



Article

A Systematic Literature Review Analysing Digital Marketing Strategies in Tourism Development

Bunyod Matyusupov*¹

1. Economics department, Urgench State University

* Correspondence: bunyod.m@urdu.uz

Abstract: This study aims to conduct a systematic literature analysis on tourism and hospitality, focusing on utilising digital marketing strategies to promote and develop tourism destinations. Scopus database (2016-2024) was used to search for articles and the analysis was performed using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. 32 publications (articles, review articles and book chapters) were selected for the final analysis based on the relevant criteria. The results showed that due to the increased attention to digital marketing strategies in tourism in recent years, the number of publications related to this field has an increasing trend. Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing was found to be the most influential journal in the field with 134 citations. This study provides valuable insights related to this field for future research. In particular, the use of email marketing, social media marketing, search engine optimization and influencer marketing is gaining importance. In addition, it is emphasized that the effective use of video content, storytelling and personalization plays an important role in the development of the field.

Keywords: Digital Marketing Strategies, Tourism, Hospitality, Instagram, Social Media

1. Introduction

While traditional marketing plays a key role in the initial stages of establishing relationships between businesses and consumers, digital marketing is effective in driving action and promotion. Therefore, the core content of Marketing 4.0 is the marketing process that combines online and offline practices to attract customers and develop relationships with them. Marketing functions include market research, market planning, sales, exchange, product design and planning, physiological distribution, standardization and evaluation, financing, risk prevention, packaging and branding, and customer support to identify consumer needs (Abdullayev, 2020).

In recent years, significant trends related to digital technologies have been observed in the marketing field. Due to the development of artificial intelligence technologies, changes have occurred in the marketing strategies of companies, which are becoming increasingly important in creating personalized user experiences for customers. Additionally, the increasing amount of content created by employees and customers on social media platforms is enabling companies to strengthen their relationships with their customers (Digital Marketing Institute, 2025; Klochko et al., 2024; Batashev et al., 2023; Carballo-Penela et al., 2023). In addition, the use of voice search, SoLoMo and SoCoMo (mainly video content and mobile advertising) strategies is enabling companies to effectively communicate with their customers. In particular, the use of voice search is

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increasing and this trend is expected to continue (Bansal, 2024). In turn, video content and online advertising are effective tools for companies to attract customers and provide information about products to customers (Alghizzawi et al., 2024; Ketter & Avraham, 2021).

Nowadays, several popular platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube) have become an integral part of everyday life for many users, including tourists. These platforms serve as an important source of reliable and interesting information about a tourist destination, especially when planning a trip. Social media helps tourists not only plan their trip but also share their experiences during and after the trip. In 2024, 67 percent of tourists primarily searched information from social media when planning their trips. Interestingly, more than half of tourists change their travel plans due to social media, and Instagram is the most used social media platform with a share of 45 percent (Chakraborty, 2024).

All types of technologies and online platforms (such as social media, mobile applications, etc.) that tourists use to obtain the most important information at all stages of the trip (e.g., before, during, and after the trip) are called smart tourism technologies. They have five attributes: informativeness, interactivity, accessibility, personalization, and security (Zhang et al., 2022). These attributes are important for the effective use of technology, identifying the needs of tourists through them, maintaining constant communication with them, offering remote services, and providing personalized information in a 24/7 manner (Ibodullayev et al., 2025).

Therefore, this systematic literature review is conducted to comprehensively examine recent research topics in the field of tourism marketing, their achievements, research gaps, and future research opportunities. Also, this paper discusses some of the challenges that hotel and destination marketing managers may encounter. A Scopus search is conducted using the keywords "digital marketing strategies", "tourism" and "hospitality" to assess and review the literature relevant to the objectives of this study. The study aims to identify gaps in current research and directions for future research by analysing publications on the use of digital marketing strategies in tourism development.

In order to achieve this, five research questions were developed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the existing scientific research in the field under analysis: (1) what is the annual growth rate of scientific publications in this field? (2) what scientific journals have published papers on digital marketing strategies in the context of tourism? (3) which scholars and publications are most actively contributing to research in this field? (4) what is the analysis of the most common keywords related to the field under study? (5) what are the future research directions in this field?

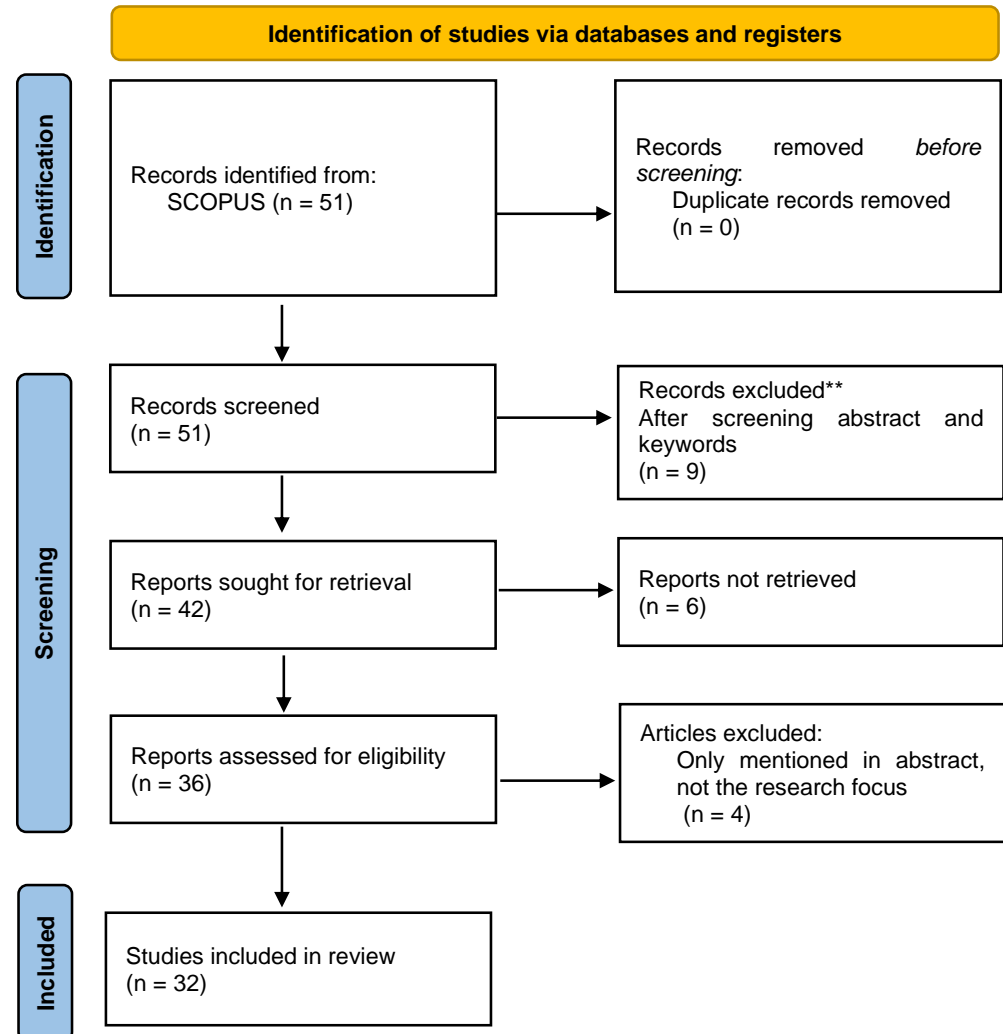
This study aims to analyse the ways of using digital marketing strategies in tourism development. To achieve this goal, this study used the systematic literature review methodology.

In reviewing the relevant literature, the introduction of the article uses literature related to this study and supports its results. The second chapter explains the methodology used to select the literature and obtain the results. The third chapter describes the results obtained during this study. The next chapter, the discussion, summarizes and explores the results obtained to identify future research directions related to the research objectives.

2. Materials and Methods

The study begins by searching the Scopus database for documents up to 2025. The reason for choosing Scopus is that it is the largest database of publications covering a wide range of topics, including books, articles, and conference proceedings (Salisbury, 2009). It is also used by many researchers to conduct their research, especially when writing systematic literature reviews (Schimperna et al., 2021; Park and Jeong, 2019).

The following query was applied to the title, abstract, and keywords: “(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("digital marketing strateg*") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (tourism OR hospitality)) AND PUBYEAR > 2013 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "BUSI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "SOCI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "ECON")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ch") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "re")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE , "final")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English"))”.



Source: author's development.

Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram.

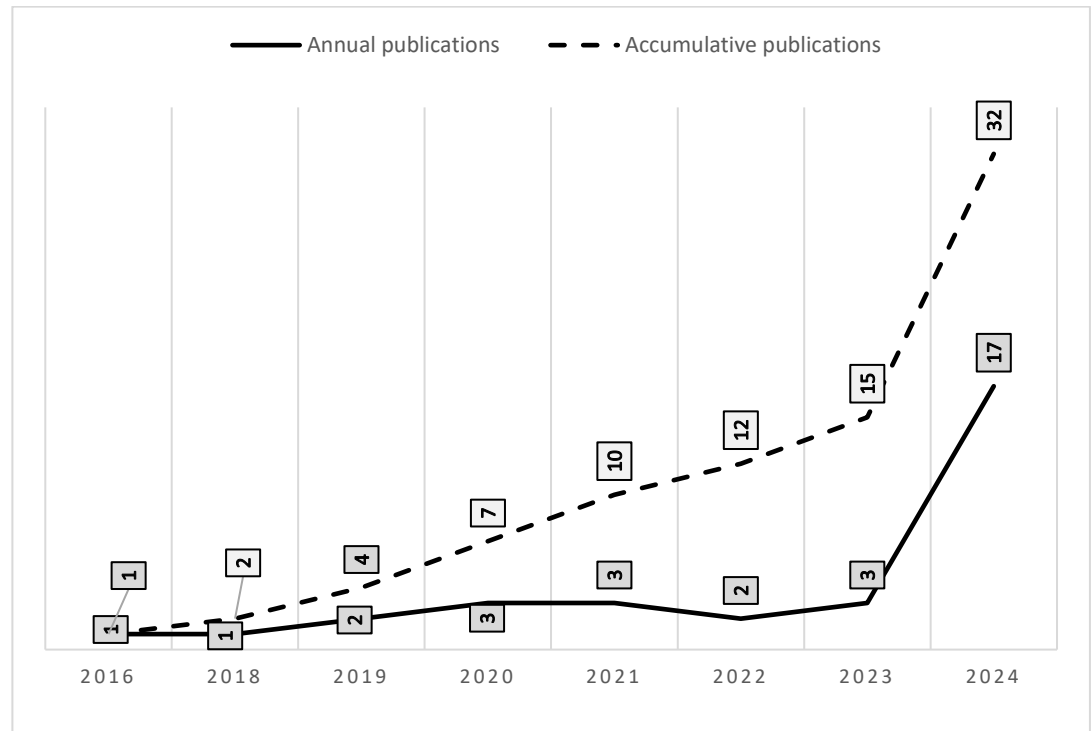
The study used some filters in the search and selection process. In particular, since 2025 was not yet over, only documents published by the end of 2024 were accepted. Also, in terms of fields, only documents related to “Business, Management and Accounting”, “Economics, Econometrics and Finance” and “Social Sciences” were selected. Only articles, review articles and book chapters were selected by document type. In terms of the publication stage, only the final stage was selected. As for the language filter, only documents published in English were selected. Through this process, 51 documents in English were identified, all published between 2016 and 2024.

Since the search was conducted within only one database (Scopus), no duplicate articles were found and all 51 documents were considered in the screening process. After abstract and keyword screening, 9 documents were found to be irrelevant to this study and were excluded from the analysis. After that, 6 documents were excluded from the analysis because they could not be retrieved. As a result, 36 documents were screened

during the eligibility process and 4 documents were found to be ineligible and were excluded from the analysis. This is because the keywords used in the search process were not considered in the main focus of the study, although they were used in the abstract and keywords. After these processes, 32 documents were accepted for the final analysis. Figure 1 shows the process of selecting relevant documents in the PRISMA flow diagram.

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the analysis that help answer each research question.



Source: author's development.

Figure 2. The annual and accumulative publications between 2016 and 2024.

The total number of published articles on the use of digital marketing strategies in tourism, as shown in Figure 2, has a general growth trend between 2016 and 2024. It is worth noting that while the total number of published articles between 2016 and 2023 was 15, in 2024 alone this figure more than doubled to 32. This result answers RQ1 and indicates that this field has been attracting more attention from scholars in recent years.

Table 1. List of most cited publications (with more than 10 citations).

Authors	Topic	Published Year	Journal	Total citations
Ketter E.; Avraham E.	#StayHome today so we can #TravelTomorrow: tourism destinations' digital marketing strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic	2021	Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing	134
Kapoor P.S.; Balaji M.S.; Jiang	Effectiveness of Travel Social Media Influencers: A Case of Eco-Friendly Hotels	2022	Journal of Travel Research	100

Y.; Jebarajakirthy C.				
Deb S.K.; Nafi S.M.; Valeri M.	Promoting tourism business through digital marketing in the new normal era: a sustainable approach	2024	European Journal of Innovation Management	73
Sakas D.P.; Reklitis D.P.; Terzi M.C.; Vassilakis C.	Multichannel Digital Marketing Optimizations through Big Data Analytics in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry	2022	Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research	30
Alghizzawi M.; Alzghoul A.; Alhanatleh H.; Omeish F.; Abdrabbo T.; Ezmigna I.	Short video marketing and consumer engagement: Mediation effect of social sharing	2024	International Journal of Data and Network Science	22
Nuseir M.T.; Aljumah A.	Digital marketing adoption influenced by relative advantage and competitive industry: A UAE tourism case study	2020	International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change	22
Damnjanović V.; Lončarić D.; Dlačić J.	Teaching case study: Digital marketing strategy of Accor Hotels: Shaping the future of hospitality	2020	Tourism and Hospitality Management	18
McTeigue C.; Sanchez C.; Santos E.; Walter C.E.; Au-Yong-oliveira M.	A strategy for tourism growth, rebound, and revival: Promoting Portugal as a destination post-covid-19	2021	Sustainability (Switzerland)	12
Thach L.; Cogan-Marie L.	Wine tourism in Burgundy, France: An analysis of marketing practices	2018	Tourism Review International	12

Source: own elaboration.

Since the number of citations represents the influence of an article and the journals in which it is published on the field, the higher the number of citations, the stronger its impact (Alsharif et al., 2024). From this point of view, "Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing" is the most influential journal, while the article titled "#StayHome today so we can #TravelTomorrow: tourism destinations' digital marketing strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic" by Ketter and Avraham (2021), is the most influential publication with 134 citations in the list of most cited publications (with more than 10 citations) which are represented in Table 1. The article "Effectiveness of Travel Social Media Influencers: A Case of Eco-Friendly Hotels" published by Kapoor et al. (2022) in "Journal of Travel Research" (100 citations) ranked second. The article "Promoting tourism Business through digital marketing in the new normal era: a sustainable approach" by Deb et al. (2024) published in "European Journal of Innovation Management" continued this list with 73 citations. The total number of citations to the articles listed in Table 1 is 423, of which 307

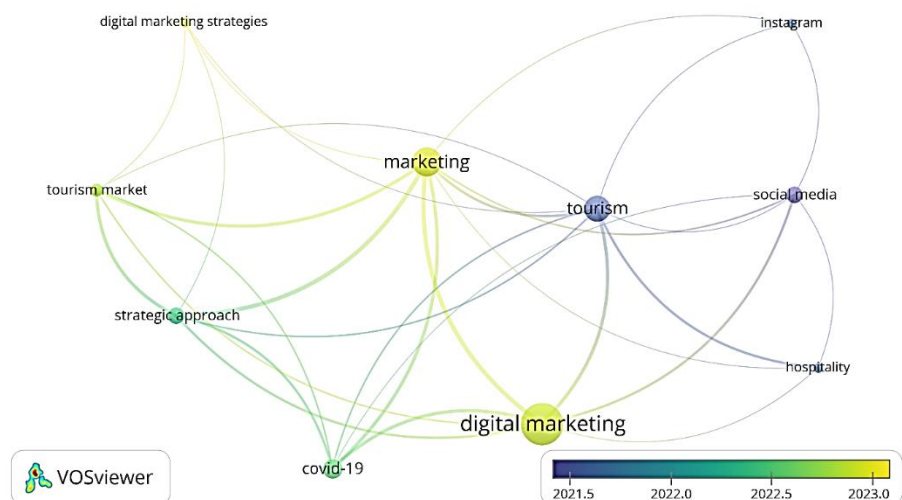
(72.6%) correspond to the top 3 articles. This result shows that these articles and the journals in which they were published had a strong impact on the field.

Table 2. List of most cited journals (with more than 10 citations).

Journal	Citations	Total publications	In particular	
			Article	Review
Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing	134	1	1	0
Journal of Travel Research	100	1	1	0
European Journal of Innovation Management	73	1	1	0
Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research	30	1	1	0
International Journal of Data and Network Science	22	1	1	0
International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change	22	1	1	0
Tourism and Hospitality Management	18	1	1	0
Sustainability (Switzerland)	12	2	2	0
Tourism Review International	12	1	1	0
International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning	11	2	1	1

Source: own elaboration.

According to Table 2, journals with one publication such as “Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing”, “Journal of Travel Research” and “European Journal of Innovation Management” are ranked highest in the list by having the most citations while other journals with two publications are ranked 8th and 10th (“Sustainability (Switzerland)” and “International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning” respectively). Therefore, it can be said that a large number of publications does not necessarily indicate that a journal will have many citations. By clarifying the most cited articles and journals, these results answer RQ2 and RQ3.



Source: own elaboration.

Figure 3. Snapshot of keywords (≥ 3 occurrences).

This study seeks to answer RQ4 by comprehensively analysing the co-occurrence of keywords in selected studies using VOS viewer software (version 1.6.20). As for explaining the attractiveness of keywords, Figure 3 describes the keywords color-coded by publication period. Studies since before mid-2021 used concepts like "Instagram", "social media", "hospitality", or "tourism" (dark purple). The colour gradient towards blue visually illustrates the gradual rise in popularity of "strategic approach" and "covid-19" in research between 2021 (blue) and 2022 (emerald). Continuing along the timeline, by mid-2022 (green), the use of the topic "tourism market" increased. Starting in 2023 (yellow), publications began to focus more on issues related to "digital marketing", "marketing" and "digital marketing strategies".

Table 3. Top 10 keywords (≥ 3 occurrences).

Keyword	Occurrences	Total link strength
Marketing	9	26
Digital marketing	13	22
Strategic approach	5	18
Tourism	8	18
Covid-19	6	16
Tourism market	4	14
Social media	5	9
Hospitality	3	6
Digital marketing strategies	3	4
Instagram	3	3

Source: own elaboration.

The higher the keyword frequency, the stronger the relationship between the keyword pairs (Alsharif et al. 2024). According to the co-occurrence analysis shown in Fig. 3 using VOSviewer, the minimum number of keyword co-occurrences was set to 3, and 10 out of 175 keywords fell within this range. This methodology is valuable in highlighting the main conclusions of this study and assessing thematic trends in the use of digital marketing strategies in tourism. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 3, where the 10 keywords that met the included criteria are depicted in terms of their total link strength and their co-occurrence rates are indicated. Specifically, in this table, "marketing" is at the top with a total link strength of 26 and appears 9 times. This list continues with "digital marketing" with 13 times occurrences and its total link strength is 22. Also, the keywords "strategic approach" and "tourism" with the same total link strength (18) are next with 5 and 8 occurrences respectively. Keywords such as "hospitality", "digital marketing strategies" and "Instagram" with the same occurrences (3 occurrences) are at the bottom of this list with different total link strengths (6, 4 and 3 respectively).

Analysing the most influential articles shown in the tables above helps to identify modern digital marketing strategies and explore future research directions. The results of this study show that the use of digital marketing strategies in tourism development has increased in recent years. The main focus is on further improving the use of digital marketing strategies and identifying modern strategies to promote a tourist destination to attract more tourists. For instance, since the use of voice search has increased in recent years, it is useful to take this trend into account when implementing marketing practices in the destination (Sakas et al., 2022). The importance of video content has also been proven in previous research (Alghizzawi et al., 2024; Ketter & Avraham, 2021). However, other digital marketing strategies such as email marketing (Damjanović et al., 2020; Deb et al.,

2024; Nuseir and Aljumah, 2020), influencer marketing (Kapoor et al., 2021; Sakas et al., 2022) and social media marketing (Sakas et al., 2022; Deb et al., 2024; Damnjanović et al., 2020) also contribute to improving destination marketing practices. Also, a destination website or a tourism service provider website can attract more visitors through search engine optimization which helps search engines understand the content of your website so that users can find your website and determine whether or not to visit it based on the information displayed in the search engine (Nuseir and Aljumah, 2020). Besides, some authors (Damnjanović et al., 2020; Sakas et al., 2022) consider personalization to be central to successful destination marketing. According to Sakas et al. (2022), tourism, especially in the hotel industry, can take the personalization process to a higher level by using artificial intelligence to predict tourist behaviour. Through this, hotels can offer services that are tailored to the needs of tourists, as well as improve the tourist experience and increase their satisfaction. McTeigue et al. (2021) point out that storytelling also plays an important role in attracting tourists to a destination through stories and forming their loyalty to the destination. Another important aspect is that the effective use of digital marketing strategies is significantly affected by the infrastructure conditions of the destination (Thach & Cogan-Marie, 2018) and employees with modern skills to enhance digital empowerment (Damnjanović et al., 2020; Sakas et al., 2022).

When it comes to future research directions (RQ5), each of the digital marketing strategies listed above is worth studying separately and in depth. Therefore, this work sheds light on some of the future research directions suggested in the aforementioned studies. In particular, Kapoor et al. (2022) compared attribute-value messages, which inform visitors about eco-friendly hotel sustainability initiatives such as water conservation, and simple recommendations, which are based on subjective, emotional, and general information from customers. The results show that attribute-value messages posted by a social media influencer on social media have a stronger impact on tourists' willingness to stay at eco-friendly hotels than simple recommendations posted by a social media influencer. Therefore, the authors suggest that future research examining the effects of mixed messages will help to better understand the impact of a social media influencer's encouragement. According to Sakas et al. (2022), future research should focus more on the impact of personalized advertising on examining the role of sustainability and culture in digital marketing practices. Deb et al. (2024) studied all types of tourism stakeholders in analysing the relationship between social media marketing and tourism business performance, and accordingly, future research can study them separately, whether they are large or small businesses. Alghizzawi et al. (2024) concluded that as businesses have achieved customer loyalty through strategies such as short video marketing and social sharing, future research should focus on exploring the complexity of these interactions in different contexts. Future research should investigate the comparison of wine regions worldwide by website effectiveness (Thach & Cogan-Marie, 2018).

Practical and theoretical implications

This article attempted to shed light on the ideas of digital marketing strategies in tourism development. It also helps tourism destination managers and businessmen operating in them to create successful marketing plans by identifying the latest digital marketing strategies. This, in turn, helps them to develop destination promotion, attract more tourists and increase the volume of tourism services sales. As for the theoretical implications of this work, it enriches the relevant literature by analysing the literature on the latest trending marketing strategies in the field. Its conclusions on email marketing, social media marketing, search engine optimization and influencer marketing, which have gained importance in recent years, help to identify directions for future publications in this field.

4. Conclusion

In recent years, the use of digital marketing strategies in tourism development has gained increasing attention. This study analysed 32 publications on digital marketing strategies in tourism development by searching the Scopus database. Based on the results of the analysis, the most influential publications and journals in the field were identified. According to it, "Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing" was the most influential journal, while the article "#StayHome today so we can #TravelTomorrow: tourism destinations' digital marketing strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic" by Ketter and Avraham (2021) was the most influential publication with 134 citations. As a result of the analysis of the selected publications, it was found that email marketing, social media marketing, search engine optimization and influencer marketing are gaining importance in the field. In addition, video content, storytelling and personalization of tourist services were found to be effective in implementing successful marketing practices for tourism businesses and increasing the number of loyal tourists. These help to achieve tourist satisfaction by improving tourist engagement and tourist experience. As a result, satisfied tourists become loyal to a destination. This study has some limitations, namely (1) the publication search in this study was conducted only in the Scopus database; (2) only articles published in English were accepted for the analysis. Therefore, conducting searches in other databases and analysing publications published in other languages, not only in English, may help to further improve the results of this study.

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