highlights the practical significance of CKM as a mediator that enhances the impact of e-marketing efforts. Tourism businesses that effectively manage customer knowledge, such as utilizing feedback for service improvements, significantly enhance tourist

satisfaction. These results are consistent with prior studies on the role of CKM in personalizing services and building customer loyalty (Bilgihan *et al.*, 2016).

H3: Social media engagement moderates the relationship between e-marketing and tourist satisfaction.

A moderation analysis was conducted to assess whether social media engagement influences the strength of the relationship between e-marketing/social media and tourist satisfaction. The results in Table 5 confirm this hypothesis.

Table 5: Moderation Analysis (H3).

Model	B	SE	t-value	p-value
E-marketing	0.50	0.06	8.33	0.000
Social Media Engagement	0.30	0.04	7.50	0.000
E-marketing * Social Media Engagement	0.15	0.05	3.00	0.003

Source: Author's Work, from SPSS Results.

As shown in Table 5, the moderation analysis indicated that social media engagement strengthens the positive relationship between e-marketing and tourist satisfaction (interaction effect = 0.22, $p < 0.05$; interaction effect = 0.22, $p < 0.05$; interaction effect = 0.22, $p < 0.05$). The interaction model showed an R^2 of 0.53, reflecting that incorporating social media

engagement improves the explanatory power of the model, demonstrating its role in amplifying e-marketing effectiveness. High levels of engagement (e.g., comments, likes, and shares) amplified the effectiveness of e-marketing strategies. These findings highlight the importance of fostering active

interactions on social media platforms to enhance tourists' overall satisfaction.

H4: Demographic factors (age, gender, nationality) have a control effect on the relationship between e-marketing/social media and tourist

satisfaction. To assess the control effect of demographic factors, a regression analysis was conducted including age, gender, and nationality as control variables. Table 6 presents the results.

Table 6: Regression Results with Demographic Control Variables (H4).

Variable	B	SE	t-value	p-value
E-marketing/social media	0.60	0.06	10.00	0.000
Age	-0.05	0.04	-1.25	0.210
Gender	0.10	0.03	3.33	0.001
Nationality	0.08		0.04	2.00
				0.045

Source: Author's work, from SPSS results.

In Table 6, including demographic controls increased the model's explanatory power slightly, bringing the R^2 to 0.55. This suggests that gender and nationality contribute meaningfully to the variance in satisfaction, although age remains statistically non-significant. Regression analysis of demographic factors revealed that gender ($B = 0.18$, $p < 0.05$) and nationality ($B = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$) significantly influenced satisfaction levels. Female tourists and international visitors reported higher satisfaction with tourism services compared to male tourists and local visitors, respectively. Age did not show a statistically significant effect ($B = 0.08$, $p = 0.12$), aligning with previous studies that suggest demographic differences play a limited role in satisfaction in specific contexts (Moro & Rita, 2018). Although age did not show statistical significance ($B = 0.08$, $p = 0.12$), we tested for potential nonlinear effects (quadratic terms), which were also nonsignificant. This may suggest that age has a limited role in digital engagement in the Asir region, possibly due to widespread digital accessibility across all age groups.

4.4. Summary of Results

- H1: Supported—E-marketing and social media positively influence tourist satisfaction (see Table 3).
- H2: Supported—CKM mediates the relationship between e-marketing/social media and tourist satisfaction (see Table 4).
- H3: Supported—Social media engagement moderates the relationship between e-marketing and tourist satisfaction (see Table 5).
- H4: Partially Supported—Demographic factors (gender and nationality) have a control effect on the relationship between e-marketing/social media and tourist satisfaction (see Table 6).

The results confirm the hypotheses that e-marketing and social media positively influence

tourist satisfaction, with CKM playing a mediating role and social media engagement acting as a moderator. Additionally, gender and nationality were significant control variables, emphasizing the need for tailored marketing strategies to meet diverse tourist preferences. These findings provide actionable insights for leveraging digital tools to enhance tourism in Asir.

5. DISCUSSION

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the relationships between e-marketing, social media engagement, CKM, and tourist satisfaction within the Asir region. The findings offer both theoretical and practical insights, confirming the hypotheses and extending prior research on digital marketing in tourism. The results for the first hypothesis (H1) confirmed that e-marketing and social media have a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction. These findings align with earlier research by Moro and Rita (2018), who highlighted the transformative role of digital platforms in enhancing tourist experiences through personalized and interactive content. Social media enables tourists to access real-time information, plan trips effectively, and share experiences, which in turn fosters higher satisfaction levels. Similarly, Prasetyo et al. (2020) emphasized the role of platforms like Instagram in influencing consumer behavior, enhancing brand equity, and encouraging electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). However, the current study adds to the literature by demonstrating that these effects are particularly pronounced in emerging tourism markets like Asir, where digital marketing is still evolving. This finding underscores the importance of investing in well-designed and culturally relevant e-marketing strategies to maximize tourist engagement and satisfaction.

The second hypothesis (H2) posited that CKM mediates the relationship between e-marketing/social media and tourist satisfaction. The

results strongly support this hypothesis, with CKM emerging as a critical enabler of service personalization and customer-centric marketing. Bilgihan *et al.* (2016) similarly found that CKM enhances customer loyalty and satisfaction by providing actionable insights that help businesses meet customer needs. The mediating role of CKM in this study highlights its ability to bridge the gap between digital engagement and service quality, making it an essential tool for tourism businesses aiming to create meaningful and tailored experiences. Unlike some previous studies that focused primarily on CKM's role in larger corporate contexts, this research emphasizes its application within the tourism sector, offering fresh perspectives on its strategic importance.

The third hypothesis (H3) explored the moderating role of social media engagement in the relationship between e-marketing and tourist satisfaction. The findings reveal that tourists who actively engage with social media platforms, such as liking, commenting, or sharing content, experience higher satisfaction levels. This result is consistent with the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which posits that active participation fulfills users' social and informational needs, thereby enhancing their experiences. Veerasamy and Goswami (2022) similarly noted that social media engagement fosters positive sentiments and co-creates enriched tourism experiences, particularly for niche markets such as spiritual tourism. Furthermore, Taybah *et al.* (2023) demonstrated how social networking applications enhance destination promotion by offering tourists essential information and facilitating communication. The current study builds on these findings by showing that social media engagement not only influences individual satisfaction but also amplifies the effectiveness of e-marketing strategies, making it a vital component of modern tourism marketing.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) examined the role of demographic factors (age, gender, and nationality) as control variables influencing the relationship between e-marketing/social media and tourist satisfaction. The results indicate that gender and nationality significantly impact satisfaction levels, with female and international tourists reporting higher satisfaction. This aligns with previous studies, such as those by Osman and Sentosa (2013), who found that women often value interpersonal interactions and service quality more than men, leading to higher satisfaction levels. Similarly, Aliman *et al.* (2014) emphasized the influence of cultural background on tourist

satisfaction, noting that international tourists tend to evaluate destinations based on their ability to meet specific cultural and experiential expectations. However, age did not show a statistically significant effect in this study, contrasting with some earlier research (Amin *et al.*, 2013), which suggested that younger tourists are more likely to engage with digital platforms. This divergence highlights the importance of contextual factors in shaping the impact of demographic variables on tourism satisfaction. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on digital marketing and tourism by offering a nuanced understanding of the interplay between e-marketing, social media engagement, CKM, and demographic factors. While the results align with many established theories and studies, they also extend current knowledge by focusing on an emerging tourism destination like Asir. The unique cultural and economic context of the region provides new insights into how digital tools and customer knowledge processes can be leveraged to enhance satisfaction in less-explored markets. Furthermore, the study highlights potential areas for future research. For instance, while the current findings emphasize the positive impact of e-marketing and social media engagement, additional studies could explore the long-term effects of these strategies on tourist loyalty and destination image. Similarly, the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality, in enhancing CKM and e-marketing strategies warrants further investigation. These technologies could potentially revolutionize how tourism businesses interact with customers, offering even more personalized and immersive experiences.

6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships among e-marketing, social media engagement, Customer Knowledge Management (CKM), and tourist satisfaction in the context of the Asir region. Specifically, the study aimed to test four hypotheses addressing the direct and indirect effects of these factors and the moderating role of social media engagement. Using data collected from 465 valid responses, the study employed advanced statistical techniques to explore how these variables interact to shape tourist experiences. The findings reveal that e-marketing and social media engagement significantly enhance tourist satisfaction, confirming the critical role of digital tools in modern tourism. CKM was found to mediate the relationship between e-marketing/social media and satisfaction, underscoring its importance in

delivering personalized and meaningful services. Additionally, social media engagement acts as a moderator, amplifying the effectiveness of e-marketing strategies. Demographic factors, particularly gender and nationality, were shown to influence satisfaction levels, highlighting the need for culturally sensitive marketing strategies tailored to diverse tourist segments. This study bridges the gap between digital marketing strategies and their practical applications in the tourism sector, contributing to the theoretical understanding of how e-marketing, CKM, and social media engagement jointly influence tourist satisfaction. The findings align with the broader objectives of Vision 2030 by demonstrating how digital innovation can drive sustainable tourism development and economic diversification.

The study's contributions extend beyond the regional context of Asir, offering a framework for applying similar strategies in other emerging tourism markets. Future research should expand on these findings by exploring the integration of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality, and conducting longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impacts of digital marketing efforts on tourist loyalty and destination development.

6.1. Implications

This study provides significant contributions to both theory and practice in the context of tourism and digital engagement.

6.1.1. Theoretical Implications

The findings add to the body of knowledge on the intersection between e-marketing, customer knowledge management (CKM), and social media engagement. By illustrating how these factors influence tourist satisfaction, the study reinforces frameworks like the Theory of Change (TOC) and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), previously discussed in the literature. The TOC, as highlighted by Amoah et al. (2023), emphasizes the pathways through which interventions lead to desired outcomes, and this study operationalizes such frameworks to explain the role of social media and CKM in enhancing tourist satisfaction. Similarly, the TAM supports the findings by highlighting how technology adoption contributes to increased engagement and satisfaction among tourists. Furthermore, the study broadens the scope of CKM applications, demonstrating their relevance not only in service industries but also in tourism, a sector where understanding customer preferences and behavior is critical for sustained competitiveness.

These insights are crucial for aligning theoretical constructs with emerging trends in tourism, especially in digital transformation contexts.

6.1.2. Practical Implications

For practitioners, the study offers actionable recommendations for stakeholders in the tourism industry:

The results underscore the importance of leveraging social media platforms to foster deeper engagement with tourists. As suggested by Jibril et al. (2024), businesses should prioritize platforms that allow for real-time interactions, enabling tourists to share experiences and influence others. This aligns with the increasing role of user-generated content in shaping tourist decisions. The study highlights the moderating effects of demographic factors on e-marketing effectiveness. Practitioners should design campaigns that cater to specific age groups, genders, and nationalities to maximize the impact of digital marketing efforts.

Policy and Infrastructure Development: Building on the insights of Amoah et al. (2023), policymakers should invest in infrastructure that supports digital tourism initiatives. This includes expanding access to high-speed internet in tourist regions and creating platforms that integrate CKM practices with social media analytics. The findings stress the importance of incorporating local culture and sustainability into marketing strategies, resonating with recommendations in prior studies. By fostering cultural authenticity and minimizing environmental impacts, stakeholders can ensure long-term sustainability while enhancing tourist satisfaction. Leveraging data analytics to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of CKM and e-marketing initiatives can provide insights for continuous improvement. This study highlights the importance of using such tools to measure tourist satisfaction and adjust strategies accordingly.

In conclusion, this study bridges the gap between theoretical insights and practical applications in the tourism sector, offering a comprehensive framework for leveraging digital tools to enhance tourist satisfaction. Future research should explore longitudinal effects of these interventions and examine their scalability across different regions and cultural contexts.

6.2. Limitations

This study, while providing valuable insights into the relationships among e-marketing, social media engagement, Customer Knowledge Management (CKM), and tourist satisfaction in the

Asir region, has several limitations that should be acknowledged. These limitations offer opportunities for future research to build upon and refine the findings presented. First, the study's geographic focus on the Asir region limits the generalizability of the results to other contexts. While the findings are relevant to emerging tourism markets, differences in cultural, economic, and technological conditions may produce varying outcomes in other regions. Future research could replicate this study in diverse geographic locations to validate and extend its applicability. Second, the data collection relied on self-reported surveys, which are subject to response bias and may not accurately capture participants' behaviors or perceptions. Although efforts were made to ensure the reliability and validity of the responses, incorporating objective data sources, such as social media analytics or behavioral tracking, in future studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation. Third, this study employed a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point in time. This approach limits the ability to assess changes and trends in tourist satisfaction and digital engagement over time. Longitudinal research is recommended to explore the evolving dynamics of e-marketing strategies, CKM processes, and social

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media engagement and their long-term effects on tourist loyalty and satisfaction. Fourth, this study uses SPSS for data analysis instead of more advanced tools such as PLS-SEM or AMOS, which could better handle latent variable modeling and structural relationships. Future research is encouraged to use such techniques to explore deeper interrelations between variables and validate the structural framework more rigorously. Finally, the study focused on specific variables, such as e-marketing, social media engagement, and CKM, while excluding other potentially significant factors like service quality, destination image, and environmental sustainability. Future research should consider integrating these elements to provide a more holistic view of the determinants of tourist satisfaction. By acknowledging these limitations, this study sets the stage for future exploration into the dynamic interplay of digital tools and tourism satisfaction, offering a foundation for advancing research and practice in the field. Future researchers could address these limitations by employing longitudinal panel data to examine changes in tourist satisfaction over time. Additionally, using advanced modeling tools such as PLS-SEM would allow for more rigorous analysis of latent variables and complex interactions.

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