

Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Mamta Sandip Solanki (Registration Number: 2090174), PhD Scholar at the School of Business and Management, Department of Tourism Management, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Friday, 14 March 2025 at 2.00 PM in the Seminar Hall, Academic Block, Bangalore Bannerghatta Road Campus, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560076, Karnataka, India.

Title of the Thesis : **Evaluating the Influence of Social Media Marketing of State Tourism Departments on Destination Image through Social Media Analytics**

Discipline : **Tourism**

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The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva-voce examination.

Place: Bengaluru



Registrar (Academics)

Date: 03 March 2025

ABSTRACT

The introduction of information technology and, subsequently, the internet gave the tourism industry a much-needed boost for its overall development. The internet became a bridge for marketers to connect to their potential customers. The marketers shifted their focus from the traditional marketing tools to digital marketing. Recently, the popularity of social media has increased immensely in terms of communication, social connections, and news sharing. More and more players are shifting to digital platforms for a good market share in this vast industry. The information shared on these platforms is responsible for building the destination image. Hence, there is a need to study the 'Social Media Marketing' of regional tourism departments and its influence on tourist destination image (TDI). The literature review suggests a lack of studies on India's destination image on the popular social media platforms of Indian DMOs. This study investigates the social media marketing of 29 regional tourism departments, which include 28 Indian states and one union territory. The study also formulates an effective social media marketing theory and practice for building destination image. Destination Image is defined as not only the perceptions of individual destination attributes but also the holistic impression made by the destination. (Echtner, C. M., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (1993)). It is primarily divided into Cognitive, Affective and Conative/Behavioural components. The AIDAT (an abbreviation for Attention, Interest, Desire, Action and Tell) model is adopted to study the 12 months' data of 29 Indian DMOs Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) public pages with the help of social media analytical tools (NodeXL, Massdownloader.com, Exportcomments.com, Orange data mining software and Python).

FB page engagement metrics provides data of the follower's/users interaction on social media posts of the DMOs. For this purpose, the Exportcomments.com paid version is used. Next, to identify the main determinants of social media for destination image building, image analysis is carried out with the help of Massdownloader.com (a Google extension for Instagram). All the images uploaded on the Instagram pages of 29 DMOs' over the course of 12 months were downloaded and categorized under 13 categories of cognitive and four categories of affective components. For the text analysis, the most frequently used word, Twitter account, of 29 DMOs' public pages is analysed through NodeXL student license. With the help of Twitter API, the related data for the 12-month time period was downloaded. The next step was to use the built-in application NodeXL to find the frequently used words and the top hashtags in the network. It also provided scores of various centrality measures. Finally, with the help of Python software, the clusters were identified.

Keywords: *Social Media, Destination Marketing Organization, Destination Image, Tourism, Social Media Analytics*

Publications:

1. **Solanki, M. S., & Thomas, J.** A Mixed Method Approach of Quantitative and Qualitative Design in Analyzing the Trends of the Global Tourism Industry. *Pacific Business Review (International)*, 16(6), 145–157. <http://www.pbr.co.in/2023/December13.aspx>
2. **Solanki, M. S., & Thomas, J.** Evaluation of Social Media Marketing Literature in the Tourism Industry Using PRISMA. *Journal of Creative Communications*, November 2023, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09732586231202610>

Patent:

1. A Framework to Categorize Destination Images-Tailored for Social Media Platforms, Application No. 202441094961 A, 13/12/2024