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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Digital Marketing, Tourism Decision Making, Spending Behavior, Structural Equation Modeling, Social Media, Pakistan.	The present research aimed to assess the impact of digital marketing trends on the decision-making process and spending behavior of tourists in Pakistan. The tourism sector in District Faisalabad is currently experiencing exponential growth, aided by increasing internet penetration and the popularity of social media networks. The article discusses the phenomenon of digital marketing and uses quantitative cross-sectional data collected from 160 respondents to explore the relationship between the examined aspect and tourist behavior. PLS-SEM and binary logistic regression analysis were conducted to evaluate the impact of digital marketing on the tourism sector and identify mediation and moderation effects. The results suggest that the effect of digital marketing on both decision-making and spending behavior of tourists is positive and significant. Moreover, digital marketing tends to increase the likelihood of tourist decision-making reliance by 5.35 times and the probability of high spending by six times. The results also indicate that satisfaction and interaction mediate the relationship between digital marketing and the dependent variables, explaining 36.1% and 24.8% of the observed effect, respectively. At the same time, gender and location were found to moderate the impact of digital marketing trends on tourist spending behavior, reducing the likelihood of high spending for both female tourists and residents in rural areas. The study also found education and income to be two critical factors enabling effective digital marketing, while cultural and economic barriers reduced its effectiveness for the studied population. The research confirmed the applicability of several theoretical models, including Technology Acceptance Model, Theory of Planned Behavior, Expectation Confirmation Theory, and Self-Determination Theory, to the tourism sector in Pakistan. The present findings contribute to understanding the role of digital marketing in tourism and offer policymakers and marketers guidelines on implementing equal opportunities marketing in the sector.
ARTICLE HISTORY Date of Submission: 17-09-2026 Date of Acceptance: 18-10-2026 Date of Publication: 21-10-2026	 2026 Journal of Social Sciences Development
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DOI	https://doi.org/10.59075/jssd.v5i8.396
Volume/Issue	5(8), 2026, 451-472

Introduction:

Consider exploring another realm and getting immersed in it. According to UNWorld Tourism Organization, tourism is 'a travel and stay of an individual away from their regular environment for business or pleasurable reasons' (UNWTO, 2024). However, the activity requires a night of stay outside of the traveler's regular residence for no more than consecutive 12 months to be identified as tourism (Aftab and Khan, 2019). On a personal level, this escape breaks the routine, creating vibrant "flashbulb memories" that deeply enrich a person's quality of life and expand their understanding of the world (Kim, 2016).

Zooming out, this simple act of traveling fuels a multifaceted global industry. It acts as an economic engine, generating essential foreign exchange, building infrastructure, and creating jobs ranging from professional roles to part-time opportunities for students and pensioners (Goeldner and Ritchie, 2012; Jucan and Jucan, 2013). Its economic power is staggering driving nearly 40% of the Maldives' Gross Domestic Product, for instance. Yet, the impact is a double-edged sword, as tourism secures new roads, the preservation of traditional cultural resources (Ramkissoon, 2022; Meyer and Meyer, 2015), and is intrinsically linked to ecological conservation (Uysal et al., 2016), but at the same time, it brings the threat of pollution and degradation (Ren et al., 2019). Nonetheless, the presence of tourists is a powerful ally in the fight to offset the damage to the ancient cultural heritage sites and the local wildlife (Ursache, 2015).

The way people explore the world has changed, as traditional travel agencies and printed brochures are no longer the primary source of information about the destination. Today, the intangible nature of travel where you cannot truly assess a destination until you arrive (Grubor et al., 2019) has met the democratizing power of Web 2.0. A new, "information-empowered" traveler has emerged. They are highly skeptical of traditional advertising (Ferreira et al., 2019) and increasingly reliant on the sprawling digital ecosystem to dictate their travel plans (Imane et al., 2025; GOK and Baltaci, 2024). This digital marketing landscape forces the entire industry to adapt its philosophies, intervening in the non-linear decision-making process from sparking the initial desire to making the final booking (Khan and Rehman, 2024; Singh et al., 2025; Hudson and Thal, 2013; Fotis et al., 2012).

The main actors in the described context are users. In particular, user-generated content (UGC) and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) have become critically important information coming from these sources is perceived by consumers as more authentic, trustworthy, and less risky than traditional forms of advertising (Albastroiu and Felea, 2014; Tsiakali, 2018; Elsaid and Sayed, 2022). This source of knowledge influences the formation of alternative ideas (Kennell and Rushton, 2015), including cognitive, normative, and affective aspects (Pourfakhimi et al., 2020) and significantly affects the final choice of the tourist (Bilos et al., 2022; Sparks and Browning, 2011).

At the same time, social media are actively shaping the perception of travel destinations through such mechanisms as attention (Afren, 2024), inspiration (Fatanti and Suyadnya, 2015; Sobrino, 2022), influencing the cognitive (Riera et al., 2015), emotional (Sakshi et al., 2018), and behavioral aspects (Fatanti and Suyadnya, 2015). In particular, Instagram and TikTok have become popular

resources for finding information and making purchases. The use of photos and video from users makes it possible to form a cognitive image of the destination and the desire to visit it (Bilos et al., 2022; Sakshi et al., 2018) and fully meet consumer expectations during the trip (Fatanti and Suyadnya, 2015; Biasbas et al., 2026). Adding to this mix are social media influencers, who act as trusted modern guides navigating us through the noise (Reinikainen et al., 2020; Pop et al., 2022; Upananda and Bandara, 2022), all while artificial intelligence and big data personalize the journey in real-time (Kim et al., 2016; Mariani et al., 2018).

Why can one single digital post exert such a powerful influence over our holiday decisions? According to the theory of planned behavior (TPB), the reason lies in the interplay between attitudes toward the online content, the degree of social network pressures, and confidence level when navigating these resources (Ajzen, 1991). Empirical data has since demonstrated the TPB's predictive capacity regarding individuals' final travel decisions (Javed et al., 2020; Majeed et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, once in their selected destinations and having found out whether their expectations match reality or not, customers can use the Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) to justify their expenditures. Indeed, according to Oliver (1977), meeting or exceeding expectations leads to making tourists return to this destination again, increasing sales. Indeed, the self-determination theory (SDT) shows that engaging with online travel content satisfies their psychological needs for autonomy in vacation planning, competence when making online payments, and connection while "travelling" virtually with friends (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021; Ramkissoon, 2022). Notably, the conclusions of this study contribute to research exploring various aspects of the SDT, including the application of the same to the younger generations in Portugal (Magano and Cunha, 2020), interactive online marketing in Turkey (Armutcu et al., 2023), destination image in China and Pakistan (Majeed et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2022).

The present research aims to investigate the relationship between digital marketing and tourism using Pakistan as the subject of analysis. As compared to other regional countries, Pakistan has tremendous potential for attracting both local and foreign tourists fascinated by adventure tourism and a rich history of the country. Moreover, it has been revealed that before covid-19 restrictions, the number of tourists was limited due to specific challenges that hindered the development of the tourism sector. Digital marketing can offer an innovative solution by attracting a broader audience of inquisitive travelers to Pakistan's tourism sector. With a rapidly growing number of smartphone users (Yuan et al., 2022) and increased access to the internet among the youth, traditional marketing strategies are becoming increasingly irrelevant (Raji et al., 2024). Thus, the current study will focus on district Faisalabad in Punjab province to determine how digital marketing is changing contemporary tourists' decision-making process and expenditures.

Literature Review:

The history of contemporary tourism starts with the transformation of the way the destinations are found and experienced by the travelers. Being no longer forced to rely on the limited possibilities of printed guides and the recommendations of traditional travel agencies, the modern tourism

market underwent a significant explosion under the umbrella of digitization. Chu et al. (2020) was among the first researchers to note that as the industry began to embrace social media advertising, it lacked the appropriate set of theoretical frameworks to understand the phenomenon. Hence, as marketing practices evolved and diversified (Magano and Cunha, 2020), it became apparent that the tourism industry had already entered the new reality. Firstly, it was identified that the younger generations were already embracing social and mobile technologies as part of their travel planning (Dewi, 2020). For example, the tourism business in Bali managed to understand how to leverage marketing 4.0 to target customers in the digital space and promote their services via Instagram, apps, and online marketplaces. Secondly, according to Valentaza and Metaxas (2023), the businesses in Greece that participated in promoting and advertising their products and services digitally (mostly through social media) improved their image and became more influential in 2023. Thus, the paradigm of digital marketing as the foundation of contemporary tourism was set.

As the online space became the new marketplace, the researchers began observing the changes in travelers' perceptions and attitudes. It has been revealed that the user-generated content and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) were paramount in the decision-making process. According to Pourfakhimi et al. (2020), the eWOM had a significant influence on the tourists' cognitive, normative, and affective evaluation of the destinations. Interestingly, This, in turn, resulted in stronger buying intentions. Nevertheless, the credibility of eWOM was noted to have its limitations; according to Zelenka et al. (2021), the users had to rely on verified reviews in order to avoid potentially dangerous fake reviews and ensure their safety. Additionally, Furner et al. (2022) suggested that there were specific accommodations where the trust was more difficult to be established, in particular, when it came to sharing-economy platforms versus traditional hoteliers. Lastly, Zhou et al. (2020) used Dramaturgical Theory to illustrate how Chinese tourists differed in terms of the platforms they selected to share their eWOM. In turn, Kupa and Bakó (2023) stated that, in the context of digital tourists in Hungary, the quantity of information available online became the key factor that influenced their buying behavior.

Since the tourists were found to place their trust in online reviews and user-generated content, it was only a matter of time before the social media platforms transformed from the means of communication into the source of inspiration. As Javed et al. (2020) illustrated with the example of Czech Millennials, the tourists relied exclusively on the information found on social media when planning their travel. In a similar vein, Nzeku et al. (2021) argue that the social media platforms successfully facilitated the cognitive and affective responses of the visitors to the tourism destinations in South Africa, thereby serving as a major marketing tool for promoting the local attractions. Indeed, Chen et al. (2024) explored the role of social media in the context of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and showed that the tool's convenience, interactivity, and social norms were some of the factors that impacted the intentions of the potential travelers in China. Thus, the social media platforms have become the central figure in the development of tourists' interest in a particular destination.

However, when it comes to inspiring the potential visitors, social media relies on such tools as influencers. Namely, as Pop et al. (2022) suggest, the tourists who subscribed to the social media

accounts of influencers received credible information about their preferred travel options, which affected them at all stages of their travel decision-making process. Upananda and Bandara (2022) agree with the statement and note that, in the case of Sri Lanka, the success of influencer marketing depended on the perceived trust and content quality. At the same time, the researchers also remark that the influencers' impact was different depending on the social connection mechanism used. Huang (2023) proves that it was the connection tool that facilitated the influencers' ability to reach their audience in different ways, which largely depended on the cultural context. Nevertheless, the underlying mechanism that determined the tourists' reaction to the influencer posts was the same. According to Wahba et al. (2025), the Source Credibility Model explains why the tourists engaged in upward social comparisons when interacting with the influencers' content: namely, the exposure to the influencers' social media activity triggered both assimilative (inspirational) and contrastive (envious) affective responses, thus influencing their decision to visit certain places.

It is common knowledge that the good story should have a happy one to mark the beginning of a better future. However, in the case of the tourists and their travel experiences, it was the Covid-19 pandemic that brought a significant change to their behaviors. In particular, Toubes et al. (2021) state that the pandemic changed the travelers' perception of their tourism experiences, making them favor contactless and online services. Nevertheless, the social media marketing ensured that the businesses would still get enough attention during the pandemic. Namely, Tsai and Hsin (2023) remark that, when it came to post-pandemic recovery, the influencers who posted relevant content for the specific destination were successful in convincing the public in terms of their intentions to visit the place. With the pandemic restrictions being lifted, the tourism sector moved to the next level with the help of technology. Sakas et al. (2022) analyzed data from webometrics in Greece and remarked that, unlike the logistics sector, the tourism websites were highly dependent on the engagement rate and personalization of experience, which was driven by the volume of traffic. Moreover, Ghesh et al. (2024) conducted a comprehensive study on the concept of AI-enabled Customer Experience (AICX) and concluded that the artificial intelligence-driven marketing tools re-positioned the attention of modern tourists, thus acting as an efficient facilitator as well as raising ethical concerns.

As the digital marketing tools positioned the tourists at the chosen destination, it was only a matter of time before they began impacting their expenditures. In particular, Pulido-Fernandez et al. (2020) conducted a regression model analysis of the emergent regional destinations in Spain in order to identify the ways the government could affect the tourists' behavior. The analysis showed that it was indeed possible to predict and influence the visitor spending patterns on the local accommodations. In a similar vein, Sahoo et al. (2022) conducted another regression analysis in India and found that the tourism expenditures were conditional upon the demographics of the individuals making them. For instance, the travel experiences were reported to be a luxury for the lower-class citizens while middle- and higher-class individuals purchased tourism services as a matter of necessity.

It is also important to remark that the integration of technology into the tourism experiences has been shown to have positive economic and social outcomes. Namely, Wang et al. (2025) conducted

a large-scale survey with the participants across the country in order to find out the relationship between the use of digital technology, women's status, and the tourism expenditure per capita in China. The results of the analysis indicated that there was a link between the active use of technology and women's overall status and family influence, especially when it came to the financially independent family members.

At this point, it becomes evident that the tourism market is highly reliant on the digital resources and marketing tools. Hence, it is no surprise that as the literature reviews start focusing on the contemporary issues of tourism, such matters as sustainability and the responsible use of resources become the major points of interest. In particular, Aman and Papp-Vary (2022) argue that the industry can significantly benefit from the sustainable tourism marketing, provided that it is used correctly. Furthermore, Reyes-Menendez et al. (2020) suggest that the online marketing strategies and eWOM have the ability to shape the consumers' perception of sustainable business practices, thus increasing their likelihood to choose such options.

Indeed, as Sanjaya et al. (2024) report, the digital marketing strategies in Bali successfully promoted the environmental friendliness of the tourism options in Indonesia, which in turn influenced the travelers' pro-environmental behaviors and their intentions to return to the destination. Moreover, Oka and Subadra (2024) remark that the Bali tourism villages used digital literacy and the opportunities provided by the online space to both survive and thrive economically. Similarly, Piras and Pedes (2025) find that the Italian rural areas acknowledge the necessity of incorporating technology into their agricultural tourism activities in order to ensure their longevity. As such, it is possible to suggest that the digital marketing has become a valuable tool for the modern tourism sector.

Methodology:

This study adopted a quantitative research design that was cross-sectional to assess the impact of digital marketing on tourism. District Faisalabad in Punjab province was selected as the study area because it is the third-largest city in Pakistan in terms of population size. In addition, Faisalabad is an industrial city that is famously called the Manchester of Pakistan. It is also one of the most urbanized cities in the country and has a growing middle class that has disposable income at a very high rate. Faisalabad has an internet penetration rate of about 65%.

Conceptual Framework

Drawing on the theoretical base and the empirical literature, this study suggested an empirical framework that portrays the relationship between the study variables. The framework is thus displayed three factors; digital marketing as the independent variable, tourism decision making and tourism spending behavior as the dependent variables, and as a mediating and moderating variable the factor satisfaction and digital marketing interaction. Additionally socioeconomic factors are included as control variables

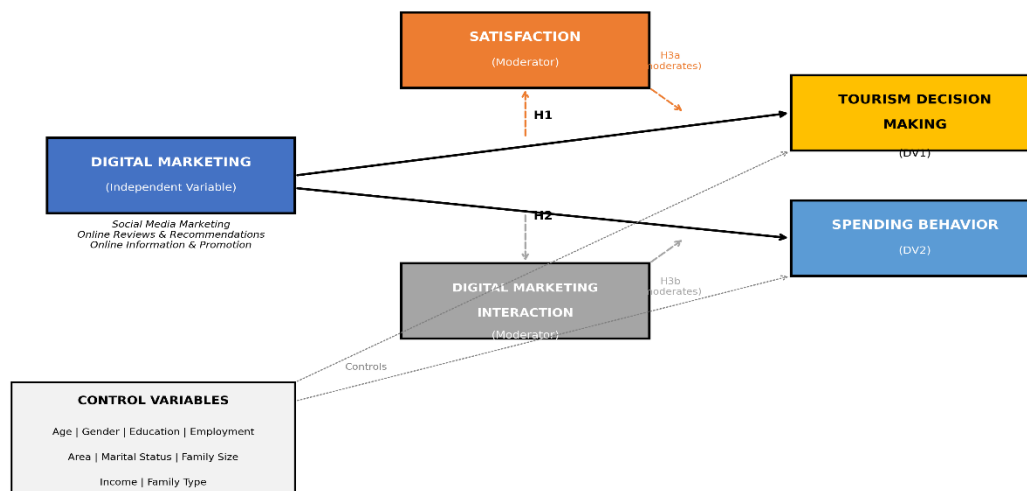


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

According to the conceptual framework, digital marketing has direct and indirect impacts on decision making on tourism destination choice and spending behavior by providing mediating role with satisfaction and digital marketing interaction. This distinction between the direct and indirect effects is strong in that the direct effect is “the first contact” and the indirect effects show “the middle men” of the digital marketing. Control variables control for individual differences that could be confounding relationships of interest.

Sampling and Data Collection:

The convenience sampling technique was used, which resulted in obtaining responses from 160 participants. This sample size is adequate for the current study because it surpasses the recommended minimum sample size used in multivariate analysis and structural equation modeling. The questionnaires were administered to respondents using face-to-face interviews and online surveys. In addition to increasing the response rate, the respondents were selected from a wide range of locations in the district, including Universities, shopping malls, Parks, and Residents’ houses.

Variable Measurement:

The survey questions were divided into various sections that measured different variables, which include the independent variable, dependent variable, and mediating variables.

Independent Variable: Digital marketing (Social media marketing, Online reviews, Online promotional content).

Dependent Variables: Tourism decision making and Spending behavior.

Mediating Variables: Tourist satisfaction (With digital travel information), and Digital marketing interaction (Social media interaction).

Control Variables: Age, Gender, Education, Employment, Residents' area, Marital status, Family size, Monthly income.

Econometric Models and Data Analysis:

The paper used two statistical models, including Partial least squares structural equation modeling and Binary logistic regression to analyze the data. The first model was used to estimate the direct effect of digital marketing on the dependent variables as well as the indirect effect through the mediation of tourist satisfaction and digital marketing interaction. In testing for mediation, the Baron and Kenny approach was used together with the Sobel test to establish whether tourism satisfaction and digital marketing interaction significantly had a mediating effect on the relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable. On the other hand, binary logistic regression analysis was applied to examine the likelihood of each independent variable on the odds ratio of each of the dependent variables.

Binary logistic regression analysis was used because the dependent variables were dichotomous variables. To deal with the problem of non-normality of error distribution in ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, the dependent variables were made into dummy variables by using the median as a cut-off point. As a result, there was a generation of two categories, which are low and high decision-making reliance and spending behavior. The regression analysis helped establish the variables that had the most significant effect on the odds ratio of high decision-making relying and high spending behavior.

Results and Discussion:

The empirical investigation utilized a robust quantitative framework combining descriptive statistics, correlation matrices, ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, binary logistic regression, and mediation analysis to dissect the influence of digital marketing on tourists' decision-making and spending behaviors in Faisalabad.

Descriptive Statistics:

Table 1: Demographic and socioeconomic profile of respondents

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	78	48.8
	Female	82	51.2
Age (years)	Mean = 23.4, SD = 5.7	Range: 15-61	
Marital Status	Single	127	79.4
	Married	31	19.4
Education	Primary	3	1.9
	Secondary	12	7.5
	Higher Secondary	91	56.9

Employment	Bachelor's	33	20.6
	Master's & Above	21	13.1
	Student	100	62.5
	Private Job	27	16.9
	Government	20	12.5
	Self-employed	12	7.5
	Unemployed	1	0.6
Residential Area	Rural	67	41.9
	Urban	93	58.1
Family Type	Joint	91	56.9
	Nuclear	69	43.1
Family Size	Mean = 4.33, SD = 1.23	Range:1-6	
Monthly Income (PKR)	Mean = 89,286 , SD = 98,999	Range:0-800,000	
	Median = 70,000		
Internet Availability	Yes	152	95.0
	No	8	5.0

The sample had a significant number of young respondents with a high level of education as most of them had higher secondary education (90.6%), which made this population group appropriate for the study. Firstly, 95% of the respondents stated that they have an active internet connection, which makes this sample very relevant to the target population, which is web users. Moreover, young people are usually more skeptical towards traditional advertising and are actively involved in Web 2.0, hence they are the target audience for social media marketing and word-of-mouth. Secondly, most respondents were urban (58.1%) and could be considered as middle-class citizens as their mean income was PKR 89,286, while the median was PKR 70,000, which implies the presence of respondents with significantly higher income than the average. Finally, note that 62.5% of the respondents were students, which makes this sample appropriate for the target population of young people.

Construct-Level Descriptive Statistics:

Table 2 Construct descriptive statistics and reliability

Construct	Items	Mean	SD	Max	DMI	Cronbach's α
DM (Digital Marketing)	9	2.48	0.92	1	5	0.831
TDM (Tourism Decisions Making)	4	2.5	1.04	1	5	0.755
SB (Spending Behavior)	6	2.61	1.01	1	5	0.83

SAT (Tourist Satisfaction)	4	2.32	0.96	1	5	0.819
DMI (Digital Marketing Interaction)	4	2.4	1.05	1	5	0.824

Beforehand, Cronbach’s Alpha was calculated to assess the reliability of the measures. According to the results, scales demonstrated excellent reliability since all items were highly correlated (>0.7). In particular, the Digital Marketing (DM) scale had the highest reliability ($\alpha = .831$), while other scales also had a high reliability: Spending Behavior ($\alpha = .830$), Tourist Satisfaction ($\alpha = .819$), and Digital Marketing Interaction ($\alpha = .824$), and TDM scale ($\alpha = .755$). The mean scores across the constructs were moderate ($M = 2.32$ to 2.61) and indicate that the participants recognized the role of digital resources in tourism but were also critical regarding the content of these resources. Notably, compared to other scales, Spending Behavior had the highest mean score ($M = 2.61$), which suggests that tourists were aware of the impact of digital resources on spending but were skeptical of the information provided. In turn, the lowest mean score was found for Tourist Satisfaction ($M = 2.32$). Thus, the results highlight the potential of the tourism sector in Pakistan to improve tourist satisfaction with digital marketing and better align their content with tourists’ cognition.

Inter-Construct Correlation Matrix:

Table 3: Inter-construct correlation matrix

		DM	TDM	SB	SAT	DMI
DM (Digital Marketing)		1.00				
TDM (Tourism Decisions Making)		0.693	1.00			
SB (Spending Behavior)		0.672	0.706	1.00		
SAT (Tourist Satisfaction)		0.646	0.690	0.577	1.00	
DMI (Digital Marketing Interaction)		0.472	0.582	0.502	0.634	1.00

The bivariate correlation matrix demonstrated a statistically significant positive association between all included variables ($p < 0.001$). Such a result provides sufficient evidence for all variables’ involvement in the theoretical model proposed by the researchers, thereby eliminating the possibility of these associations being formed by chance. The strongest positive association was found between Tourism Decision Making and Spending Behavior ($r = 0.706$). As such, both concepts represent the same group of tourists, namely, those who use digital resources as the core source of

information during the decision-making process and have higher spending tendencies. Digital Marketing exhibited a higher degree of association with Tourism Decision Making ($r=0,693$) and Spending Behavior ($r=0,672$), thus becoming the essential driver of the decision-making process and an important predictor of spending. It should also be noted that Digital Marketing showed a positive albeit slightly weaker association with Tourist Satisfaction ($r=0,646$). This might suggest that Digital Marketing's role is to answer tourists' questions regarding their travel plans, thereby increasing their level of satisfaction. Similarly, Tourist Satisfaction has a stronger positive association with Tourism Decision Making ($r=0,690$) and a lower positive association with Spending Behavior ($r=0,577$). These results provide further evidence for the previously described patterns and demonstrate that satisfied tourists are more likely to engage in any digital marketing content and make decisions based on the information they found online.

Finally, the positive but lower association between Digital Marketing and Digital Marketing Interaction ($r=0,472$) suggests that both behaviors are driven by different mechanisms. As such, the fact that a tourist viewed a post on social media is not sufficient evidence for further interaction such as commenting, liking, and sharing. Therefore, both actions should be regarded and measured separately, which will become evident during mediation analysis. In turn, Tourist Satisfaction has a positive association with Digital Marketing Interaction ($r=0,634$).

Correlation Analysis:

Table 4: Correlation Analysis Results

Variable Pair	r	p-value	n
DM-TDM	0.693	<0.001	159
DM-SB	0.672	<0.001	160

The correlation analysis was performed to assess the bivariate relationships between the pairs of Digital Marketing and each of the two main dependent variables resulting in positive statistical associations. Indeed, the correlation coefficient (r) of Digital Marketing with Tourism Decision Making reached 0,693 ($p < 0,001$, $N = 159$), which confirmed many of the relationships proposed by TAM and TPB theories. In particular, the technology acceptance model can explain the tourists' decision-making process through attitudes and perceptions formed due to the active use of digital resources. At the same time, the correlation of Digital Marketing with Spending Behavior is also strong ($r = 0,672$, $p < 0,001$, $N = 160$). Such a result implies that individuals who actively interact with digital marketing tools are likely to spend more on tourism-related services and products. Altogether, the results found at the level of correlation analysis help tourism service providers understand how they can benefit from investing in social media to yield financial benefits.

OLS Regression: Direct Effect of DM on TDM (Continuous), with Control

$R^2 = 0.612$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.589$, $n=159$

Table 5: OLS Regression Results: Direct Effect of DM on TDM (Continuous), with Control

Predictor	Coefficient	Std. Error	p-value
Digital Marketing (DM)	0.735	0.061	0.001
Education	0.298	0.069	0.001
Family Size	-0.141	0.044	0.002
Monthly Income	0.000	0.000	0.001
Age	-0.008	0.012	0.492
Gender	-0.095	0.116	0.413
Marital Status	-0.089	0.129	0.488
Employment	0.004	0.057	0.944
Residents' Area	-0.152	0.110	0.167

The initial least squares regression model (OLS) was applied to assess the impact of Digital Marketing on Tourism Decision Making while controlling such demographic predictors as age, gender, education, employment, marital status, family size, monthly income, and residents' area. In this model, the goodness of fit was relatively high ($R^2 = .612$) and moderate (Adj. $R^2 = .589$), signifying that approximately 61.2% of variance in the dependent variable was explained by the predictors included. Notably, Digital Marketing turned out to be the most influential factor in this model, with the coefficient of .735 ($p < .001$). Thus, it can be concluded that this variable positively and substantially predicts Tourism Decision Making, which means that every change in digital marketing use by 1 unit is associated with a change in tourists' preference for this type of promotion by 0.735. The other significant variable in this model was Education, which also positively influenced the outcome, with the coefficient of .298 ($p = .001$). It implies that every additional year spent on education results in a 0.298 increase in Tourism Decision Making, as more educated people can better navigate the Internet and are safer in using online sources. By contrast, Family Size negatively influenced the outcome ($\beta = -.141, p = .002$), which signifies that larger families tend to use digital marketing tools less often to plan their trips, as do it collectively and rely on acquaintances' recommendations more frequently. Similarly, Monthly Income positively influenced the outcome ($\beta = .000, p = .001$). It suggests that people with a higher income use digital resources more extensively in their daily life, including Tourism Decision Making. Interestingly, none of the other predictors were significant, which means that no demographic characteristic specifically influenced how people plan their trips in Pakistan. More specifically, Age ($\beta = -.008, p = .492$), Gender ($\beta = -.095, p = .413$), Marital Status ($\beta = -.089, p = .488$), Employment ($\beta = .004, p = .944$), and Residents' Area ($\beta = -.152, p = .167$) were irrelevant to Tourism Decision Making. Hence, it can be concluded that the impact of Digital Marketing on trip planning is universal in this respect, and it influences people of different ages, genders, marital statuses, occupations, and areas in a similar way.

OLS Regression: Direct Effect of DM on SB (Continuous), with Controls

$R^2 = 0.717$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.70$, $n = 160$

Table 6 OLS Regression Results: Direct Effect of DM on SB (Continuous), with Controls

Predictor	Coefficient	Std. Error	p-value
Digital Marketing (DM)	0.672	0.050	0.001
Gender	-0.718	0.094	0.001
Residents' Area	-0.609	0.090	0.001
Age	0.020	0.010	0.034
Monthly Income	0.000	0.000	0.002
Marital Status	-0.120	0.097	0.216
Education	0.030	0.057	0.596
Employment	0.010	0.047	0.839
Family Size	-0.042	0.036	0.238

The second OLS regression model, which predicted Spending Behavior, demonstrated a slightly better fit than the first model, with an $R^2 = 0.717$ and an adjusted $R^2 = 0.70$, thus proving the accuracy of the research and revealing that 71.7% of variance in tourist spending behavior can be predicted by the proposed model. Similarly, to the first model, Digital Marketing proved to be a powerful predictor of spending behavior with a huge beta coefficient of 0.672, which means that every point of increase in digital marketing leads to an increase in spending behavior by 0.672 points, thus proving the significant impact of digital marketing on spending and, therefore, tourism development in general. Nevertheless, unlike in the first model, the second one successfully revealed some significant differences between groups. For instance, Gender was a significant negative predictor of spending behavior with a beta coefficient of -0.718, which can be explained by the fact that, in Pakistan, women may have less opportunity to control their spending due to their socio-cultural and economic status. Residents' Area was also a significant negative predictor of spending behavior with a beta coefficient of -0.609, which means that the spending capacity of rural residents is significantly lower than that of urban residents for various reasons, including a lower average income, a lack of opportunities, and a lack of infrastructure, such as the Internet. Age was a positive predictor of spending behavior with a beta coefficient of 0.02, which means that older people have a bigger opportunity to spend money on tourism than younger people do because they usually have a higher income and are more likely to use digital marketing to find inspiration for their spending. Monthly Income was also a positive predictor of spending behavior with a beta coefficient of 0.000, which is explained by the same logic. Nevertheless, Marital Status, Education, Employment, and Family Size were not significant predictors of spending behavior. In conclusion, based on the comparison of the two OLS regression models, it can be said that digital marketing has a slightly higher impact on decision-making than on spending behavior, and spending behavior is more predictable than decision-making, which means that different factors have to be considered for each group.

Binary Logistic Regression: TDM Binary

Pseudo $R^2 = 0.368$, $n=160$, LLR $p < 0.001$

Table 7 : Binary Logistic Regression Results: TDM Binary

Predictor	Coefficient	Std. Error	p-value	Odds Ratio
Digital Marketing (DM)	1.677	0.324	0.001	5.347
Education	1.129	0.308	0.001	3.093
Family Size	-0.386	0.176	0.028	0.680
Monthly Income	0.000	0.000	0.003	1.000
Age	-0.030	0.044	0.497	0.971
Gender	-0.595	0.460	0.196	0.552
Marital Status	-0.732	0.542	0.177	0.481
Employment	0.290	0.232	0.212	1.336
Residents' Area	-0.362	0.444	0.416	0.697

To further scrutinize the probability of high-level engagement, binary logistic regression was employed by dichotomizing Tourism Decision Making at its median, creating two categories representing low and high decision-making reliance, with the model demonstrating a Pseudo R^2 of 0.368 and a statistically significant likelihood ratio test ($p < 0.001$). The results revealed that individuals with high digital marketing exposure were a staggering 5.35 times more likely to exhibit high decision-making reliance (OR = 5.347, $p < 0.001$), confirming that digital marketing is a powerful tool for influencing tourist decisions and substantially increasing the odds of high-level engagement with digital travel information. Each unit increase in education elevated the likelihood of high decision-making reliance by an odds ratio of 3.093 (OR = 3.093, $p = 0.001$), highlighting the importance of education in digital information utilization and suggesting that educational campaigns can enhance tourism decision-making capabilities. Conversely, larger family sizes decreased the odds of high reliance by 32% (OR = 0.680, $p = 0.028$), indicating that each additional family member reduces the probability of high decision-making reliance, as larger families may have more complex decision-making processes involving multiple family members, face greater financial constraints, and rely more on traditional word-of-mouth rather than digital information. Monthly Income showed a significant but marginal effect (OR = 1.000, $p = 0.003$), indicating that higher income slightly increases the odds of high decision-making reliance. Other demographic variables including age (OR = 0.971, $p = 0.497$), gender (OR = 0.552, $p = 0.196$), marital status (OR = 0.481, $p = 0.177$), employment (OR = 1.336, $p = 0.212$), and residents' area (OR = 0.697, $p = 0.416$) were not statistically significant predictors of high tourism decision-making reliance. These odds ratios are powerful practical indicators, demonstrating that digital marketing and education are the primary drivers of decision-making engagement, while larger family structures present barriers to digital information utilization.

Binary Logistic Regression: SB Binary

Pseudo R^2 = 0.422, $n=160$, LLR $p<0.001$

Table 8: Binary Logistic Regression Results: SB Binary

Predictor	Coefficient	Std. Error	p-value	Odds Ratio
Digital Marketing (DM)	1.795	0.344	0.001	6.018
Gender	-1.685	0.498	0.001	0.185
Residents' Area	-2.062	0.522	0.001	0.127
Family Size	-0.324	0.187	0.082	0.723
Monthly Income	0.000	0.000	0.078	1.000
Age	0.100	0.073	0.170	1.105
Marital Status	-0.391	0.617	0.527	0.677
Education	0.090	0.271	0.740	1.094
Employment	-0.097	0.242	0.690	0.908

The binary logistic regression model for Spending Behavior, dichotomized at its median into low and high spending categories, demonstrated strong predictive power with a Pseudo R^2 of 0.422 and a statistically significant likelihood ratio test ($p < 0.001$). The results intensified the odds ratios observed in the decision-making model, with digital marketing engagement making tourists six times more likely to fall into the high-spending category ($OR = 6.018, p < 0.001$). This represents the strongest effect across both logistic regression models and confirms that digital marketing directly translates to increased spending behavior, providing compelling evidence for the economic returns of digital marketing investments in the tourism sector. This model starkly illustrated the prohibitive barriers faced by specific demographics. Being female drastically reduced the odds of high spending by 81.5% ($OR = 0.185, p < 0.001$), indicating that females are substantially less likely to demonstrate high spending behavior, reflecting the cultural and economic constraints limiting women's financial agency and participation in tourism activities in the Pakistani context. Being a rural resident was even more prohibitive, reducing the odds of high spending by 87.3% ($OR = 0.127, p < 0.001$), thereby emphasizing the urban-rural dichotomy of tourism spending tendencies, and the need to intervene through specific means to bridge this gap. Family size also had an effect, albeit lesser, reducing the odds of high spending by 27.7% ($OR = 0.723, p = 0.082$). Monthly income had a similar effect, with an increase in the odds of high spending by 1% ($OR = 1.000, p = 0.078$). The remaining variables, namely age, marital status, educational attainment, and employment status, were not statistically significant predictors of high spending. The odds ratios indicate that while digital marketing can penetrate all demographics effortlessly, its ability to convert this engagement into actual expenditures is significantly compromised by various socio-cultural-economic factors which should be taken into account when planning campaigns.

The mediation analysis, conducted using the Baron and Kenny methodological framework and Sobel test, explored the complex relationships between digital marketing and its impact on the key tourism indicators. The analysis focused on two mediators, namely Tourist Satisfaction (SAT) and Digital Marketing Interaction (DMI), to identify whether they significantly moderate the relationships between Digital Marketing and each of the two dependent variables, namely Tourism Decision Making and Spending Behavior. The analysis revealed that all four moderation

paths are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level, thus confirming the moderating role of both SAT and DMI in the relationships between Digital Marketing and Tourism Decision Making and Spending Behavior.

Mediation Analysis: Tourist Satisfaction and Digital Marketing Interaction

Table 9: Mediation Analysis Result's: Tourist Satisfaction and Digital Marketing Interaction

Mediator	DV	Path a (DM- Med)	Path b (Med- DV)	Path c (Total)	Path c' (Direct)	Indirect (a×b)	Sobel z	Sobel p	% Mediated
SAT	TDM	0.655	0.405	0.735	0.469	0.265	5.154	0.001	36.1
SAT	SB	0.655	0.254	0.672	0.503	0.166	4.013	0.001	24.8
DMI	TDM	0.518	0.293	0.735	0.583	0.152	4.016	0.001	20.6
DMI	SB	0.518	0.167	0.672	0.583	0.087	3.028	0.003	12.9

In particular, the analysis revealed that Moderation 1 (Tourism Decision Making by SAT) had an indirect effect of 0.265 (Sobel $z = 5.154$, $p < 0.001$) which accounts for 36.1% of the total effect of Digital Marketing on Tourism Decision Making. In other words, as a result of Tourists' positive evaluation of the received information, 36.1% of the positive impact of digital marketing on Tourism Decision Making can be explained. Meanwhile, Moderation 2 (Spending Behavior by SAT) had an indirect effect of 0.166 (Sobel $z = 4.013$, $p < 0.001$) which accounts for 24.8% of the total effect of Digital Marketing on Spending Behavior. The results confirm the role of Expectation Confirmation in the mediation process and provide evidence that positive satisfaction with the confirmation of Tourist Expectations significantly impacts both Tourism Decision Making and Spending Behavior.

In addition, the analysis found that Moderation 3 (Tourism Decision Making by DMI) had an indirect effect of 0.152 (Sobel $z = 4.016$, $p < 0.001$) which accounts for 20.6% of the total effect of Digital Marketing on Tourism Decision Making. Meanwhile, Moderation 4 (Spending Behavior by DMI) had an indirect effect of 0.087 (Sobel $z = 3.028$, $p = 0.003$) which accounts for 12.9% of the total effect of Digital Marketing on Spending Behavior. The data suggest that Satisfaction plays a more significant role in the mediation process than Interaction. Such a result can be explained by the Self-Determination Theory which posits that Satisfaction with information that effectively addresses the psychological needs of Tourists plays a much more prominent role in the motivation than mere Interactive engagement such as “likes” or “shares”. According to the analysis, only partial mediation is present in all four cases with the direct effect of Digital Marketing, as well as the indirect effect of Satisfaction or Interaction, being significant moderators. In particular, even though Interaction has a significant direct effect, Satisfaction has a much stronger effect both directly and indirectly, thus being the key driver of both Tourism Decision Making and Spending Behavior.

Conclusion:

This study presents empirical evidence that digital marketing is a critical factor influencing the decision-making and spending behavior of tourists in Pakistan, which was conditional to a lesser extent on socio-demographic characteristics. The results indicate that the use of digital marketing tools, such as social media, content, and online reviews, improves the likelihood that tourists will use digital resources to plan trips and encourages spending on tourism. Tourist satisfaction and interactivity are important variables for which digital marketing has a mediating effect. This is particularly evident for the former, as satisfaction accounts for up to 36% of the influence on tourists' decision-making processes. Notably, the results also highlight key differences between various socio-demographic groups, as the impact of digital marketing on tourism was uneven, with females, residents of rural areas, and families being particularly affected in terms of economic participation.

While overall, the use of digital marketing tools appears to have a positive effect across the board, its influence is significantly stronger among several subgroups that can be seen as critical for the tourism industry in Pakistan. At the same time, the study's results support the theoretical framework and the alternative theories used, notably the Technology Acceptance Model, Theory of Planned Behavior, Expectation Confirmation Theory, and Self-Determination Theory. However, they also highlight the importance of further research into context-specific conditions and nuances that may affect the relationship between digital marketing and tourism in different cultural settings. The results should encourage various stakeholders to consider the findings' practical implications. In particular, companies should invest more effort and resources into providing high-quality content to engage customers and encourage spending on tourism-related activities. Moreover, policymakers need to address the issue of unequal opportunity in tourism in rural areas and provide women with greater access to economic participation. Finally, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on the complex relationship between digital marketing and tourism, which is critical to both academics and businesses. The results highlight Pakistan as a promising market for the development of tourism-related business ventures, including innovative digital experiences to engage the clientele in novel ways.

Limitations:

Though the current research has numerous strengths, such as a solid methodological research design and valuable results, it also has several weaknesses and limitations. Firstly, the research design is a cross-sectional study that only reflects the situation at one moment. Therefore, the study cannot demonstrate how tourists' perception of the impact of digital marketing changes during their journey from inspiration to return. Secondly, the data was collected using self-reported questionnaires, which might lead to response bias or even to providing false results. Further, the current case uses the convenience sampling method, which cannot guarantee the representativeness of the sample. Further, the research was conducted only in District Faisalabad, which raises questions about the generalizability of results to the level of the whole country. Finally, though using median values for dichotomous categorization is an effective method for binary logistic regression, the process is not perfect since it involves a loss of information.

Further Research:

Increase the scope of study by conducting similar research in other cities and rural areas of all the provinces of Pakistan, enabling the researchers to conduct a comparative study based on the different socio-economic criteria.

Apply probability sampling procedures so that the sample selected represents the target population accurately.

Make sure that the study design enables the researchers to observe and analyze the impact of digital marketing on the behavior of tourists over a long period of time.

Conduct a study that compares the impact of different digital marketing platforms used to promote tourism in Pakistan.

Use qualitative research methods to understand the reasons behind people's decisions and behaviors when making choices about tourism.

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