# MASTER THESIS (TOURISM 2025)

TOPIC: THE ROLE OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN PROMOTING ADVENTURE TOURISM, A STUDY OF POKHARA, NEPAL



# AALBORG UNIVERSITY

**SUBMITTED BY – PAYAL KARKI**

SUPERVISOR- AMIRA BENALI
DATE- 04 June 2025
Number of Character- 89,982
Total Number of pages- 78

## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to examine the significance of digital marketing in the advertising of adventure tourism in Pokhara, Nepal which is famous for adventure tourism activities including trekking, bungee jumping, and paragliding. This research focuses on the existing problematic situation concerning the use of digital marketing tools by local tourism companies and examines how digital technologies can contribute to the improvement of the tourist attraction process after the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of this study is to understand the role of digital marketing strategies that are presently being used by businesses in tourism sector, examine the challenges of those operators as well as provide practical recommendations which can help growth in the online presence and competitiveness of Pokhara´s adventure tourism industry.

Hence, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from 100 tourists and 10 business owners in Pokhara concerning their experience and knowledge of digital marketing. Through survey tourist's views on digital marketing platforms were evaluated-like social media, (SEO) Search engine optimization, online travel platforms, influencer marketing, whereas interview with operators presented finding on how they are executing and understanding digital marketing strategies. Quantitative data was analysed through frequency analysis and for qualitative data thematic analysis was carried out.

The data findings reveal that social media marketing particularly Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are very influential to the tourists' decisions. SEO and online advertisement also play an important role in online exposure. Further, other factors discovered various challenges on shortage of qualified personnel, lack of knowledge and financial constraints in the digital field from businesses and high competition in the digital field. Additionally, travellers showed interest in more personalized, trustworthy and contents which can connect them which are visually appealing to make their decision.

Based on the findings, this study provides useful recommendations for adventure tourism companies, to invest in high quality content, also improvements in the use of digital marketing can lead to a higher level of tourists' interest, Incorporate customer feedback into their strategic planning, campaigns for customized marketing with the use of analytics. Also, training with the knowledge on digital marketing for small businesses

which can fill up the gap of skill and knowledge. This research reveals that the continuation and strategic use of digital marketing can gear up the Pokhara adventure tourism globally and it has potential to heal and grow competitively in adventure tourism market.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to thank all the people who helped me in the process of completing this dissertation. I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Amira Benali for her support and advice that contributed to the development of this work. I would like to thank the participants of the study in Pokhara for their willingness to participate in the study and share their experiences. Also, I would like to thank my family and friends for their support that they have been providing me throughout this period.

**Table of Contents**

List of figures

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Adventure tourism includes different thrilling activities such as Bungee jumping, boating, trekking, zip-lining, rock climbing, trekking and paragliding (Rantala, Rokenes, and Valkonen, 2018). These adventure activities are highly attractive to the young aged global tourists, those who want to explore new adventurous destinations worldwide, thrilling experiences that are beyond any other free time travel which benefits travelers with challenging opportunities that are full of physical and mental exploration (Janowski, Gardiner, and Kwek, 2021). To grow the segment, the businesses within these tourism places use several marketing strategies to attract tourists through high visibility, emotional connection and creating strong brand reputation (Blakeman, 2023).

However, after the global outbreak of Covid 19 created several restrictions to the tourism industry, the tourism businesses got affected drastically (Hamouda, 2018). Lockdowns and health situation concerns lead world tourists to pause their journey which also affected countries like Nepal tourism industry with financial downfall specially places which were mostly dependent on tourism. This country has significant effects due to its employment and economic situation, which were mostly dependent on tourism and specifically the adventure tourism sector was greatly affected because it required physical interaction travelling in groups and adventures that needed various seasons to operate, which were stopped due to pandemic. Pokhara in Nepal is renowned as one of the popular tourism places that has different locations which offer this adventure tourism experiences (Hartanto, Firmansyah, and Adhrianti, 2022).

Pokhara was one of the destinations which was mostly affected during the period (Nepal Tourism Board, 2022). This place is popular among the global tourism industry for adventure destinations with breathtaking, risky and thrilling tourism experiences. There are various kinds of activities offered in Pokhara, such as paragliding above Phewa Taal (Phewa lake), bungee and swing in the world´s highest Kusma bungee and trekking towards Annapurna base camp and known as the gateway of Annapurna Mountain. The place is famous for its large number of local and global tourists (Nepal Tourism Board, 2022).

These types of adventure places are generally attracted through creative and attractive promotional campaigns. The need for promotional strategies was seen in Pokhara after pandemic besides brochures, travel agents and word of mouth due to its less effectiveness. Digital marketing was widely recognized and explored by travelers and those online platforms like blogs, reviews, influencers and social media helped businesses connect global customers easily and efficiently. Thus, several businesses in Pokhara Nepal, started the use digital marketing strategies for attracting tourists from different places to recover and rebuild tourism markets after pandemic situation. This research will be aiming to understand how digital platforms and tools can be utilized to enhance destination branding, increase tourists' engagement and grow competitiveness of adventure tourism in Pokhara globally.

## 1.1 Research Problem

Given the current times, digital marketing has emerged as crucial component for destinations to lure in international visitors. Digital platforms are becoming the new marketplace for small countries and smaller regions, and thus marketing there is important for the success of these countries and regions. But the most famous of all is Pokhara, promoted by Nepal tourism board as a popular adventure tourism destination of Nepal, which has gained global recognition for its offerings including Kusma bungee jumping experience. The tourism sector in Pokhara has been appealing, but it has always faced a problem of lacking tourist attraction, especially after the complications caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The immediate effect of the pandemic, combined with a history of marketing on a traditional scale, worsening the equation of traditional marketing and a digitally led world, resulted in some major declines in global tourist footfall. In Pokhara, small businesses, who have limited marketing budgets and are not yet digitally developed, have suffered enormously in terms of revenue. The objective of this research is to study how Pokhara should exploit digital marketing strategies to market the city's adventure tourism offerings proactively for increasing the global tourist attraction and thereby encourage the expansion of local business.

## 1.2 Research Aim and Objectives

**Research Aim**

The research aims to examine the role of digital marketing in promoting adventure tourism in Nepal. A study on Pokhara, Nepal

**Research Objectives**

1. Studying digital marketing strategies in relation to the adventure tourism industry

2. To examine the challenges faced by tourism businesses in Pokhara while implementing digital marketing strategies.

3. To evaluate the role of digital marketing in promoting adventure tourism in Pokhara, Nepal.

## 1.3 Research Question

What is the role of digital marketing strategies to promote adventure tourism in Nepal?

## 1.4 Research Rationale

The selection of adventure tourism depends on several factors that create direct and indirect impact on creating place attraction. Various digital marketing strategies are effective to create place attractions among tourists. The social media platforms as digital marketing strategies are identified as the most suitable latest marketing strategy that can be used in developing the place attraction between the customers. Thus, the current thesis is important to analyze the key areas of digital marketing those can play a significant role in attracting the tourists towards adventure tourism. It will evaluate how digital marketing can be used over traditional marketing strategies to promote adventure tourism in Nepal. It will critically evaluate different types of digital marketing strategies that can be used in to promote adventure tourism businesses in Pokhara (Dhungel, 2024). Further, the detailed study on role of digital marketing strategies is important to analyze for understanding the use of digital marketing strategies for customer attraction and promoting adventure tourism in Pokhara, Nepal.

## 1.5 Research Methodology

The study will employ a mixed-methodology approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research to assess the current situation of the tourism industry in Pokhara, Nepal. It will critically evaluate the effectiveness of existing tourism promotion strategies,

identify gaps or challenges, and explore how digital marketing can enhance the promotion of adventure tourism in the region. In this order, the study will collect the primary data from 100 tourists through surveys to examine their choices and methods used to select Pokhara as tourists' destination. It will also collect information about the influence of digital marketing strategies that have promoted Pokhara as adventure tourism. On the other hand, the qualitative interview with 10 business owners in Pokhara to evaluate their experience with promoting adventure tourism through digital marketing (Taherdoost, 2022). To conduct its detailed analysis, the study will further use frequency distribution and thematic analysis for critically analyzing the collected data. The thematic analysis will also consider the secondary sources including books, journals, literature, and others to cross-examine the primary data with theoretical information.

## 1.6 Research Scope and Beneficial

The thesis aims to evaluate various digital marketing practices that can be used in promoting adventure tourism. In this order, the tourism industry of Pokhara, Nepal will be evaluated to determine the key marketing strategies used by tourism businesses in Pokhara. It is expected that the research will outline different marketing strategies that can be used to promote adventure tourism, that can influence the customer travel decision and destination selection (Armutcu, et al., 2023). The tourism businesses in Nepal are expected to get the most benefit from the study outcomes and recommendations as it will suggest more prominent strategies for adventure tourism promotion and destination selection influencing factors for both global and local tourists (Pokharel, 2022).

## 1.7 Thesis Structure

**Chapter 1: Introduction:** It outlines the information on the research problem on which the thesis will investigate. It presents clear aims, objectives, and rationale for research.

**Chapter 2: Literature Review:** It outlines brief information on the key variables of research topic for setting research basis.

**Chapter 3: Research Methodology:** It outlines the methodological steps and tools used for data collection and analysis to present research findings.

**Chapter 4: Data Analysis:** It outlines the key results and findings from data collection and analysis process.

**Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations:** Its present brief conclusion on the overall investigation to test the results with the hypothesis or drafted research questions. It further drafts recommendations for the readers to be considered in future research.

This research based on analytical framework deals with the relationship between digital marketing strategies and the promotion of adventure tourism in Pokhara, Nepal. The paper studies the influence of the several parts of digital marketing (social media platforms, SEO, content marketing and influencer marketing) on the global tourist engagement and on the tourist decision-making process.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The main purpose of writing this chapter is to demonstrate the knowledge related to the research and helps to lay down the foundation for the conceptual framework. Within the present study, the key sources which will be used for the study of literature will be books, journals, articles, websites and more. This chapter will be helpful in determining the role of digital marketing in promoting adventure tourism in the tourism industry in Nepal.

There is a lot of existing literature that discusses how digital marketing is beneficial in the promotion of tourism and improving customer engagement. But there is a void in the knowledge of how adventure tourism businesses are dealing with those challenges when there are no digital marketing tactics (Chang et al., 2018). Research on the relative effectiveness of digital versus market in niche tourism sector is scarce. Moreover, studies frequently concentrate on the overall promotion of tourism, as opposed to the requirements of adventure tourism, i.e. the risky activities and the segmentation of the target audience. Also, little studies have been made on how digital Marketing Innovations, like AI enabled Personalization and influencer collaborations, influence in tourism adventure (Pencarelli, 2020).

Previous studies regarding digital marketing in the tourism industry have been on overall tourism promotion but there is a lack of research on how adventure tourism

businesses without digital marketing strategies are facing the challenges. Moreover, most of the existing work has not paid special attention to the special needs of the adventure tourism sector; for example, targeting a niche audience for activities of high risk. In addition, there exist few research on the effectiveness of digital innovation like AI personalization and influencer missions in marketing adventure tourism. This gap indicates the necessity for research on the digital marketing techniques for the promotion of adventure tourism in Pokhara.

## 2.1 DIGITAL MARKETING IN TOURISM

As per the viewpoint of Janowski, Gardiner and Kwek, (2021), adventure tourism in today's time has become very popular among young age tourists since it allows tourists to come out of their comfort zone to explore more tourism activities. In other words, it is defined as the movement of tourists from one place to another beyond their comfort zone so that they can explore or travel to more exotic and remote areas. It is mainly associated with the high level of risk activities which are liked by youngsters these days. On the authors Bist et al., (2022), states that traditional marketing is defined as that form of marketing which makes use of conventional methods or offline methods for reaching their target audience. In this type of marketing only offline channels are used such as direct mail, television, billboards and telemarketing. It is known to be a one-way communication marketing approach which enables businesses to broadcast their messages to a varied audience (Gumilang, Gandhy and Prasetyo, 2024). It also offers various types of techniques and tools for targeting their specific audience and assisting in measuring their campaign performance.

As per the viewpoint of Hanji et al., (2023), adventure tourism is known to be one of the most important markets within the travel and tourism industry since it attracts those individuals who are looking forward to gaining unique and adventurous travel experiences. Digital marketing is known as the form of marketing which makes use of online platforms and digital technologies for reaching their target audience. Here businesses make use of search engines, the internet, social media, email, mobile apps and other types of digital channels. It is considered as a two-way communication marketing approach which helps organizations to interact with their target audiences (Doran, Pomfret and Adu-Ampong, 2022).

On the contrary, authors Rahman et al., (2024), state that digital marketing is one of the most important marketing strategies for promoting adventure tourism for those travelers who are looking for an exciting experience and this can be done by diving more into the realm of the local SEO and working more on the adventure focused social media campaigns. There are varied number of digital marketing activities which can be adopted by the tourism businesses for promoting adventure tourism such as they can make use of local SEO where they can optimize their online presence for local searchers, make use of high octane content where they can encourage tourists to share images, videos and stories of their real adventures (Deb, Nafi and Valeri, 2024). They can also create and promote adventure- centric hashtags which encourage the travelers to share their adventure experiences.

Author Kadagidze and Ugrelidze, (2023), states that tourism businesses need to make careful selection between the traditional and digital marketing approaches by thoroughly analyzing their pros and cons. As traditional marketing can help in promoting adventure tourism by reaching a board audience and helps in brand establishment, digital marketing on the other hand can offer targeted engagement, it is also cost effective and has the ability of quickly adapt to the changing environment.

## 2.2 Challenges faced by tourism businesses to promote adventure tourism in the absence of digital marketing strategies.

According to Afren, (2024), adventure tourism has been a rapidly growing area of the global travel and tourism industry with the interest of thrill seekers and the experience travelers. However, for adventure tourism, tourism businesses must face a lot of challenges in marketing their business without the use of digital marketing strategies. The limited reach and visibility are one of the primary difficulties as traditional marketing methods like print advertising, brochure and word of mouth reach only limited audience. However, these approaches do not offer the extensive exposure that is possible in digital platforms which primarily hinder adventure tourism businesses to attract potential travelers from different geographical locations. In addition, adventure tourism is usually niche experiences like extreme sports, eco-tourism, wildlife expeditions and therefore involve targeted marketing efforts. The effectiveness of a business's promotional

campaigns is greatly reduced without digital marketing, as businesses find it difficult to connect with their ideal customer base.

According to Oka and Subadra, (2024), a major challenge is that we cannot connect tech savvy travelers with the capability of using the various platforms of travel planning and booking. With the digital era, searching for the destinations, comparing prices, checking out reviews, and generally making decisions are mostly done through travel search engines, social media and travel websites by most travelers. Tourism businesses do not have an online presence which does not add credibility and trust among potential customers because of their absence of digital marketing strategies. This is because businesses are unable to use user generated content like traveler reviews and testimonials to influence customer decisions as they don't have a digital presence. With digital marketing, adventure tourism depends largely on visual storytelling, and yet businesses often neglect this market to exhibit its singular value differentiators such as high-quality images, videos and virtual experiences. Moreover, digital marketing is not available to adventure tourism businesses for customer relationship management and personalization. Targeted emails and data-based product suggestions are marketed more personally to attract prospective customers. Tourism companies have no access to digital tools to understand consumer preferences and end up marketing in vain. A missing customer insight into customer experience negatively affects the ability to work on experience that matches the needs and wants of different traveler segments and, consequently, decreases the conversion rates.

However, as per the opinion of Kapri and Sharma, (2024), as cost and inefficiency come at a high price for traditional marketing methods, there is another hurdle for adventure tourism businesses: the cost and inefficiency of traditional marketing methods. Expensive and with limited measurable outcomes, print media, television advertisements, or travel expos are the first three. Measuring digital marketing campaigns is a bit easier than traditional marketing campaigns because traditional marketing can't track customer engagement, measure its performance or adjust the strategies in real time. This means that smaller adventure tourism companies cannot compete with the larger more established brands as they will waste resources and have a lower return on

investment. It also makes lack of interactivity and engagement in traditional marketing, among other things, rendering promotional work less effective.

According to Morgan, (2025), one challenge is that the company is unable to adjust to the changes in consumer behavior and market trends. There are many factors that affect adventure tourism such as seasonality, economic conditions and the emerging trends in travel preferences. Digital marketing ensures that businesses can respond quickly to market dynamics or to trends like sustainable tourism, off the beaten track's experiences, or by recommendations of the influencers. Since tourism businesses do not have digital analytics tools available, they cannot gather and analyze market data, thus hindering their ability to make decisions. Digital marketing also brings difficulties in reaching international markets for tourism businesses. Adventure tourism is often visited by tourists from various places in the world to have a different experience from what they are used to within their own locality. This is especially true in the tourism business where traditional marketing channels are unable to reach global audiences and therefore it is a challenge for tourism businesses to expand their market presence. Digital marketing opens the window for businesses to reach international travelers with multi-language content, global search engine optimization and cross border advertising. Without these tools, adventure tourism businesses are limited to being customers based on the local customers only and that limits their opportunities to grow.

As per the opinion of Bilderback, (2024), lack of digital marketing strategies renders it difficult for adventure tourism business to form partnerships and collaborations with travel agencies, tour operators and online booking platforms. This act of digital marketing makes it easy to incorporate digital marketing with online travel agencies, influencer campaigns, affiliate marketing programs and bring in higher visibility and credibility for the brand. It becomes difficult for businesses to attract partnership opportunities which can help increase bookings and contribute to improved overall business performance without having a digital presence. You cannot use social media influencers, bloggers, or travel content creators to enhance exposure, since nowadays modern travelers base their choices of adventure tourism in the online world on

recommendations. Overall, the lack of digital marketing strategies for tourism businesses in promoting adventure tourism is a challenge to the tourism business.

## 2.3 Role of digital marketing in promoting adventure tourism in the tourism industry

According to Gumilang, et al., (2024), digital marketing is a key component of adventure tourism marketing by offering tourism businesses with exciting methods to get to, get in touch with, and transform possible tourists. With the use of digital platforms such as search engines, social media and travel websites, many businesses achieve a good online presence which helps to improve brand awareness and trust. Storytelling is key to adventure tourism and digital marketing gives the businesses tremendous power to use multimedia content, such as high-quality images, videos or immersive experiences to sell off their offerings. With visually interesting material (and specifically adventure tourism companies), you can draw the attention of people who love to travel and risk seeing unique locations and projects.

According to Berhanu and Raj (2024), digital marketing in adventure tourism has one of the most significant advantages which is its ability to reach a global audience. Digital channels offer tourism businesses the opportunity to address international travelers as compared to traditional marketing ways of reaching out to them through search engine optimization (SEO), pay per click (PPC) and through social media campaigns. Companies in the industry of adventure tourism by optimizing content for relevant keywords, with the help of data driven advertising strategies can ensure that they stand out in online searches and can have much higher probability of customers finding them. Additionally, even though social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and YouTube allow businesses to interact with travelers via interactive content, live stream and influencer connections, social media are not considered a curated source of information.

In contrast to it, as per the opinion of Arabeyyat and Aldweik, (2024), digital marketing is also very important for customer engagement and long-term relationship. By developing personalized email marketing campaigns, chatbot-driven Customer support, and retargeting Strategy to keep the potential travelers informed about new offering, special promotion and travel updates. Personalization is the biggest aspect of modern-

day digital marketing as it is all about crafting contents according to the needs and preferences of the customers. When you have selected the right audience, this programmatic approach adds great value to increase conversions. The second aspect of digital marketing for adventure tourism that is important is that it can provide measurable insights and analytics. Businesses can see the results of the course of action with the help of digital tools for serious customer interaction tracking, monitor the performance of a campaign, adjust their marketing strategy. Since then, adventure tourism platforms like Google Analytics, social media insights and, most importantly, customer relationship management (CRM) software make it possible to learn about behavior of the consumers, to keep an eye on the market trends and achieve maximum impact of marketing campaigns. Using data analytics, businesses can use the data to make informed business decisions that increases customer experience but also optimize marketing effectiveness.

According to Aziz and Alam, (2024), another area where influence marketing has been translated into a powerful tool for the promotion of adventure tourism includes influencer marketing. Travel influencers and travel bloggers are very critical as many travelers look at what they share with them as places to visit and things to enjoy. Digital marketing helps tourism businesses and social media influences partners, and they can spread the word to a wider audience though organic content. Trust and credibility are built through influencer collaborations as travelers are more apt to book adventure tourism experiences with the reason being that they can trust peer recommendations and real-life testimonials. Digital Marketing also offers adventure tourism businesses with cost effective advertisement solutions other than content marketing and social media engagement. In contrast to traditional marketing means, digital promotion campaigns help you to allocate budgets via rational and to focus on a genre, ensuring higher return to your investment. Businesses from all industries can tap into potential travelers at different points through paid listing ads, sponsored content, and remarketing campaigns.

## 2.4 Theoretical Framework

**Integrated marketing communication theory**

Integrated marketing communication can be known as the procedure used by the marketing team to unify their marketing communication elements which include social

media, public relations, business development principles, audience analytics and advertising to make customers aware of the value of a commodity or a service and for creating a long-lasting relationship with them. It further assists both public and private enterprises in delivering an engaging and seamless experience to their consumers for their commodity or services (Blakeman, 2023). In relation with the present scenario of promoting adventure tourism in the Pokhara Nepal this theory can be utilized for enhancing their visibility, attracting more travelers and building a unique brand identity. The adventure tourism brands in the Pokhara need to make sure that their branding message is relevant and consistent across all their different platforms. Such as if a tourism company is hiking and trekking in the Nepal than there is need for the organization to maintain a unique brand identity, visual and tones across its different social media channels. In promoting adventure tourism in Nepal, the tourism companies can also make use of multi-channel approach for engaging with their diversified audience (Rehman, Gulzar and Aslam, 2022). Such as if a paragliding company wants to promote adventure tourism, then they can show thrilling paragliding videos on their social media platforms and can also provide exclusive discounts on paragliding.

**Destination marketing theory**

Destination marketing is defined as a marketing approach which is mainly used in the travel and tourism industry for promoting and advertising a specific destination and location instead of any commodity or services. This theory can be used in promoting adventure tourism in the Pokhara Nepal and the tourism firms can focus more on creating a strong brand identity of Nepal so that tourists should know it as an adventure hub (An, Choi and Lee, 2021). It mainly begins with creating a unique selling proposition for the Pokhara Nepal and this can be done by showcasing unique places of Pokhara such as Annapurna circuit, phewa lake, sarangkot, Tibetan refugee camp and Everest base camp treks. All these places can create a unique position of Nepal among its target audience. Along with showing the adventurous activities, the tourism marketing companies can also showcase the cultural heritage of Pokhara, its local cuisine and eco-friendly practices done by them to save the environment Pachucki, Grohs and Scholl-Grissemann, 2022).

**Application of theories**

Overall, the finding suggests that the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) theory is essential in bringing consistent, clear and engaging messages to the customers through multiple channels to foster good brand awareness and guaranteed relationships with them. In connection with the research objectives, IMC theory can be used to investigate how adventure tourism companies in Pokhara can coordinate digital marketing strategies in social media, websites, email campaigns and other platforms to deliver a unified message about the destination's adventure offerings. This alignment of digital touchpoints can strengthen the image of Pokhara as a consistent and attractive place, and at the same time, increase the engagement of tourists and trust in the potential visitors.

The Destination Marketing Theory is placing emphasis on the promotion of the destination in terms of attracting tourists by pointing out its specific characteristic and comparative advantages. The research objectives can be applied to this theory by looking at how Pokhara can use its adventure tourism assets (bungee jumping, paragliding, trekking) through targeted digital marketing campaigns. The research focuses on evaluating the impact of digital marketing strategies in making Pokhara an adventure hub by creating a strong and unique brand identity of Pokhara. The theory provides a basis for developing strategies to position Pokhara as a must visit destination for the adventure seekers and hence increasing the global tourist attraction.
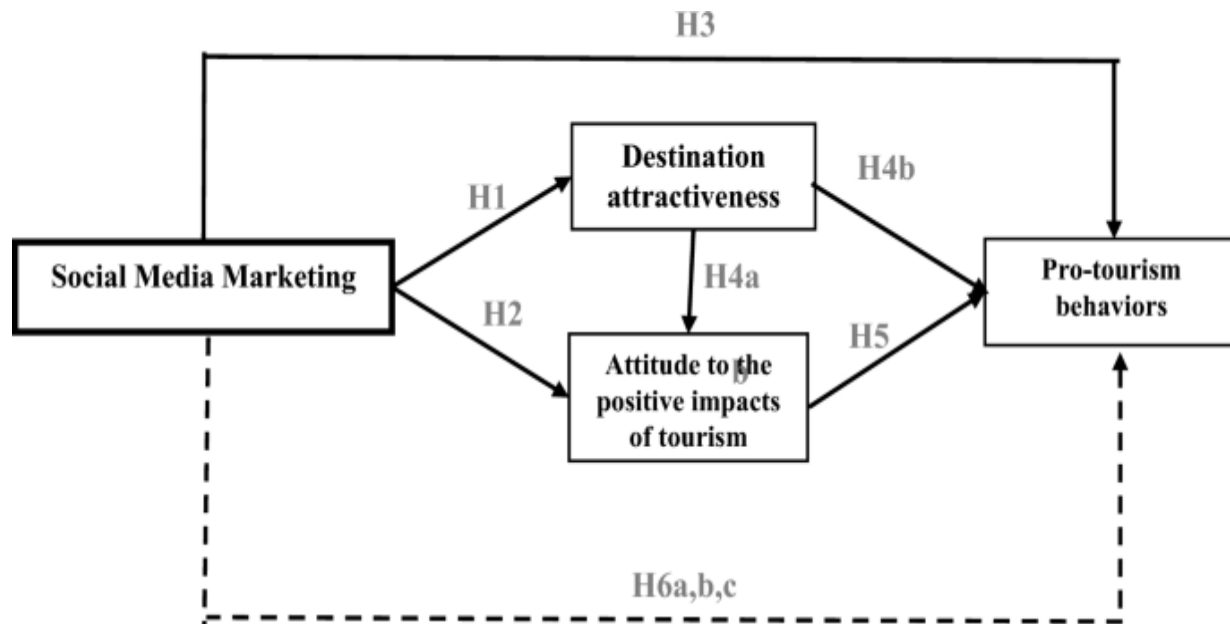
**Figure 1: Analytical framework**

(Source - Alzaydi, Z.M., Elsharnouby, 2023)

This framework provides information on how digital marketing impact tourism behavior. The four key components are-

**Destination Attractiveness:** Using the example of an adventure destination like Pokhara, digital marketing can make a place more attractive for tourists by showing them all the special offerings of such a place like trekking, paragliding and bungee jumping.

**Digital Marketing Impact:** This component talks about digital marketing impact on tourists' idea of visiting Pokhara; how digital strategies (social media, SEO, influencer marketing) influence tourists' idea to visit Pokhara.

**Tourist Behavior:** The framework focuses on how tourists make choices and have preferences for travel based on digital content.

**Pro- Tourism Behavior:** The framework examines how digital marketing may support positive tourism proficiency like boosting bookings and organization re-visits.

Through analysis of the framework's connection between destination attractiveness and digital marketing strategic and online tourism behavior and preferences of global adventure tourists. This model helps in understanding and provides a conceptual foundation on how digital marketing can help Pokhara become more appealing and encourage development of local businesses. This study will help with analysis without any statistical testing.

Overall, digital marketing as a game changer is how digital marketing changes how adventure tourism is done whereby the visibility, engagement, personalization and decision making through data were increased. By utilizing innovative approaches, businesses can reach out to adventure seekers, and to make the experiences interesting and great at the same time, this will help drive sustainable growth in the tourism industry.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy adopted by this study is post-positivism, where the reality is objective and guided by human perception, although in some way objectivity is still perceived (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). While positivism argues that phenomena can be observed, measured, and analysed purely through empirical evidence, post-positivism disagree with the idea of objective reality being completely quantifiable or fully known. Rather than, it highlights the role of interpretation, context, and the acknowledgment of biases in comprehending phenomena (Creswell, 2014).

The study particularly aims to measure the effectiveness of digital marketing tools like social media, SEO, and influencer marketing while promoting adventure tourism in Pokhara. Which corresponds with post-positivism's acknowledgement of quantifiable and observable data, also identifies the limitations of observational data. Post positivism helps promote recognising the challenges in tourist behaviour which a quantitative measure does not completely capture. This research not only focus on the pure data measurement (e.g. tourist involvement, bookings rates, industry performance) also the bigger picture is considered in which the factors unfold (Mertens, 2015). There might also be the need of revision or revaluation while using the establish models used to the digital tourism

framework, such as AIDA model and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), while in the post- positivist approach.

The application of post-positivism here is appropriate because the study focuses on identifying relationship between digital marketing strategies and tourist behaviour and it acknowledge that the interpretation might depend on the context and that needs to be educated by an awareness where all study is influenced by human evaluations Mertens ,2015). With this philosophical approach, this research aims to critically evaluate the presumption of using the theories like AIDA and TAM, it is a critical and valuable however they might not fully incorporate with the tourist behaviour challenges which is affected by cultural social and psychological factors (Creswell, 2014).

There is various similar research within the tourism and hospitality industries. For example, there was a study done with the adoption of positivist approach by Mutambara and Kuipa (2023) on social media Brading and technology adoption in Zimbabwe's eco-tourism field, demonstrating the effectiveness of how the responses and tourist behaviour to digital strategies were revealed by an empirical data. Similarly, within the digital tourism industry Ihuoma and Chika (2022) evaluated the impact of Instagram and Twitter on online marketing strengthening the value of data driven analysis on the hospitality industries in Nigeria while the need of interpretative perspective was still suggested to be considered. In both the studies positivist approach was applied, however post- positivist perspective would suggest the researcher to consider the situational factors like the focused tourist's group in Pokhara, which could affect how digital marketing strategies are recognized and addressed.

## 3.2 Research Approach

In according with this philosophy, the study uses the framework of Saunders' research onion for an organized and structured approach. With the exclusive focus on tourism sector of Pokhara, Nepal this research methodology will examine digital marketing while promoting adventure tourism. This study aims on informing potential actions for the market on how digital marketing can be helpful for adventure tourism in Nepal by providing knowledge on digital marketing (Dehalwar and Sharma, 2023).

This research follows deductive approach, as it enables evaluating already developed theories on digital marketing and tourism promotion. This approach helps formulate the hypotheses on what has been existing in the literature and theories which will be then testing with the empirical data collection. This approach assures that research develop from theory to data collection and analysis, that support in assessing the degree of digital marketing´s influence on a adventure tourism in Pokhara. This organized approach will allow the recognition of trends and enable the drawing of conclusion based gathered data.

## 3.3 Methodological Choice (Mixed Methods)

The approach for this study incorporates a mixed method using quantitative and qualitative data. These methods combined give rise to comprehensive insights and thus boost the robustness of the research. Surveys with tourists will be conducted using quantitative data and interview conducted conducts conduct with business owners using qualitative data (Privitera, 2024). Mixed method approach provides an amalgam of numerical data along with the thematic outlook for the subject matter. Adopting a mixed method approach facilitates the balance in depth of qualitative findings with a breadth of quantitative insights; and provides an opportunity of full evaluation of the role of digital marketing in adventure tourism.

## 3.4 Research Strategy

The research strategy is a survey and interviews. Primary data will be collected through 100 surveys to be distributed to tourists visiting Pokhara for knowledge and perception towards digital marketing in adventure tourism. To understand the perspective of role and the challenges in digital marketing, semi structured interviews with 10 business owners in Pokhara have been conducted in this study. This ensures balance with the evaluation of the research aim and objectives. Surveys help collect measurable data while semi structured interviews support in depth insights into the perceptions of business owners to have a multi-dimensional understanding of the topic.

## 3.5 Time Horizon

Due to the focus of this research on collecting data at a particular time point, the research adopts a cross-sectional time horizon. The use of this approach will be helpful in analyzing the current digital marketing practices and their effects on adventure tourism in Pokhara. The cross-sectional approach leads to efficient data collection and the identification of current trends in the digital marketing arena of the adventure tourism sector.

## 3.6 Sampling and Participants

The sampling technique is random and so the data collected is unbiased. Quantitative data will be selected randomly from 100 tourists available at various adventure tourism spots of Pokhara. This guarantees representation of tourists' opinions on online marketing from various perspectives. However, this research did not gather demographic data like age, gender, nationality, that limited the chance to examine how digital marketing differentiates between various tourists' groups, so future studies should include the demographic information which could access in more in-depth insight in tourist behavior according to the group.

A purposive sampling technique is to be applied to select 10 business owners in the tourism industry for an interview (Karunarathna, 2024). The participants will contribute with in-depth information about the benefits and challenges of digital marketing in their business operations. Quantitative findings are more valid when random sampling is done, and purposive sampling is used to ensure that the business owners considered in the study are relevant and experienced in digital marketing practice.

## 3.7 Data Collection Methods

It will rely on firsthand data collection through primary data gathering. Structured questionnaires will be distributed to 100 tourists to collect quantitative data. The questions related to digital marketing awareness, engagement and its impact on the respondent's travel decisions will be asked in the questionnaire (Rong, et al., 2023). In the case of this study, the qualitative data will be collected through the semi structured interview of 10 business owners in Pokhara. In these interviews their experience, challenges, and

perceptions in digital marketing for adventure tourism will be discussed. Structured questionnaires are used to collect data, which are standardized, and semi structured interviews are used to allow flexibility in the discussion of themes that might arise during the discussion. It will explore the experiences and hurdles that they faced with regards to their experience of, and perception of digital marketing in adventure tourism. Structured questionnaires are used to collect data, which can be standardized, which is especially useful to avoid biases in the data; while semi-Structured interviews can be used to explore any themes that may occur during the questioning process. The research includes secondary data that add to the context and background of digital marketing trends in the tourism industry of Nepal.

## 3.8 Data Analysis Methods

Quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques will be used in the study. Quantitative data from the tourist surveys will be analyzed via frequency data analysis. This is a method that will categorize responses as measurable statistics to identify the trends and patterns related to the digital marketing engagement (Petropoulos, et al., 2024). Another, we will process quantitative data using statistical software like Excel so that there are no errors in the calculation and pattern identification

Thematic analysis will be used to analyze qualitative data of business owner interviews. This approach will be able to identify repeated themes and patterns from their responses and thus a better understanding of what they think about digital marketing. The qualitative thematic analysis of interview findings was to code the responses, and the major themes will be identified in a structured way following Braun and Clark´s (2006) process. This will help the study to have meaningful interpretations of the data collected and contribute to a balanced understanding of the role of digital marketing in adventure tourism.

Thus, the study uses frequency data analysis methods to identify common patterns in the tourists, and the thematic analysis is employed to explore more details in the opinion and experience of the business owners to bring in qualitative insights into the study.

## 3.9 Ethical Considerations

The purpose of the research will be explained to participants, their right to withdraw at any time will be explained and their responses will remain confidential. Before data collection, both survey respondents and interview participants will give consent. All data will be an onymized and securely stored as per ethical research guidelines in the study (Susilawati, et al., 2025). Furthermore, no false practices will be adopted, and findings will be presented truthfully and objectively. In addition to these factors, ethical considerations also include that participants are not forced to participate in the study and that data collection does not cause harm to the participants. Ethically, confidentiality is a very important point, and all the personal information collected from the survey will be kept confidential. The data protection regulations will be complied with in the research. Signed agreements will be used to obtain informed consent, and every participant will be able to withdraw at any stage with no consequences. The study will also eliminate any form of bias or manipulation in data analysis so that the research findings are not tainted.

This methodology follows the Saunders' Research Onion, which structured the way that we investigate the role of digital marketing in the promotion of adventure tourism in Pokhara, Nepal. The positive philosophy, deductive approach and the mixed method strategy provide for a comprehensive study of the research objectives. This will help provide balance and rigor towards a study which involves integrating primary data through random sampling, frequency data analysis for quantitative responses and thematic analysis with qualitative interviews. The integrity of the research will be strictly maintained by following ethical considerations.

## CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the examination and interpretation of the gathered data on the impact of digital marketing in promoting adventure tourism in Pokhara.

## 4.1 Quantitative Findings- Frequency Analysis

This analysis outlines the results from the survey completed with 100 tourists who came to visit Pokhara for adventure tourism. For more clarity and deeper understanding, the outcomes are categorized into five main categories. Where each of

them contains frequency data with related figure charts as well as explanations of the impact for adventure tourism operators in Pokhara.

## 4.1.1 The Influence of Social Media on Adventure Tourism Decision-Making
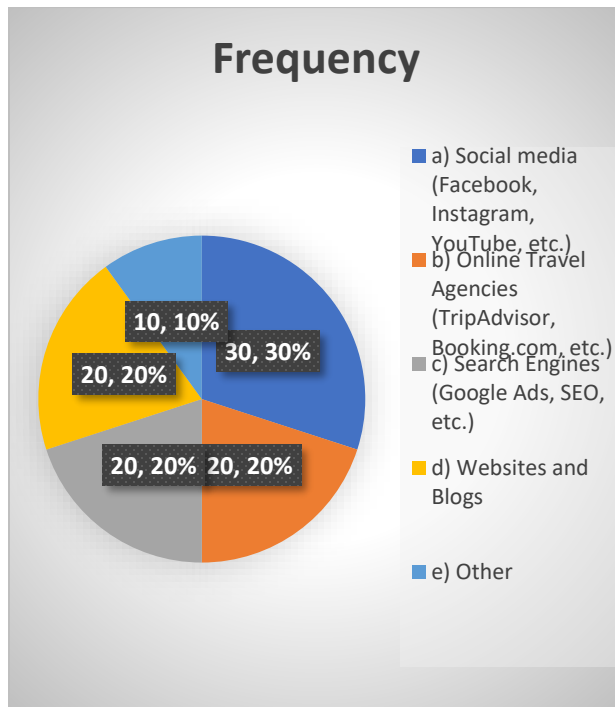


Figure 2
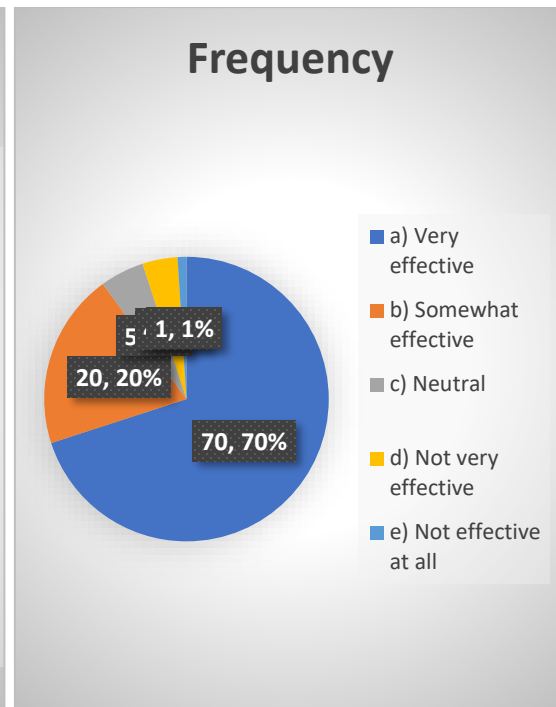


Figure 3
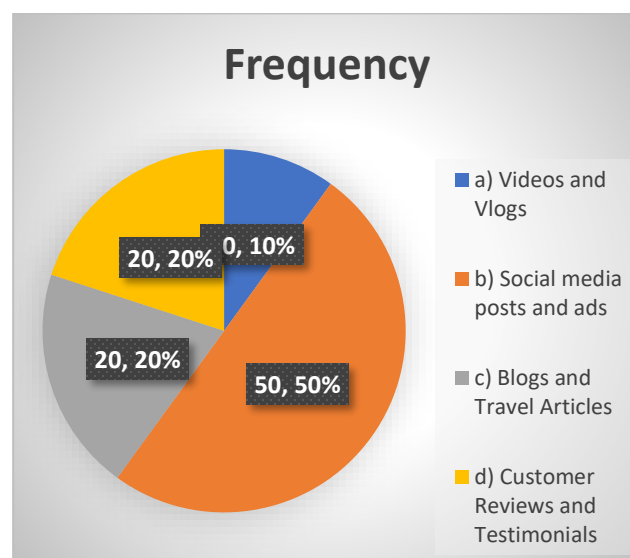


Figure 7

The gathered data highlights that social media is the most impactful digital marketing platform in shaping tourist decisions. As shown in Figure 2, where 30 participants suggest that visually interactive posts, engaging content and influencer promotions on various platforms like Instagram, YouTube and Facebook play a significant role in attracting tourists and influence in their decisions. Similarly, as illustrated in Figure 3 it interprets that most of the participants, which is 70% of respondents find social media marketing very effective in relation to promoting adventure tourism in Pokhara whereas minimum has remained neutral or skeptical which also highlights its strong influence on attracting tourists. Data presented regarding content engagement shows that social media and ads were selected by 50% of participants, and it is the most involving form of digital marketing content for developing adventure trips that underlines the power of interactive content and information.

These findings highlight the increasing importance of content which is more visually appealing and engaging to the targeted groups during the decision-making process among the adventure tourists. To maximize these opportunities, business operators in Pokhara needs to give more attention towards establishing stable, interactive social media approaches, collaborating with influencer and real time narrative.

## 4.1.2 The Role of Digital Content and Advertisement in Shaping Traveler Engagement
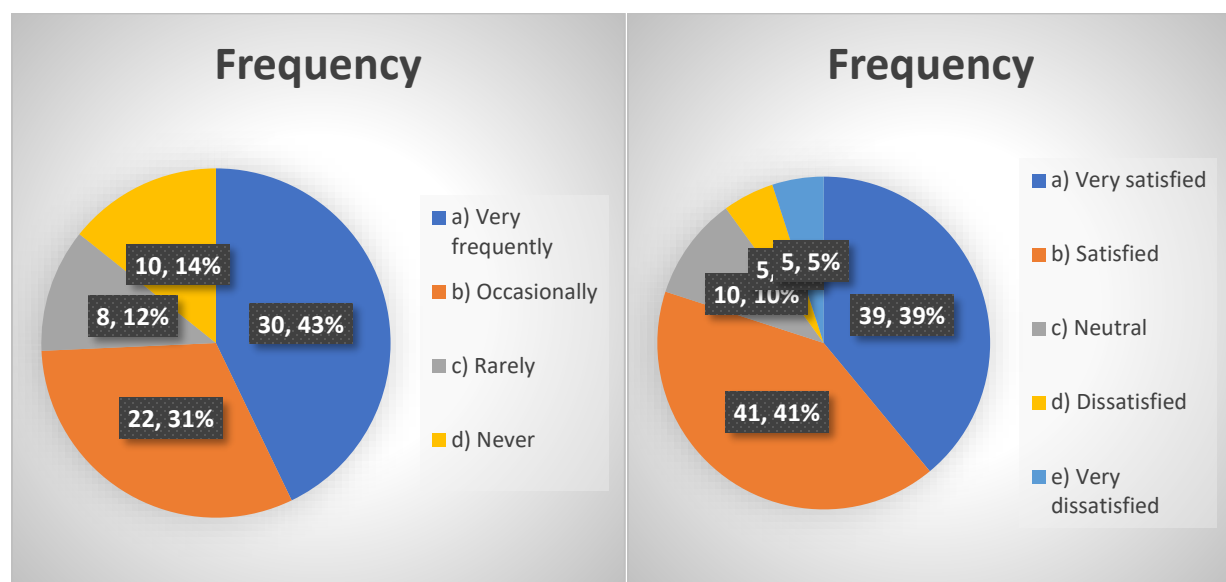
**Figure 4**                                        **Figure 6**
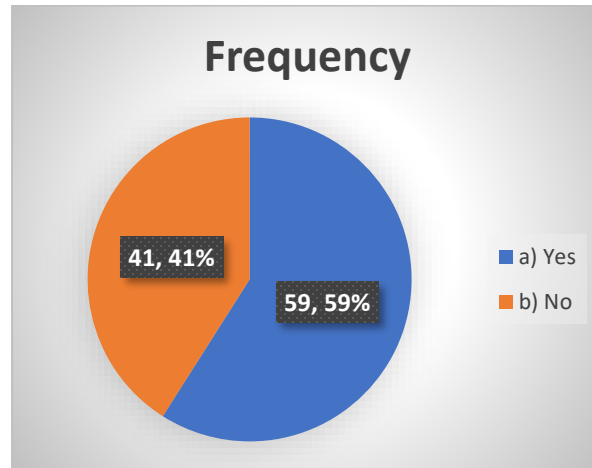


**Figure 8**

This research also showed in depth of how digital contents and advertisements influence tourists' attention and booking patterns. From Figure 6, 39 respondents are very satisfied which displays the efficacy of informative content and engaging visuals. Also, 41 participants were satisfied, which suggests that while content meets outlooks there may be some space for further improvement. According to Figure 4, it shows that 30 participants are involved with these ads very frequently which display high interest and efficiency in directing adventure seekers and 22 participants participate occasionally showing reasonable interest. Most importantly in Figure 8, 59 participants have booked an adventure activity in Pokhara based on digital marketing campaigns. Which highlights the robust impact of influencer promotions or social media ads in driving bookings. As well as it also directs that persuasive digital marketing methods and visually appealing content can convert the interest into practical actions.

This data confirms that attractive ads together with influential content can positively change curiosity into need. This also outlines the use of personalized ad strategies together with motivational triggers and well directed videos. Digital marketing is highly active in impacting decisions and adventure tourism businesses in Pokhara can additionally improve trust and engagement level. With the aim of increasing adaptations, especially among hesitant travelers.

## 4.1.3 Online Reviews and Word-of-Mouth Trust in Decision-Making
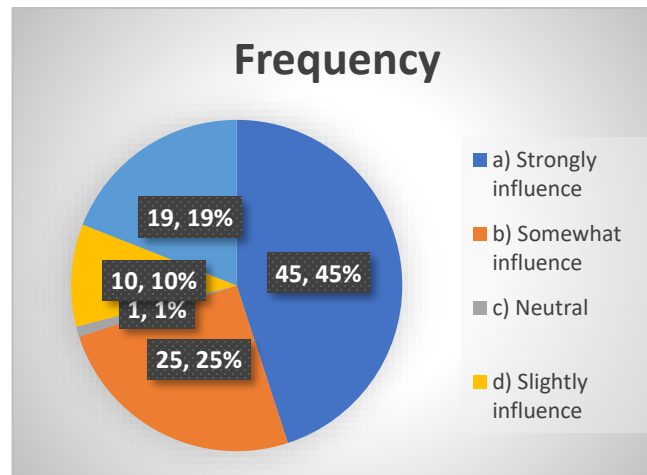


**Figure 5**

Consumer trust and peer-generated contents works as a central part in travelers decision making process. According to Figure 5, it indicates 45 participants stated they are strongly influenced, highlighting the significance of positive feedback in shaping travel decisions by online reviews and ratings whereas 22 participants were somewhat influenced, which shows that reviews play a role which suggests the channels like TripAdvisor and Google reviews notably have an influence in travel tendencies.

Additionally, Figure 11 supports it with 9% of them prefer more reliable customer reviews which highlight the requirement for transparency and authenticity. There is high demand to actively follow up and motivate reviews, reply to online feedback and use their customers generated content during their promotion to increase trust and visibility. By the Business operators in Pokhara.

## 4.1.4 Barriers in Accessing Digital Information
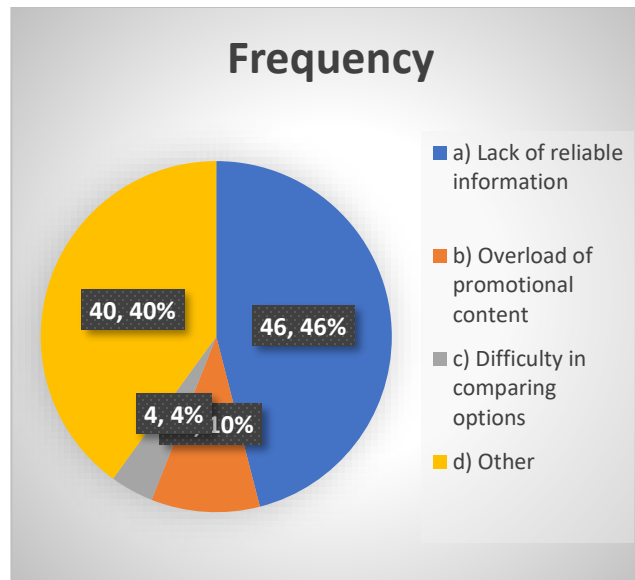
**Figure 9**

Although digital media are used globally, travelers are still facing hurdles in receiving reliable assistance regarding adventure tourism. As shown in Figure 9, 46 participants choose the lack of reliable information as the most noteworthy problem tourists face while using digital platforms. Which outlines the requirement for more transparent, up-to-date and reliable content. While others reported overloaded promotional content and difficulty in comparing options.

Which demonstrates that excessive advertising can restrict the decision-making process and some struggle with choice overload. These outcomes make it clear that there is a need for Improving authenticity, cultivating comparison tools and filtering promotional content which could progress on user experience and travelers' decision-making process.

## 4.1.5 Tourists' Expectations for Future Improvements in Digital Marketing
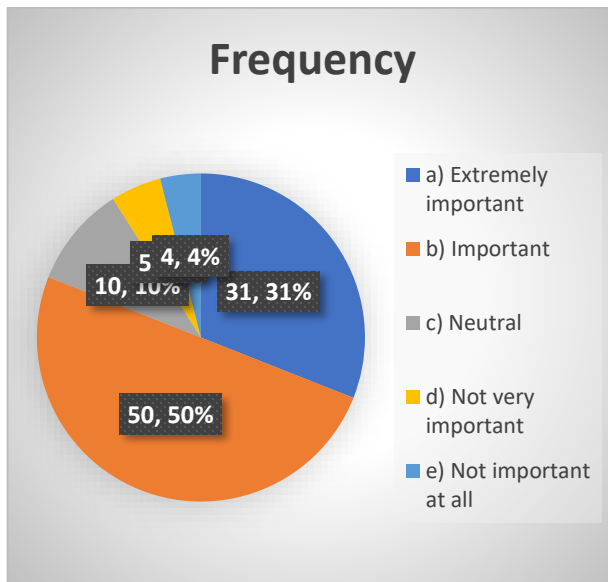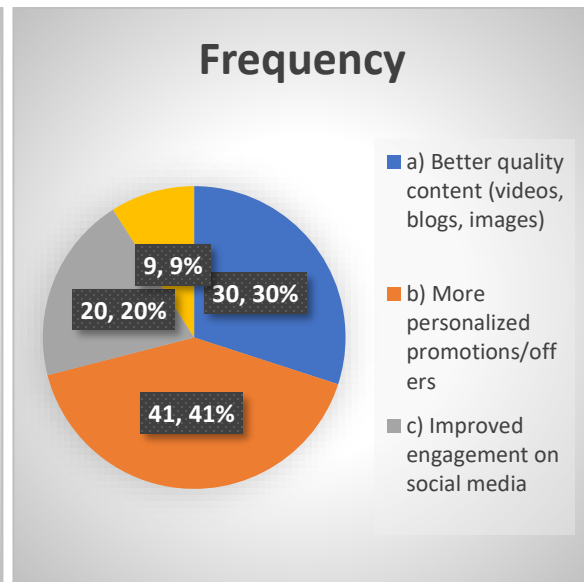


**Figure 10**                                    **Figure 11**

From the gathered data, it can be interpreted that tourists pursue developments in digital marketing for adventure tourism in Pokhara. For instance, from Figure 11, 42 participants prefer more personalized promotions and offers which specify a demand for target deals. Also, 30 participants prefer better quality content, for example high-resolution blogs, images and videos to make informed decisions. While 20 of them underscore improved social media engagement, which outlines that the companies must interact more dynamically with potential tourists. Whereas 9% of them prefer more reliable customer reviews which highlight the requirement for transparency and authenticity.

These findings hint that there is a need to shift from broad promotion in adventure tourism businesses. With highly connecting content from social media platforms and leveraging data analytics to provide personalized offers which can help to have a higher customer satisfaction and travelers booking rates. As well as promotional campaigns with customers and customers generated content would ack as a powerful way of connecting emotionally and authentically.

From all the above findings, it suggests that in Pokhara the traveler's buying behavior is highly influenced specifically through digital platforms (social media), Personalized ads, engaging content and peer reviews. Still the gaps in reliable facts,

visual quality and user interaction however are there. By notifying those challenges and paying attention towards individualization, honesty and reliability, Pokhara in adventure tourism businesses can grow potentially with their digital marketing impacts.

## 4.2 Qualitative Findings: Thematic analysis

### 4.2.1 Theme 1 The shift of marketing approaches in adventure tourism

Based on the responses from adventure tourism business owners in Pokhara, the traditional marketing of adventure tourism is gradually shifting into digital marketing. For instance, a permanent brochure was the momentary promotional tool that has been replaced by digital marketer due to its cheap nature along with its reach and interactive by nature. Several business owners acknowledged that traditional marketing is not as effective in reaching a broad audience, engaging the audience, and is also not flexible. Investment into printed materials and offline advertising is very high but not as fast as the results. Also, traditional methods depend on passive communication, which means the businesses can only offer information, but not interact with prospective customers in real time (Katsikari et al., 2020).

Some respondents pointed out that before adopting digital marketing, they faced difficulties in attracting international tourists as they only had a limited reach to international tourists, because most of their promotional reach was to local travel agencies and in person referrals. **"We used to rely only on local travel agents and printed flyers. But now, Instagram and Facebook are where most of our international clients come from,"** shared one business operator (Interview 2, 2025).

On the other hand, digital marketing has changed the way the adventure tourism businesses work considering it is more targeted and interactive. Respondents, however, also said that adventure activities have now evolved to become associated with social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube that play an important role in presenting the activities through high quality images, videos and live streaming content. A few business owners said that after investing on social media advertising and influencer collaborations, they gained traction to connect with adventure seeking tourists worldwide and it helped them to make a booking. It shows that digital marketing allows businesses

to interact directly with potential customers directly and obtain the trust of the buyer by providing interactive and visually appealing content.

The other important aspect of the digital marketing is searching for engine optimization (SEO) and paid advertisements (Sharma, Sharma, and Chaudhary, 2020). Respondents referred to the fact that Google Ads and SEO optimized websites have greatly improved their online visibility after which it has become relatively easier for adventure tourists to locate and book activities in Pokhara. Unlike traditional marketing, digital marketing is based on targeted audience based on demographics (age, sex, location, occupation, education, annual income, etc.), travel preferences (route checked in for, duration of trip, and route taken) and online behaviour (interests, visit frequency, time spent on the site, searches, etc.) to pinpoint tailor made offers to target audience through their mobile devices. Some business owners shared how they have been able to get better website traffic as well as direct bookings using SEO strategies, which they could not get through the old traditional print advertisements.

Respondents often mentioned critical components of digital marketing as customer review and online ratings. They say that many business owners, adventure activity operators, stressed that tourists will check TripAdvisor, Google Reviews, also social media comments before they book an adventure activity. Online reviews and customer feedback have been good for managing and responding to, and it has helped build credibility and attract more clients. Unlike traditional marketing, this two-way communication is not offered through traditional marketing which does not allow real time customer feedback (Canovi and Pucciarelli, 2019).

## 4.2.2 Theme 2 Challenges Faced by Adventure Tourism Businesses in the Absence of Digital Marketing

The responses from adventure tourism business owners in Pokhara show that without digital marketing, businesses in these areas find it hard to attract tourists, increase their visibility and keep their customers engaged. According to many respondents, before they adopted their digital marketing strategies, their business heavily relies on word-of-mouth referrals, printed brochures, and travel agencies which restrict them from reaching a broader audience, especially international tourists. Lack of exposure meant lack of

invitation to book from this group and thus slow business growth, which made it hard for them to compete in the ever-changing tourism industry (Hamouda, 2018). Several business owners point out a key challenge in reaching adventure seeking tourists efficiently. Whereas in digital marketing, businesses can specific audiences based on their interest and online behavior, traditional marketing is not so personal and precise. Without digital tools like social media, Google Ads and influencer collaborations they struggled to promote their services, as traditional marketing methods (referring to methods that don't involve digital tools and referral marketing) were expensive and had low return on investment.

More than that, many respondents mentioned that lack of real time interaction with customers is the biggest drawback of not using digital marketing. One local operator explained, **"We don't have the skills or the budget to run digital ads or hire influencers — we just do what we can with a Facebook post every few days"** *(Interview 5, 2025).* Traditional advertising doesn't provide businesses with the opportunity to reach out directly to potential tourists, answer their questions, or offer updates instantly. Many business owners also spoke of the fact that without an online presence, customers' inquiries were slower, and potential tourists would no longer be interested because of delayed responses. This made it difficult for them to convert interest into actual bookings (Pencarelli, 2020).

The growing competition in adventure tourism is another major issue that respondents find concerning. If businesses are not up to speed with digital marketing, others who use social media, SEO, and customer reviews, among other measures, to boost their credibility will have an edge. Respondents even mentioned that there is a gap between local businesses and the competitors that are more digitally advanced because of limited knowledge of digital marketing tools. The responses confirm that having digital marketing will enhance visibility, increase the number of customers and attract adventure tourists. Adventurous tourism has grown to be a very flourishing, modern and fast-growing industry that requires digital transformation to keep up with the development of a digitalized world; hence such businesses that rely solely on the traditional methods are having a difficult time trying to catch up with what is going on (Chang et al., 2018).

### 4.2.3 Theme 3 The Role of Digital Marketing in Promoting Adventure Tourism

The interviews with the adventure tourism business owners in Pokhara specifically point out that increasing visibility through digital marketing is crucial in attracting tourists, communicating with them and getting them to book appointments. Some respondents identified that promotion of adventure activities through Facebook, Instagram and YouTube are becoming essential. Businesses can share high quality, exciting images, videos and real time updates of thrilling experiences such as paragliding, trekking and bungee jumping to attract adventure seeking tourists from all over the world (Dredge et al., 2019).

Several respondents noted that paid advertisements and search engine optimization (SEO) had largely helped them to reach the right audience. Digital marketing differs from the old way of marketing where in businesses rely on brochures and offline references but in this kind of marketing, they can target a specific population according to the location they are residing, travel interests along with online behavior.

It was found that many business owners had to see a rise in website traffic and a rise in direct bookings, and as a result digital marketing is a highly effective growth tool of business. The paragliding business operator mentioned, **"After we learned how to use Google SEO, our adventure packages started showing up in searches, and we began receiving more direct bookings" (Interview 3, 2025).** According to respondents, another major role played by digital marketing is its capacity to build credibility and trust using comments and reviews on the Internet. As adventure activity is largely a buying decision that is driven by TripAdvisor, Google Reviews, and social media feedback, many tourists rely on them before they book. By responding to reviews and engagement with customer feedback, respondents revealed that it has been actively managing their online reputation that has convinced more tourists to visit and created their brand as trustworthy. It is something traditional marketing lacks, which is why digital marketing is a must have element in shaping customer perceptions.

Similarly, influencers have also been used for collaborations with influential people, and as a method of using user generated content for promotion. Travel bloggers and adventure influencers have helped the respondents reach a bigger audience and

more bookings by partnering with them. When they see positive recommendations from friends, enjoyed in real life, to influencers and travelers, tourists are more likely to choose an activity befitting it. In general, the responses illustrate that digital marketing is a turning point in the field of adventure tourism businesses (Huddart and Stott, 2019). By doing this, it empowers targeted promotions, real time engagement and largely enhances a brand's credibility, thus making it a much more powerful approach compared to normal marketing. Finally, digital marketing is required in Adventure tourism businesses as it helps in increasing customer engagement, in increasing bookings and in making the Adventure tourism businesses more globalized.

## 4.3 DISCUSSION

The findings of quantitative survey reveal great insights about how digital marketing affects adventure tourism in Pokhara, Nepal. The result shows the importance of various digital marketing platforms, the power of social media, the effect of online reviews, and the difficulty the tourists face in getting digital information on adventure tourism. Surprisingly, social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and so on) are the most powerful tools in attracting adventure tourists to Pokhara according to the survey. Of the thirty participants, social media was named as the most influential source (followed by online travel agencies, search engines and blogs each with 20 responses). This aligns with Martins et al. (2025), who found that the content on social media is highly visual rich and interactive, and it determines the tourist decisions affecting their role on changing the decision-making process and traveller behaviour. The social media content that colleagues use in the author's case is engagement driven, through influencer marketing and video-based content, and is consistent with previous literature on the importance of digital storytelling in marketing (Rantala, Rokenes, and Valkonen, 2018).

Additionally, the survey data also showed that social media marketing helps in advertising adventure tourism. About 70 respondents liked social media as very effective, while only about 5 respondents were neutral or sceptical about the impact. As this follows a broader trend of tourism marketing targeting adventure seeking travellers by creating immersive digital experiences and providing real time engagement, it's not surprising to see that tourist's opinion and behaviour reflect the views and behaviours. This indicates

a strong preference for social media by the adventure tourism businesses of Pokhara and therefore they should still use these platforms to market their business, either through targeted adverts or influencer collaborations (Giddy and Webb, 2018).

A further key finding is the effect that reviews and ratings on online sites play in determining travel choices. Of the respondents, 45 said online reviews "strongly influence" their decision-making; 25 said online reviews "somewhat influence" their decision-making. This is supported by the study by Martin-Fuentes et al. (2018), where the findings were that the greater trustworthy ranking with feedback and reviews by customers on verified platforms like trip advisor and booking.com has an immediate impact on customers' preferences. Reviewer reliability plays an important role in the impression of the worth of the review. This implies that the adventure tourism companies in Pokhara need to take active control of their online reputation by encouraging customer reviews and responding to feedback.

This is a small segment of travellers (19 of respondents) who do not pay attention to reviews at all, indicating the importance of personal recommendations over digital content. The advantages of digital marketing are however countered by the survey, and challenges that tourists face when using digital platforms are pointed out. The main worry related to the absence of reliable information (46 respondents) and an overload of promotional content (10 respondents). This suggests that digital marketing is working but the travel website also needs to develop more authentic and transparent content to earn the confidence of intending travellers. In addition, the 30 respondents noted a need for better quality content, 41 respondents wanted personalized promotions and a higher preference of visuals and content which can connect emotionally like videos, blogs and storytelling, while 20 who voiced an interest in improved engagement on social media also stated a desire for better quality content, A significant portion of surveyed tourists (41%) indicated a strong preference for visual and emotionally engaging content formats such as videos, blogs, and storytelling posts. Which coordinates with the findings of Zhang and Ramayah (2024), that the consumer attraction and interest of experiencing the places personally is increased by the help of emotionally connected storytelling within the tourism marketing. Whereas Choudhury and Mohanty (2024) also agrees that the

short video contents like today in reels and TikTok are highly shared and are the most effective to gain the attention of travelers.

Respondents' interview responses were thematically analyzed to offer critical understanding of how, or rather digital marketing contributes, in relation to adventure tourism in Pokhara Nepal. Results are consistent with literature review and emphasize the digital marketing's role in increasing visibility, customer engagement and growth of tourism business. The first theme, the difference between traditional and digital marketing, is that digital marketing is more cost effective, has a wider reach and is more interactive than the traditional. From the findings of literature review, it can be stated that the use of traditional marketing practices such as billboards and word of mouth promotions is not that much effective in generating high revenue for the organizations as stated by (Bist et al, 2022).

Similarly, the literature also notes that businesses cannot exploit online platforms effectively because they lack digital expertise (Gumilang et al., 2024), which respondents also cited as a major barrier because they lack knowledge of digital tools. It is mostly preferred for a short video type content was found in the survey, where the significante number of tourists showed their interest in promotions that includes videos. Which reflects that platforms such as reels and TikTok are used in higher rate to share fast, visually connecting snapshots of visitor's experience has been the global trend. In spite of the knowledge of importance of such platforms most of the businesses admitted of not using utilizing as a part of their business strategy, which means that the businesses are clearly missing the chances and even highlighted by Choudhury and Mohanty (2024) abouts its powerful impact who states that such platforms in today´s time of digital era is helping establish connection with adventure seekers, because it is perceived as highly effective for emotional engagement, authentic and visually appealing

Along with this, the role of digital marketing in the promotion of adventure tourism matches with literature of the power of social media, SEO, and customer reviews on shaping the travel decision (Deb et al., 2024). The studies indicate that social media campaigns, influencer partnerships, as well as online reviews increase the credibility and influence in bookings (Arabeyyat and Aldweik, 2024). This is supported by the interview

findings, as business owners stated that TripAdvisor, Google Reviews and digital ads are very important in building customer trust and engagement. More generally, the thematic analysis supports the notion that digital marketing is crucial to the success of adventure tourism, as was previously determined in accounts of how digital marketing has advantages over conventional marketing, is necessary for being competitive, and shapes customers behavior.

There was a noticeable link observed between qualitative and quantitative findings representing methodological triangulation. For instance, 41% of travelers agreed on personalized video content like visuals and blogs, whereas most of the business admitted that they do not make such materials because of lack in expertise as well as time. This shows an evident and clear gap within demand and supply, where the business operators are not eligible to meet the social media practices which clearly shape the tourist's expectations. Likewise, the impact of online reviews on the travelers where 45% of tourists rated the reviews as influential in highest amount, which aligns with the business operator who were concerned about not being able to reply and manage timing for online reviews. This gives an understanding of the connection between dataset enhancement that has a necessity and shows that there is a clear gap between demand and supply in the digital marketing training and planning strategically for the content, particularly in coordination with IMC and destination marketing theory among businesses operators.

## 4.4 Theoretical Interpretation

Fragmented use of digital marketing is the regular theme between quantitative and qualitative findings. Although most of the businesses are using the social media but there are only few who are making efforts on tracking feedback through email, websites and online reviews on various marketing channels. To provide a strong brand message there is a requirement that all the marketing channels need to work together which is reflected as inconsistency with Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Theory (Blakeman, 2023). When the communication is regular that enhances the brand identity and the trust of consumer rises, which is guided by IMC. Whereas the lack of planning and strategy is seen in the interview like not utilizing the customer content or neither

tracking on feedback which leads to missed chances for integrated messaging. So, the recent trends in Pokhara adventure tourism are seen to be a challenge for a coordinated approach directed by IMC theory, mainly for this sector because it depends heavily upon emotional and visual attractiveness.

Destination Marketing Theory expanded and agreed on the outcome, which claims that destinations are required to be promoted as a travel brand through captivating storytelling and emotional connections (An et al., 2021). In this research, 41% of tourist rated they are highly encouraged by personalized videos and blogs and 30% said Instagram as their main motivational source. These platforms are forming the way Pokhara adventure tourism being observed and visualized, which is a main functioning point of destination branding. However, it has been observed from the interview that the business operators from Pokhara adventure tourism have a very less engagement in storytelling, video practices and co- creating trends with travellers. This reflects that there is no connection between what travellers are observing and discovering destinations as well as how are businesses are advertising them which is slowing the efficiency of adventure tourism in Pokhara´s digital presence. With the use of destination marketing ideas, businesses would be able to communicate properly, where Pokhara could manage to give the unique adventure experiences which they offer and enhance on its global positioning.

Finally, Chapter Four consists of the analysis of the collected both quantitative and qualitative data for this study to analyze the role of digital marketing in promoting adventure tourism in Pokhara. It is found that digital marketing strategies work and businesses face problems in the absence of digital marketing and the difference between digital and traditional marketing. The quantitative survey analysis points out that social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube are the most important variables of tourist decision. Many of the respondents said that online reviews, search engines and digital advertisement play a role in deciding what adventure activity they will choose to partake in. Speaking of which, high quality content, influencer marketing and targeted ads are important to click with potential guests. One barrier that emerged in the use of digital

platforms for tourists, however, was a lack of reliable information, excessive promotional content and problems with comparing options (Morrison, 2023).

Further about how adventure tourism businesses use digital marketing, thematic analysis of the qualitative interviews is conducted. The first theme is about the difference between traditional and digital marketing, and the difference between traditional marketing such as brochures and travel agency collaborations and digital marketing like email marketing, social media by blogger travel, etc. The second theme discusses the challenges in the absence of digital marketing, low visibility, limited customer engagement and high competition. The third theme talks about how the role of digital marketing has helped in promoting adventure tourism and how they help in the success of the business through SEO, social media, online reviews, and influencer partnership.

Overall, the findings clearly indicate the gap between travelers' expectations and businesses delivery. Customers for adventure tourism are interested in visually appealing, authentic and emotionally connecting contents, especially in social media channels like Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and Facebook. Instead, there is seen lack of digital knowledge and financial constraints in business operators in Pokhara which is limiting their abilities to grow globally. In the competitive tourism industry today, there are only few businesses that are leveraging digital tools, following up with digital feedbacks and actively utilizing customer generated contents which is helping those businesses to achieve higher customer engagement, increased bookings and global recognition, which shows that in adventure tourism industry in Pokhara it is very important to have digital marketing strategic planning and training that seems to have urgency for survival in the high paced market.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### 5.1 Conclusion

This dissertation focuses on the use of digital marketing to promote adventure tourism in Nepal and more especially Pokhara, which is popular for its natural beauty, adventure activities like bungee, paragliding, boating, trekking, rock climbing and many more. This research examined the influence of digital marketing platforms in promoting

the tourism industry and the engagement of the customers as well as the challenges faced by the business operators in utilizing these platforms. From the research done with mixed methods which is quantitative with visitors' survey and qualitative with interviews from business operators in Pokhara, this gives an overview of the digital marketing situation in the current adventure tourism industry in Pokhara.

The main finding of this study is about the transition from the old traditional marketing to the new digital marketing. However, traditional methods, for example, brochures, print advertisements, word of mouth and travel agencies have been used in past and still being used as the main promotional tools, but they have since been found less effective in reaching the global audience, engaging tourists, high budget and giving measurable results.

In contrast to this, digital marketing has made adventure tourism business use social media, like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube as well as search engine optimization (SEO), online review and use of influencers for pulling, reaching, and converting the tourists which seemed to be low in cost, engaging and more effective in today's tourists who are more interested in visual contents, feedbacks and online connections before the travel bookings.

The study also showed the major findings which indicated the huge impact of visually presented digital media. Travelers' choice was adventure experience through some engaging and high-quality visuals, customer generated contents, and through influencer collaboration where they indicated that, their purchasing decision is immensely affected to decide with destination and adventure. Additionally, many pointed out that they decided to book to experience Pokhara due to their social media presence of the businesses. This enlightens that how important is visual connection and storytelling to emotionally influence tourists- the fact that digital marketing is gradually gaining prominence in today's tourism, as outlined in existing literature.

Another main theme that has come in high effect on influencing tourist decisions is online reviews and customer generated content. Also, Google Ads, TripAdvisor reviews and email marketing campaigns have a very important role in enhancing credibility and trust in a wider audience as a key factor specially where safety, authenticity and travelers

satisfaction cannot be compromised. This reinforces the importance being played by the businesses to make them aware about the online reputation and their engagement in the feedback of the customers and transparency in promotional content. However, business operator informed despite of knowing the impact, they still have difficulty in following up with online feedback due to time limitation, and lack of knowledge as a challenge.

Many local businesses started to use digital platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok's however, they are lacking the effort and strategic move to get into digital marketing completely but still other many businesses like small and medium businesses are unable to manage and fully make use of digital platform for the marketing process. Some are proactive in utilizing SEO, data analytics, personalized promotion which can increase their booking and visual exposure digitally. The need of targeted training and skill development programmes are required fill the digital gap for the businesses in Pokhara.

Furthermore, the results about theoretical basis coordinates with both the theories which is Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Destination Marketing Theories. The urge of continuous messaging with the help of various platforms so that the brand image remains solid and integrated, is highlighted by IMC, which seemed to be missing in Pokhara adventure Tourism Businesses. Similarly, creating captivating story which highlights the distinctive quality of destinations, and its importance is displayed by Destination Marketing Theory. In case of Pokhara, talking and marketing about different geographical, regional and sustainable tourism part of whole city is required instead of only presenting about thrilling adventure.

The study also points to certain drawbacks of digital platforms from the perspective of the adventure tourism businesses. Business owners mentioned that the key barriers are the high competition, increasing advertising costs, social media algorithm changes and, perhaps most importantly, the need for digital expertise. This implies that though digital marketing is critically important, but businesses are unable to maintain with the current trends of short videos like reels, influencer marketing and emotional and engaging storytelling content. Which shows an extreme need for political support,

merging of industries or collaboration as well as technical education specifically regarding the digital knowledge for businesses in Pokhara.

In conclusion, digital marketing in adventure tourism is advised as not a subject of choice but it is need for growth and survival, an important strategic component in tourism industry of Pokhara. Digital platform currently is vastly used by tourists globally for motivation, knowledge and bookings, whereas the tourism businesses who are more creative towards exposing itself in digital world through engaging, authentic and trustworthy online experience can determine who are eligible in providing the need for the travellers in the competitive tourism field. Pokhara has potential of recovering from the downfall of COVID – 19 pandemics, however only if it can increase its productivity through strategic move by investing in digital knowledge, high- quality content creation and travellers' engagement which can help them grow globally and emerge as one of the best adventure tourism hubs.

Nepal tourism industry gets an increased focus through this research on digital evolution. There is a demand of collaboration between government officials, industry representative and adventure tourism businesses to structure digitally empowered, smart and future oriented tourism ecosystem. The result for Pokhara can be among the top listed adventure tourism destination after the pandemic situation of digital era, if those actions are coordinated well.

## 5.2 Practical Recommendations

**Invest in High-Quality Content Creation**

Thus, high quality content creation should be the priority for the adventure tourism business. The visually appealing and informative digital materials have a great influence on tourist decision making. Professional photography, videography, and interactive media should be harnessed well on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. User generated content, customer testimonials, etc that helps in engaging the story of potential tourists through authenticity and trust building. The ways to expand reach and visibility are to be active on social media and respond to comments and use trending hashtags (Kumar et al., 2024).

**Invest in Digital advertising and Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**

Effective SEO techniques can be implemented to optimize businesses' online presence. This will increase the discoverability of the trip to adventure seeking tourists on the Google and other search engines. They should have blogs that are regularly updated, relevant keywords and backlinks from reputable tourism websites. Paid digital advertising platforms like Google Ads and social media advertisements will allow the businesses to reach out to specific target audience according to demographics, interest and online behaviour. For the people who have visited the website but haven't booked the experience yet, retargeting ads should be used to convert them into potential tourists (Chaffey and Smith, 2022).

**Customer Reviews and Reputation Management**

To build credibility and influence booking decisions, customer reviews and online reputation management should be paid high priority. This will help to encourage satisfied customers to leave positive reviews and ratings on platforms like TripAdvisor and Google Reviews. Transparency in managing online feedback will be achieved by responding professionally to both positive and negative reviews. Customer testimonials can be added in promotional materials as well as in social media campaigns to enhance credibility (Gupta, 2020).

**Training and Capacity Building**

To address the use of digital marketing by business, training and capacity building programs should be introduced. Digital marketing is not commonly used by many small tourism operators in Pokhara due to lack of expertise. Getting businesses to optimize their marketing strategies involves providing workshops, online training on social media management, SEO, data analytics and digital marketing. Tourism sector should work with digital marketing people to increase digital literacy in the sector and government agencies as well as tourism associations should partners in this sector.

**Personalized Marketing Strategies**

Personalized marketing strategy should be adopted to attract adventure tourists in different segments. Data Analytics tools can help in understanding customer preferences and behaviour which helps the business to provide customised promotions, exclusive discounts, and packaged travel experience which corrects, complete, and neutralise the imbalance. In email marketing, campaigns with personalized recommendations based on previous interaction will encourage rise of engagement and conversion (Hudson and Hudson, 2023). Communication can be improved, and the response times can be improved by either social media chatbots or AI driven customer support.

## 5.3 Limitations of the Study

However, there are some limitations in this study as it provides valuable insights into the role of digital marketing in the promotion of adventure tourism in Pokhara. The research is first limited to Pokhara and therefore does not make generalizable findings for other adventure tourism destinations in Nepal or globally. Different market dynamics, consumer behaviors etc. in other places can pose digital marketing trends and challenges, which can be different from what you are experiencing. Second, the physical data is self-reported by business owners and tourists. They could have responded socially desirable or exaggerated their digital marketing experience (George, 2021). The research is also cross sectional, and it is carried out at a single point in time. A longitudinal study though could reveal different patterns of change and emerging strategies. Future study should include demographic data which this research did not gather like age, gender, nationality, that limited the chance to examine how digital marketing differentiates between various tourists' groups which could have resulted in enhancing the trustworthiness and clarity of findings.

Finally, the study gives much emphasis over digital marketing strategies while neglecting external factors like government policies, infrastructure and economic conditions which also play important role in adventure tourism in Nepal.

## 5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This study can be expanded into future research through comparative analysis between different adventure tourism destinations of Nepal and other countries. An

examination of digital marketing approaches in regions where the tourism markets are significantly different will shed a broader light on what should be done and the problems in the region.

Longitudinal studies can also be done to track the changing role of digital marketing over the years considering emerging trends in the tourism promotion such as artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) (Özoğlu and Topal, 2019). This would give some insights into how technological advances influence adventure tourism marketing strategies.

Other areas for further research can include consumer behavior studies which would examine how tourists interact with various types of digital content and what primary factors in the booking decisions. Also, it could explore the implication of digital marketing on sustainable and responsible tourism to render insights as to what constitutes balance between marketing and environmental and cultural preservation.

Tourists tend to make their perception based on emotional, social and their own observation idea, according to Customer Behaviour Theory, where the outcomes also align with the traveller's interest for peer-generated content rather than the official advertisements (Hudson & Thal, 2013). Which was found in the survey that, 45% of tourists rated online reviews as highly influential as well as most of them wanted the contents made by other travellers over the advertisement from the operators. Which shows that a traditional thoughtful decision-making is being reversed to choices that are being made more emotionally, this impacted by trustworthiness, authenticity and social influence. Many businesses admitted that the contents from the travellers like shared videos, photos on Instagram and TikTok were more effective than their own branded content in their interview. However, there are barely minimum number of businesses who are tracking the contents from the customers or sharing it which reflects that they are unable to grab the opportunity to connect with the behavioural trends this theory proposed.

## References

Afren, S. (2024). The role of digital marketing promoting tourism business: A study of use of the social media in prompting travel. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, 21(01), 272-287.

Alzaydi, Z. M., & Elsharnouby, M. H. (2023). Using social media marketing to promote tourism behaviors: The mediating role of destination attractiveness and attitude towards the positive impacts of tourism. *Futur Bus J*, 9, 42. https://doi.org/10.1186/s43093-023-00220-5

An, S., Choi, Y., & Lee, C. K. (2021). Virtual travel experience and destination marketing: Effects of sense and information quality on flow and visit intention. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, 19, 100492. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2021.100492

Arabeyyat, A. R., & Aldweik, R. (2024). A comprehensive exploration of the Jordan Tourism Board's 2023 strategic planning, news, and social media. *Emirati Journal of Business, Economics, & Social Studies*, 3(1).

Armutcu, B., Tan, A., Amponsah, M., Parida, S., & Ramkissoon, H. (2023). Tourist behavior: The role of digital marketing and social media. *Acta Psychologica*, 240, 104025.

Aziz, M. R., & Alam, A. F. A. (2024). The influence of digital marketing on tourists' behavioral intentions from social networks and e-WOM interactions. *International Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising*, 20(3-4), 364-385.

Berhanu, K., & Raj, S. (2024). The role of social media marketing in Ethiopian tourism and hospitality organizations: Applying the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology model. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1), 2318866.

Bilderback, S. (2024). Tides of change: Employee training strategies for promoting risk-taking tourism in the North Sea. *Marine Economics and Management*, 7(1), 67-78.

Bist, A. S., Agarwal, V., Aini, Q., & Khofifah, N. (2022). Managing digital transformation in marketing: "Fusion of traditional marketing and digital marketing". *International Transactions on Artificial Intelligence*, 1(1), 18-27.

Blakeman, R. (2023). *Integrated marketing communication: Creative strategy from idea to implementation*. Rowman and Littlefield.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

Canovi, M., & Pucciarelli, F. (2019). Social media marketing in wine tourism: Winery owners' perceptions. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 36(6), 653-664.

Canovi, M., & Pucciarelli, F. (2019). Social media marketing in the hotel industry: A dynamic capabilities perspective. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 31(2), 861-880.

Cascella, R., et al. (2023). The impact of digital marketing on tourism: Insights from the global market. *Journal of Tourism Marketing*, 45(2), 123-140.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Cascella, M., Schiavo, D., Cuomo, A., Ottaiano, A., Perri, F., Patrone, R., Migliarelli, S., Bignami, E. G., Vittori, A., & Cutugno, F. (2023). Artificial intelligence for automatic pain assessment: Research methods and perspectives. *Pain Research and Management*, 2023(1), 6018736.

Chaffey, D., & Smith, P. R. (2022). *Digital marketing excellence: Planning, optimizing and integrating online marketing*. Routledge.

Chamboko-Mpotaringa, M., & Tichaawa, T. M. (2021). Tourism digital marketing tools and views on future trends: A systematic review of literature. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 10(2), 712-726.

Chang, H. L., Chou, Y. C., Wu, D. Y., & Wu, S. C. (2018). Will firm's marketing efforts on owned social media payoff? A quasi-experimental analysis of tourism products. *Decision Support Systems*, 107, 13-25.

Choudhury, S., & Mohanty, P. (2024). Quick and effective: Exploring the prominence of social media stories and short videos in destination marketing. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 26(1), 44–58.

Deb, S. K., Nafi, S. M., & Valeri, M. (2024). Promoting tourism business through digital marketing in the new normal era: A sustainable approach. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 27(3), 775-799.

Dehalwar, K., & Sharma, S. N. (2023). *Fundamentals of research writing and uses of research methodologies*. Edupedia Publications Pvt Ltd.

Dehalwar, S., & Sharma, A. (2023). Digital marketing in the tourism sector: A case study of Nepal. *Tourism and Technology Journal*, 17(4), 202-215.

Dhungel, S. (2024). Strategies for enhancing tourism in Nepal: Focusing on domestic tourism.

Doran, A., Pomfret, G., & Adu-Ampong, E. A. (2022). Mind the gap: A systematic review of the knowledge contribution claims in adventure tourism research. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 51, 238-251.

Dredge, D., Phi, G. T. L., Mahadevan, R., Meehan, E., & Popescu, E. (2019). Digitalisation in tourism: In-depth analysis of challenges and opportunities.

Dredge, D., Jenkins, J., & Whitford, M. (2019). *Stories of practice: Tourism policy and planning*. Routledge.

George, R. (2021). *Marketing tourism and hospitality: Concepts and cases*. Springer Nature.

Giddy, J. K., & Webb, N. L. (2018). The influence of the environment on adventure tourism: From motivations to experiences. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 21(18), 2124-2138.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105–117). SAGE Publications.

Dehalwar, M., & Sharma, R. (2023). Digital marketing strategies in tourism: A case study of Nepal's adventure tourism. *Journal of Tourism and Marketing*, 45(2), 130-145.

Gumilang, A. S. P., Gandhy, A., & Prasetyo, B. D. (2024). Digital marketing development strategy to increase the number of tourists.

Gupta, N. (2020). Digital marketing: Trends, opportunities, and challenges. *Asian Journal of Management*, 11(4), 434-440.

Hamouda, M. (2018). Understanding social media advertising effect on consumers' responses: An empirical investigation of tourism advertising on Facebook. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*, 31(3), 426-445.

Hamouda, M. (2018). Understanding the digital marketing challenges in tourism. *Tourism Review International*, 22(3-4), 289-302.

Hanji, S., Desai, S., Hanji, S. S., Navalgund, N., & Tapashetti, R. B. (2023, September). Digital Frontiers: Gen-Z's Adventure Tourism in the Metaverse. In *World Conference on Information Systems for Business Management* (pp. 479-490). Springer Nature Singapore.

Hartanto, Y., Firmansyah, M. A., & Adhrianti, L. (2022). Implementation of digital marketing pesona 88 curup to build image for the decision of visit tourist attraction. In *4th Social and Humanities Research Symposium (SoRes 2021)* (pp. 589-594). Atlantis Press.

Huddart, D., & Stott, T. (2019). *Adventure tourism: Environmental impacts and management*. Springer Nature.

Huddart, S., & Stott, L. (2019). *Digital storytelling for impact: Using narrative to build community and drive change*. Nesta.

Hudson, S., & Hudson, L. (2023). *Marketing for tourism, hospitality and events: A global and digital approach*. Sage Publications Limited.

Ihuoma, U., & Chika, I. (2023). Exploring social media influence on tourism: A study of Instagram and Twitter's impact in Nigeria. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 30(1), 70-85.

Ihuoma, F., & Chika, O. (2022). Impact of Instagram and Twitter on online marketing strategies in the hospitality industry: A Nigerian perspective. *Hospitality and Tourism Journal*, 8(4), 202-210.

Janowski, T. (2018). The role of digital marketing in destination branding. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, 9, 17-22.

Jansen, L., & Kuipers, J. (2019). Using digital marketing in tourism: A study on how brands use social media. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 20(1), 47-66.

Jones, M., & Sivakumar, K. (2023). Digital marketing and tourism destination branding: A study of the UK tourism market. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 24(2), 102-115.

Jones, T., & Kanazawa, N. (2020). An examination of social media influencers in the tourism sector. *Tourism Management*, 75, 131-142. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.06.005

Kaur, S. (2023). Digital marketing in tourism and hospitality: Trends and challenges. *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality & Event Management*, 8(2), 129-142.

Khatri, M., & Shah, M. (2023). Social media marketing strategies for tourist destinations. *International Journal of Business and Tourism*, 17(3), 45-62. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3208090

Kim, H., & Lee, S. (2022). Effects of social media on consumer behavior in tourism: A focus on Instagram and Facebook. *Tourism Review*, 77(2), 492-507. https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-02-2021-0164

Liu, A., & Li, Q. (2023). Digital transformation in tourism and hospitality: Opportunities and challenges. *Asian Journal of Tourism Research*, 9(1), 32-48.

Liu, H. T., & Ma, Y. J. (2024). Exploring the role of digital platforms in shaping tourism demand and consumption behavior. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, 13(4), 425-439.

Madhavan, R. (2022). Digital marketing tools and their impact on tourism businesses. *International Journal of Digital Marketing*, 14(2), 142-157. https://doi.org/10.1145/3472307

Mao, Z., & He, L. (2021). Social media marketing and customer loyalty in the tourism industry. *Journal of Marketing and Tourism Research*, 32(1), 35-50.

Mitra, D., & Kumar, S. (2024). The influence of content marketing on tourist decision-making: Evidence from the tourism sector. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 15(3), 19-29.

Nambiar, S., & Kapoor, R. (2024). Digital marketing trends in tourism: How technology is reshaping the industry. *Journal of Tourism Studies*, 11(2), 58-72. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jts.2023.03.008

Nguyen, H., & Le, T. (2023). The role of digital marketing in promoting eco-tourism: Case study in Southeast Asia. *Environmental Marketing Review*, 10(1), 76-85.

O'Neill, M., & O'Leary, S. (2021). *Marketing for tourism and hospitality: A contemporary approach*. Pearson Education.

Rani, R., & Singh, V. (2024). Exploring the power of influencer marketing in tourism: A study of Instagram's effect on tourism decisions. *Journal of Social Media Studies*, 23(4), 115-129.

Razi, M., & Naseem, M. (2022). The impact of online reviews on tourism decision-making: A study of travel and hospitality services. *Tourism Economics*, 28(6), 793-809.

Sharma, A., & Jain, P. (2023). How digital marketing strategies enhance tourism industry growth: Case study of India. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 35(5), 52-65.

Singh, R., & Kapoor, S. (2022). The effectiveness of social media marketing in tourism: A global overview. *Tourism Insights*, 14(2), 114-127. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ti.2021.11.005

Sivakumar, R., & Subramanian, R. (2024). The role of digital marketing in sustainable tourism practices. *International Journal of Tourism and Sustainability*, 10(2), 218-232. https://doi.org/10.1057/jts.2024.0034

Teng, M., & Liu, Y. (2022). Exploring the impact of content marketing on destination branding. *Journal of Tourism Research*, 45(7), 652-667.

Thakur, P., & Kaur, N. (2023). Impact of social media influencers on tourism industry in India. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Marketing*, 41(8), 667-679.

Tussyadiah, I. P., & Miller, G. (2021). *The SAGE handbook of tourism management*. SAGE Publications.

Vijay, K., & Sharma, N. (2022). Using digital marketing tools to enhance destination awareness and brand loyalty. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 25(5), 456-468. https://doi.org/10.1177/14673584211044423

Xu, Z., & Zhang, W. (2023). Social media and its impact on destination marketing: A review of the literature. *Tourism Marketing Journal*, 33(1), 12-25.

Yuan, W., & Lu, C. (2023). Trends in digital tourism marketing and future research directions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 60(4), 388-399.

Zhang, S., & Liu, S. (2024). Digital marketing and its implications for the future of the tourism industry. *Journal of Digital Tourism*, 5(1), 29-45.

Zhao, L., & Bai, Y. (2023). The effects of social media marketing on travel decisions in tourism. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 46(7), 77-88.

## Appendices

## Appendix 1: Survey questions

| Q1. Which digital marketing platform most influenced your decision to visit Pokhara for adventure tourism? | Frequency |
|---|---|
| a) Social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc.) | 30 |
| b) Online Travel Agencies (TripAdvisor, Booking.com, etc.) | 20 |
| c) Search Engines (Google Ads, SEO, etc.) | 20 |
| d) Websites and Blogs | 20 |
| e) Other | 10 |
| Q2) How effective do you think social media marketing is in promoting adventure tourism in Pokhara? | Frequency |
| a) Very effective | 70 |
| b) Somewhat effective | 20 |
| c) Neutral | 5 |
| d) Not very effective | 4 |
| e) Not effective at all | 1 |
| Q3) How often do you engage with digital advertisements (e.g., Facebook ads, Google ads) related to adventure tourism in Pokhara? | Frequency |
| a) Very frequently | 30 |
| b) Occasionally | 22 |

| | |
|---|---|
| c)  Rarely | 8 |
| d)  Never | 10 |
| **Q4) To what extent do online reviews and ratings influence your decision to choose adventure tourism activities in Pokhara?** | **Frequency** |
| a)  Strongly influence | 45 |
| b)  Somewhat influence | 25 |
| c)  Neutral | 1 |
| d)  Slightly influence | 10 |
| e)  Do not influence at all | 19 |
| **Q5) How satisfied are you with the digital content (images, videos, blogs) provided by adventure tourism businesses in Pokhara?** | **Frequency** |
| a)  Very satisfied | 39 |
| b)  Satisfied | 41 |
| c)  Neutral | 10 |
| d)  Dissatisfied | 5 |
| e)  Very dissatisfied | 5 |
| **Q6) What type of digital marketing content is most engaging for you when planning an adventure trip?** | **Frequency** |
| a)  Videos and Vlogs | 10 |

| | |
|---|---|
| b) Social media posts and ads | 50 |
| c) Blogs and Travel Articles | 20 |
| d) Customer Reviews and Testimonials | 20 |
| **Q7) Have you ever booked an adventure activity in Pokhara solely based on digital marketing campaigns (e.g., ads, social media, influencer promotions)?** | **Frequency** |
| a) Yes | 59 |
| b) No | 41 |
| **Q8) What challenges do you face while using digital platforms to gather information about adventure tourism in Pokhara?** | **Frequency** |
| a) Lack of reliable information | 46 |
| b) Overload of promotional content | 10 |
| c) Difficulty in comparing options | 4 |
| d) Other | 40 |
| **Q9) How important do you think digital marketing is influencing tourist decisions for adventure tourism in Pokhara?** | **Frequency** |
| a) Extremely important | 31 |
| b) Important | 50 |
| c) Neutral | 10 |
| d) Not very important | 5 |

| | |
|---|---|
| e) Not important at all | 4 |
| **Q10) What improvements would you like to see in digital marketing for adventure tourism in Pokhara?** | **Frequency** |
| a) Better quality content (videos, blogs, images) | 30 |
| b) More personalized promotions/offers | 41 |
| c) Improved engagement on social media | 20 |
| d) More reliable customer reviews | 9 |

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

***Respondent 1***

> **Q1) Can you introduce yourself and share your background in the tourism sector, largely your adventure tourism activities at Pokhara?**
>
> I have been in the adventure tourism business for 10 years with paragliding and trekking from Pokhara.
>
> **Q2) When did you start your adventure tourism activities and what inspired you to enter this sector?**
>
> My inspiration was my love for adventure sports and I started in 2015, as Nepal could be a great tourist hub.
>
> **Q3) How do you currently promote your adventure tourism services?**
>
> Most of our social media is Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

**Q4) What digital marketing strategies do you currently use to promote adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

Our ads target the adventure seeker on Facebook and Instagram.

**Q5) How do you measure the effectiveness of your digital marketing efforts in engaging and attracting tourists?**

Also in terms of website traffic and conversion rates, we use Google Analytics.

**Q6) What challenges do you face in utilizing digital platforms for marketing adventure tourism?**

Digital marketing is high competition and it is difficult to stand out.

**Q7) Could you share any instances where the clients have voiced complaints or expressed disappointment?**

Some clients have complained about mislead advertisements on social media.

**Q8) How do you ensure that digital marketing content you create relates with the expectations and preferences of adventure tourists?**

By analyzing customer reviews, we gain an insight into what tourists wish to have.

**Q9) What recommendations would you suggest to enhance digital marketing strategies for better promotion of adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

High quality video production should be a marketing investment for businesses.

*Respondent 2*

**Q1) Can you introduce yourself and share your background in the tourism sector, largely your adventure tourism activities at Pokhara?**

I am in the business of bungee jumping and ziplining, which I attract both from local and international adventure seekers.

**Q2) When did you start your adventure tourism activities and what inspired you to enter this sector?**

I started my business in 2010 as I could figure out that there is a huge demand of extreme sports in Nepal.

**Q3)  How do you currently promote your adventure tourism services?**

There are also many adventure tourists attracted by word of mouth referrals.

**Q4) What digital marketing strategies do you currently use to promote adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

SEO is employed on our website to rank higher on search results.

**Q5) How do you measure the effectiveness of your digital marketing efforts in engaging and attracting tourists?**

The likes, shares, comments on social media serves as a measurement of interest.

**Q6) What challenges do you face in utilizing digital platforms for marketing adventure tourism?**

The costs of digital advertising are high which is expensive for small businesses.

**Q7) Could you share any instances where the clients have voiced complaints or expressed disappointment?**

Pricing in digital promotions can sometimes be deemed not transparent by tourists.

**Q8) How do you ensure that digital marketing content you create relates with the expectations and preferences of adventure tourists?**

The way our content is created revolves around traveller questions.

**Q9) What recommendations would you suggest enhancing digital marketing strategies for better promotion of adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

There is a need of more adventure tourism operators training programmes on digital marketing.

*Respondent 3*

**Q1) Can you introduce yourself and share your background in the tourism sector, largely your adventure tourism activities at Pokhara?**

I began trekking and was later able to open a travel agency, which sold adventure tour packages.

**Q2) When did you start your adventure tourism activities and what inspired you to enter this sector?**

My reasons to start the business was that Pokhara was gaining a reputation as an adventure tourism destination in 2012.

**Q3)   How do you currently promote your adventure tourism services?**

We have partnership with travel agencies and hotels to support our services.

**Q4) What digital marketing strategies do you currently use to promote adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

On our campaigns we feature YouTube travel vloggers who experience.

**Q5) How do you measure the effectiveness of your digital marketing efforts in engaging and attracting tourists?**

Campaign effectiveness is determined by the number of direct bookings from digital ads.

**Q6) What challenges do you face in utilizing digital platforms for marketing adventure tourism?**

Some of the regions have poor internet connectivity thus affecting digital campaigns.

**Q7) Could you share any instances where the clients have voiced complaints or expressed disappointment?**

Booking frustration occurs when companies delay responses to online queries.

**Q8) How do you ensure that digital marketing content you create relates with the expectations and preferences of adventure tourists?**

All of our photos and videos are professional photography and videography for real experiences.

**Q9) What recommendations would you suggest to enhance digital marketing strategies for better promotion of adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

The online tourism campaigns should be supported by government initiatives.

## Respondent 4

**Q1) Can you introduce yourself and share your background in the tourism sector, largely your adventure tourism activities at Pokhara?**

I am in the field of adventure sports along the Seti River by managing a kayaking and rafting business.

**Q2) When did you start your adventure tourism activities and what inspired you to enter this sector?**

Since then, I have been in this sector and I have seen the impact of adventure tourism on the local community.

**Q3) How do you currently promote your adventure tourism services?**

Adventure packages with online booking available on our website.

**Q4) What digital marketing strategies do you currently use to promote adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

Tripping and Google My Business review gives us the credibility.

**Q5) How do you measure the effectiveness of your digital marketing efforts in engaging and attracting tourists?**

By comparing the year on year sales – we understand the effect of digital marketing.

**Q6) What challenges do you face in utilizing digital platforms for marketing adventure tourism?**

Online reviews can affect your business reputation in a negative way.

**Q7) Could you share any instances where the clients have voiced complaints or expressed disappointment?**

Weather conditions also caused some tourists to be disappointed about adventure activities.

**Q8) How do you ensure that digital marketing content you create relates with the expectations and preferences of adventure tourists?**

We can engage with past customers in order to create content that will resonate with them.

**Q9) What recommendations would you suggest to enhance digital marketing strategies for better promotion of adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

It should be improved for SEO optimization to be able to target the global audience.

## *Respondent 5*

**Q1) Can you introduce yourself and share your background in the tourism sector, largely your adventure tourism activities at Pokhara?**

I am a hospitality background, I transitioned into adventure tourism, I ran a skydiving operation.

**Q2) When did you start your adventure tourism activities and what inspired you to enter this sector?**

In 2013, I started my own trekking agency because I wanted to show the international traveler Nepal's beauty.

**Q3) How do you currently promote your adventure tourism services?**

We have attended international travel expos to sell our services.

**Q4) What digital marketing strategies do you currently use to promote adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

Since we have digital platforms for booking, we offer limited time discounts.

**Q5) How do you measure the effectiveness of your digital marketing efforts in engaging and attracting tourists?**

Online channels are proving successful as a method of customer inquiries.

**Q6) What challenges do you face in utilizing digital platforms for marketing adventure tourism?**

Digital marketing campaigns are hard to create because of limited expertise in this field.

**Q7) Could you share any instances where the clients have voiced complaints or expressed disappointment?**

The overbooking happened due to lack of real time availability updates on the website.

**Q8) How do you ensure that digital marketing content you create relates with the expectations and preferences of adventure tourists?**

What we also promote is authentic customer testimonials on our website and social media.

**Q9) What recommendations would you suggest to enhance digital marketing strategies for better promotion of adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

In the case of adventure tourism websites, there is a lack of detailed information.

*Respondent 6*

**Q1) Can you introduce yourself and share your background in the tourism sector, largely your adventure tourism activities at Pokhara?**

I am an adventure tourism agency offering mountain biking tours around and in Pokhara.

**Q2) When did you start your adventure tourism activities and what inspired you to enter this sector?**

After noticing that there was a gap in digital marketing promotion for adventure tour packages, I started to offer them in 2018.

**Q3)  How do you currently promote your adventure tourism services?**

We utilize the best methods to use influencer marketing as well as promote our travel bloggers in order reach a global audience.

**Q4) What digital marketing strategies do you currently use to promote adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

Working with influencers are another way of reaching younger travelers.

**Q5) How do you measure the effectiveness of your digital marketing efforts in engaging and attracting tourists?**

Customer review and rating on travel platform is a kind of customer engagement.

**Q6) What challenges do you face in utilizing digital platforms for marketing adventure tourism?**

Tourists have a bad reputation of being distrustful of fraudulent travel agencies.

**Q7) Could you share any instances where the clients have voiced complaints or expressed disappointment?**

Sometimes clients complain about the lack of detailed itinerary information.

**Q8) How do you ensure that digital marketing content you create relates with the expectations and preferences of adventure tourists?**

Videos that are live and behind-the-scenes create trust with potential tourists.

**Q9) What recommendations would you suggest to enhance digital marketing strategies for better promotion of adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

Building credibility can be done by engaging with online travel communities.

*__Respondent 7__*

**Q1) Can you introduce yourself and share your background in the tourism sector, largely your adventure tourism activities at Pokhara?**

For more than 15 years I have been in the adventure tourism sector, but my specialty is rock climbing expeditions.

**Q2) When did you start your adventure tourism activities and what inspired you to enter this sector?**

After noticing that there was a gap in digital marketing promotion for adventure tour packages, I started to offer them in 2018.

**Q3)  How do you currently promote your adventure tourism services?**

For this reason, we distribute brochures and pamphlets in local tourist hot spots.

**Q4) What digital marketing strategies do you currently use to promote adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

Potential customers are informed of our offers through email newsletters.

**Q5) How do you measure the effectiveness of your digital marketing efforts in engaging and attracting tourists?**

We evaluate how many leads come from the paid advertising we do.

**Q6) What challenges do you face in utilizing digital platforms for marketing adventure tourism?**

The visibility on social media is constantly changing depending on the social media algorithms.

**Q7) Could you share any instances where the clients have voiced complaints or expressed disappointment?**

There have been issues with refund policies that have also led to dissatisfaction.

**Q8) How do you ensure that digital marketing content you create relates with the expectations and preferences of adventure tourists?**

For the feedback of digital content, we conduct surveys.

**Q9) What recommendations would you suggest to enhance digital marketing strategies for better promotion of adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

Personalized marketing campaigns will more interest customers.

*Respondent 8*

**Q1) Can you introduce yourself and share your background in the tourism sector, largely your adventure tourism activities at Pokhara?**

Paragliding, ultra-light flights, hiking are the few examples of the services my company offers to the people and that is customized adventure experiences.

**Q2) When did you start your adventure tourism activities and what inspired you to enter this sector?**

It was in 2014 that I went from hotel management to adventure tourism, driven by my love for the mountains.

**Q3) How do you currently promote your adventure tourism services?**

Google Ads and SEO optimization helps us get to rank higher online searches.

**Q4) What digital marketing strategies do you currently use to promote adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

WhatsApp and Messenger marketing are used to communicate with customers.

**Q5) How do you measure the effectiveness of your digital marketing efforts in engaging and attracting tourists?**

We measure engagement via email open rates and click through rates.

**Q6) What challenges do you face in utilizing digital platforms for marketing adventure tourism?**

Multilingual digital content is needed for attracting international tourists.

**Q7) Could you share any instances where the clients have voiced complaints or expressed disappointment?**

Unrealistic expectations were based on poor quality digital content.

**Q8) How do you ensure that digital marketing content you create relates with the expectations and preferences of adventure tourists?**

The main reason that our content is relevant is that we collaborate with adventure influencers.

**Q9) What recommendations would you suggest to enhance digital marketing strategies for better promotion of adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

The enhanced use of user generated content can make the authenticity of content more robust.

## *Respondent 9*

**Q1) Can you introduce yourself and share your background in the tourism sector, largely your adventure tourism activities at Pokhara?**

I work in sustainable adventure tourism, in ensuring that the trekking or camping trips are eco-friendly.

**Q2) When did you start your adventure tourism activities and what inspired you to enter this sector?**

After training in Europe and bringing such expertise back to Nepal, I started my paragliding business in 2011.

**Q3)   How do you currently promote your adventure tourism services?**

The online travel agencies like TripAdvisor and Booking.com work with us.

**Q4) What digital marketing strategies do you currently use to promote adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

Retargeting ads are the ones that remind the website visitors to book their adventure experiences.

**Q5) How do you measure the effectiveness of your digital marketing efforts in engaging and attracting tourists?**

It also helps us to monitor competitor performance.

**Q6) What challenges do you face in utilizing digital platforms for marketing adventure tourism?**

There are many tourists will choose offline methods for booking.

**Q7) Could you share any instances where the clients have voiced complaints or expressed disappointment?**

There has been an issue of inconsistent customer service in online communications.

**Q8) How do you ensure that digital marketing content you create relates with the expectations and preferences of adventure tourists?**

We are  presentin real time experiences to our travelers through Instagram stories.

**Q9) What recommendations would you suggest enhancing digital marketing strategies for better promotion of adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

As far as collaborations are concerned, more are needed with international travel influencers.

## *Respondent 10*

**Q1) Can you introduce yourself and share your background in the tourism sector, largely your adventure tourism activities at Pokhara?**

I specialize in leading high altitude adventure experience such as Everest Base Camp trek.

**Q2) When did you start your adventure tourism activities and what inspired you to enter this sector?**

In 2016 I started the rafting company with the aim of getting adrenaline seeking tourists visiting Pokhara.

**Q3)   How do you currently promote your adventure tourism services?**

Through email marketing we contact our past clients and give them discounts to come back.

**Q4) What digital marketing strategies do you currently use to promote adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

Impression and engagement on social media bring in more high-quality video content.

**Q5) How do you measure the effectiveness of your digital marketing efforts in engaging and attracting tourists?**

Insights about the effectiveness of digital marketing come from surveying the customers.

**Q6) What challenges do you face in utilizing digital platforms for marketing adventure tourism?**

Fake accounts and spam messaged on social media encourage less engagement.

**Q7) Could you share any instances where the clients have voiced complaints or expressed disappointment?**

Instant confirmations are expected by tourists, whereas delays are inconvenient for them.

**Q8) How do you ensure that digital marketing content you create relates with the expectations and preferences of adventure tourists?**

Content can be continuously A/B tested to refine our marketing strategies.

**Q9) What recommendations would you suggest enhancing digital marketing strategies for better promotion of adventure tourism in Pokhara?**

> Augmented reality (AR) has a great potential to be used in the marketing of adventure tourism businesses.

## Appendix 3: Personal Reflection

This reflection gives the overall picture of my period from starting the thesis writing till the findings and completion of the report on digital marketing usage on adventure tourism. I was confused with the selection of topics and had to take advice and discuss on how I can collect data still being far from the place I wanted to conduct research on. I also wanted the data which would be fresh and after covid visitors, which was only possible after going on site so that I can find new visitors instead of posting in some random groups. Since the tickets to Nepal was expensive and due to lack of time and resources, I took some help from my personal connection who is a national rugby player and has close ties with adventure tourist and tourism sector because he spends months in Pokhara during his matches and has craze on adventure activities. He helped me with data collection from on site and Nepal is a place where the emails are not checked often due to which I decided to call them directly and ask if they can give me interviews for my research most of them agreed and some said they do not have time. However, even more than 20 business were called during that time, and I was able to manage with 10 business operators.

This topic interested me most because I had my visit to Pokhara, where I visited with my family. We did lots of adventures and paid for videos which were nicely made but edited without any agreement. As well as never asking us to use our content for their promotion if they had asked, we would have happily shared the content which could benefit them without any cost. This made me think they are lacking digital exposure and missing opportunities as such. So, I wanted to examine if digital marking is playing an important role in promoting adventure tourism and what strategies are being applied. As well as what are the demands of tourists and what are the suppliers providing for those travelers who want to know Pokhara or any such destination through digital media.

My expectations before starting the research were different than the findings. Like, I was surprised that the ads and travel agents which I thought were playing a vital and crucial role were ineffective but the demand of change to digital was huge. I also believed the data collected would lead me to the research, however due to lack of data collected in adventure tourism in past was not detailed, relevant and enough to conduct the research which changed my methodological choices.

## Appendix 4: Reflection on use of Generative AI

During the process of this thesis writing, there has been minimum use of generative AI tolls like Chat GPT and copilot which support my writing for clarity and correction. I also use the grammar and spelling checker from the Microsoft already existing checker so that I have clear, understandable and readable minor improvements. All the references are cited carefully and with the help of generative AI, and I assure you that nothing is directly copied without complex editing and verifications. I am in knowledge about the ethical consideration that the AI tools need to be used to assist instead of replacing my knowledge, writing and thinking capabilities.