

## Personalised Digital Marketing Perspectives and Practices in Tourism Industry

*Dr. Bijay Prasad Kushwaha*

Assistant Professor for Management

University School of Business, Chandigarh University, Mohali, India

Contact: +91-8979882334, Email: [bijayrsm@gmail.com](mailto:bijayrsm@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

Digital marketing is becoming popular and every organisation is trying to promote their business through digital advertising platforms. The service industry is known for personalisation where services are personalised as per the requirement of customers. This ensures customer's satisfaction and helps in retaining existing customers. This paper studies the various forms of digital marketing tools that can be applied to destination services marketing in a personalised way. This study covers five digital marketing tools such as search engines, email, banner ads, social media, and online video ads. The convenience sampling techniques used to select 423 respondents from Noida city, India. The finding suggests that email, social media, and online video are more effective personalised digital marketing tools for the tourism industry. Search engine marketing is based on keyword selection therefore personalisation may be difficult. SPSS Amos 23.0 was used to analyse and interpret the empirical data

**Keywords:** *Email Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Search Engine Marketing, Personalised Digital Marketing, Display Ads.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Today, there are numerous marketing tools to reach and influence customers. All the marketing tools may not be applicable for promoting every industries however, few marketing tools may become a lifeline for a particular industry in this competitive business environment (Buhalis, 1998). The tourism industry attaches many other businesses directly or indirectly. Destination marketing is more successful if it is done based on personalisation. Rapid advancements in digital technology have created enormous opportunities for business. The tourism industry is a hard-core service sector industry where nowadays digital technologies used in sales and promotion of destination (Buhalis, 2003). Digital marketing practices have increased the count of visitors to many destinations. Digital marketing uses big data to target and personalise the context of every prospect. The cutting-edge information and communication technologies and analysis of big data from various sources and sensors can enable online marketers to more accurately segment the visitors for the destination. The personalised digital marketing strategy allows marketers to revolutionise marketing offerings based on customer's profiles and increase the profitability of all stakeholders of a tourist-destination (Dimitrios & Marie, 2015).

It is a challenging task for marketers to promote a destination due to the direct or indirect involvement of several stakeholders with a destination (Buhalis, 2000). Mostly, destination marketing is done by the state government in India. However, service-wise marketing is done by the individual business. Destination marketing covers from travel to hospitality, and seasonality to environmental problems. These factors are managed carefully to achieve marketing objectives (Evans et al. 1995; Buhalis 2000). The smartness in the marketing of destinations is required to dynamically interconnect all stakeholders through digital technology platforms to exchange tourism activities related information instantly. Smart tourism destinations are managing a centralised information system to make better marketing decisions (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015). The availability of big data provides massive information of visitors. By making optimal use of these data destination service providers can offer right and customised services to visitors in a desired manner. The personalisation of services create curiosity and motivate them to visit a tourist destination. It also helps to fulfill the prior expectations of visitors, provide them a better experience, and make them feel delighted.

The significance of this study is for tourist destination marketers, tourist industry, and government department, and officials. When we are talking about the smart destinations then a smart centralised data storage is also required to personalise services for target visitors. So far, there are numerous researches have been conducted on the marketing of tourist destinations. Their focus is more on building smart destinations, search engine (Behera, et al., 2020), accessing transportation (Kulkarni et al., 2019), social media marketing (Dwivedi et al., 2015), cultural eras (Busca & Bertrandias, 2020), SoCoMo marketing (Dimitrios & Marie, 2015). This study will focus to identify the determinants of personalised digital marketing in the tourism industry. It will also provide a framework for personalised destination marketing. This paper considers search engine marketing, email marketing, display ads, social media marketing, and video ads for personalised digital marketing framework.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Bringing smartness into destination marketing is a necessity for today. Information communication technology has come up with a facility to run personalised marketing campaign which is very useful for destination marketing. The personalisation of marketing campaigns has significantly increased the number of customers in many industries (InterContinental Hotels Group 2014). Bloom & Monk (2003) have defined personalisation as the process of designing and facilitating offerings based on individual expectations (Popescu et al., 2003). It process of gathering personal information and mapping offerings with it to best suit the preference of the customer (Yang, et al, 2005). In the service, a customer expects such service that molds to them. As a result, the service provider try to collect proper information about visitors and offer them the right service in the right way. Profiling and targeting big data is more successful and helps to offer better service (Habegger et al. 2014). The preference of hotels, meals, transports, etc. varies with customer to customer. Destination marketers

should also identify the type of devices a visitor carries (Michopoulou & Buhalis 2013). Personalisation of information helps to make decisions and choose a destination (Mahmood & Salam, 2012).

### **2.1 Search Engine Marketing**

Most of the visitor rely on internet to search for a destination and other information to plan a trip (TIA, 2008). On the other hand, tourism-related businesses have made the internet as a major communication tool for information sharing. Such service providers are available on the internet where visitors can book services in advance. They also share promotional offers to gain and retain customers (Buhalis and Law 2008; Gretzel and Fesenmaier 2000). The search engine is one of the most popular tools which connect visitors and destination service providers. Several studies have acknowledged that online traffic through search leads to a substantial number of leads generation (Prescott 2006; Hopkins 2008). The most challenging job in search engine marketing is to maintain the webpage ranking at top on search engine result pages (SERPs). The organic form of search marketing is called search engine optimisation which is unpaid, and inorganic form of search marketing is called search engine marketing which paid (Bing et al., 2010).

*H1: There is significant impact of personalised search engine marketing on personalised digital marketing*

### **2.2 Email Marketing**

Email marketing is the process of sending informational and promotional emails to target prospects. Sending personalised emails helps in creating lead generations and booking of services (Kaur, 2017). Email marketing has become a commercial tool of communication regarding promotional offers and sharing information in the tourism sector (Silvey, 2004). Email marketing is most efficient, cost-effective, and suitable for the hospitality industry (Marinova et al, 2002). DuFrene et al (2005) has cited that the email marketing is included in most digital marketing strategy for dialogue, promotions, and acquire new customers. The most challenging task of email marketing is not to spam as maximum emails get into spam (Cheng, 2004).

*H2: There is significant impact of personalised email marketing on personalised digital marketing*

### **2.3 Display Ads**

Display advertising facilitates marketers to place their banner, posters, image, etc. on display networks of service providers. It provides the opportunities to display informational and promotional context to target consumers (Aaron, 2006; Gretzel, Yuan, & Fesenmaier, 2000). It significantly impacts the selection of tourist destination and trip plan of the customer. Banner ads are paid form of advertisement however, whether a visitor clicks on display ads or not but they get to know what message an advertiser is trying to convey (Briggs and Hollis, 1997). Banner ads help to create a positive attitude toward brand and purchase intention (Bruner and Kumar 2000).

*H3: There is significant impact of personalised display marketing on personalised digital marketing*

**2.4 Social Media Marketing**

Social media is a platform where opinion, knowledge, experience, information, etc. are shared among the community of people using conventional media. It is easy to share words, images, graphics, videos, audio, etc. to many people through social media (Brake & Safko, 2009). Social media can be used to collect rich data of customers and find out interest, hobbies, preferences, like, etc. through data mining techniques such as sentiments analysis (Mehan et al., 2013). Gather rich data of customers helps to design personalised messages for homogenous customers (Sigala, 2012). By analysing their activities on social media such as posts, comments, opinions which reveal depth information about customers travel experience. After analysing these data, destination marketers can offer customised offers (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Euromonitor International, 2012).

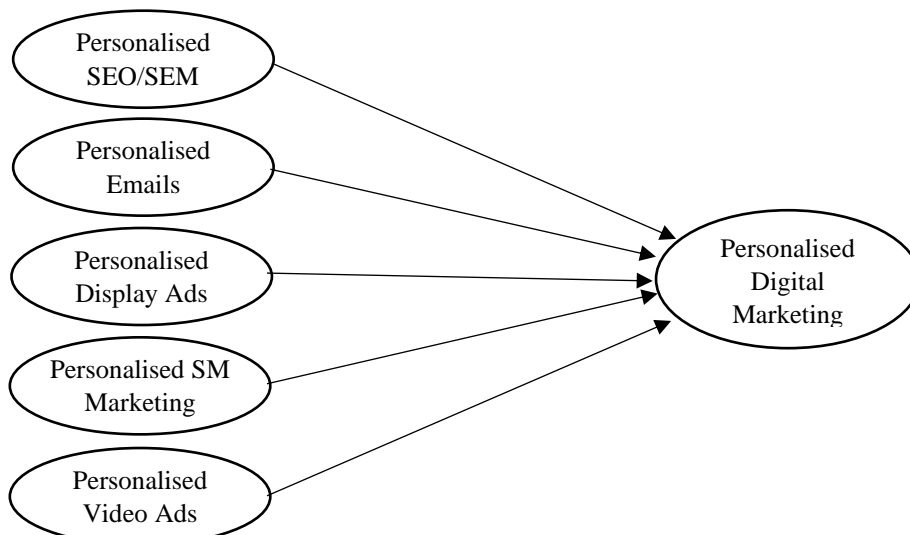
*H4: There is significant impact of personalised social media marketing on personalised digital marketing*

**2.5 Video Ads**

Video ads on online advertisements are very influential marketing tools for the tourism industry. It is the process of placing visual advertisements on digital platforms. The digital visual ads are growing on double-digit every year (IAB, 2014). The pre-roll video ads are most popular for destination marketing (Adobe, 2012). Visual ads can be placed to target prospects based on prior search (McCoy et al., 2008). Video ads helps to create brand recognition and intention towards the service. It also helps to create a positive attitude towards the tourist destination (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989). Pre-roll video ads provide an option to skip to the audience however, they don't skip because it provides a clear message to motivate them to watch and get informed about the brand offering (Campbell et al, 2017).

*H5: There is significant impact of personalised video ads on personalised digital marketing*

Figure-1: Conceptual Framework of Personalised Digital Marketing



Source: Author's Observations

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The variable under this study was identified through rigorous literature reviews. It is quantitative research where empirical data was gathered with the help of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into seven sections. The first section consists of demographic inquiry of respondents and remain six sections of inquiry are based on search engine marketing, email ads, display ads, social media marketing, and online video ads. The responses were recorded on 5 points Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The convenient sampling technique was used to choose the sample for this study. The questions were feed in Google form to nearly 2000 people, however, I received 423 sets of complete responses and consider for further analysis. The sample unit were people of Noida, Uttar Pradesh having age more than 20 years, and having knowledge of internet surfing and online bookings. The Google form was circulated through emails and WhatsApp group. All the fields of the questionnaire were properly validated to avoid response errors and unanswered questions. The empirical data was collected from January, 2020 to April, 2020.

### 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INFERENCE DRAWING

#### 4.1 Analysis of Demographic Profile of Sample

Table 1: Sample characteristics and respondents' profile (N=423)

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Student	139	32.8%	20-30	148	35.0%
Housewife	120	32.4%	31-40	169	40.0%
Salaried	137	28.4%	41-50	70	16.5%
Business	27	6.4%	50 above	36	8.5%
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Income</b>		
Male	290	68.6%	Upto ₹5 lakh	166	39.2%
Female	133	31.4%	₹5-₹8 lakh	141	33.3%
			₹8 lakh above	116	27.4%
<b>Education</b>					
High School	116	27.4%			
UG	185	43.7%			
PG	122	28.8%			

Source: Author's Calculations

The above-1 reflects the demographic analysis of samples under this study. The occupation-wise participation of respondents shows almost equal

percentage of participation of students, housewives, and salaried people whereas businessmen participation is 6.4 percent which minimum. Similarly, age-wise participation shows that the highest number of participants is of 31-40 years followed by 20-30 years. The lowest participation has come from the age-group of above 50 years. Gender-wise participation shows the highest number of male has participated. Likewise, income-wise participation shows that the highest number of participants are falling under the income group of up to ₹5 lakhs whereas the minimum participant falling under the income group of above ₹8 lakhs. The education-wise participation shows that the highest proportion of respondents have undergraduate degree however, the participants having 12 pass and post-graduation is almost equal.

#### 4.2 Analysing Reliability and Validity of Data

Table 2: Measurement Model Assessment

Latent Variables	Manifest Variables (Measured Variables)	Codes	Item Reliability Standardized Factor loading	Mean	SD
<b>Personalised SEO/SEM</b>	Keyword for searching	SEM1	0.847	3.59	1.142
	Relevancy of search	SEM2	0.869	3.70	1.246
	Ranking of Web on SERPs	SEM3	0.896	3.82	1.285
<b>Personalised Emails</b>	Promotional Emails	EML1	0.921	3.74	1.307
	Junk Emails	EML2	0.929	3.64	1.294
<b>Personalised Display Ads</b>	Text Advertising	DIS1	0.845	3.94	1.100
	Banner Ads	DIS2	0.824	3.80	1.162
	Poster Ads	DIS3	0.854	3.74	1.165
<b>Personalised SM Marketing</b>	Appropriate Ads	DIS4	0.865	3.80	1.170
	Trolled Contents	SMM1	0.837	4.02	.990
	User Generated Contents	SMM2	0.848	3.89	.932
	Audience Activities	SMM3	0.907	4.08	.958
<b>Personalised Video Ads</b>	Pre-roll Ads	VID1	0.832	4.05	.954
	In-roll Ads	VID2	0.798	4.02	.972
	Post-roll Ads	VID3	0.78	4.02	1.091

<b>Personalised Digital Marketing</b>	Personalised Promotional Offers	PDM1	0.885	3.98	1.067
	Personalised Contents	PDM2	0.873	4.01	1.060
	Personalised Services	PDM3	0.923	4.03	1.059

Source: Author's Calculations

The above table indicates standardised item outer-loading, mean and standard deviations of all items under this study. The standardised outer loading value of each item is more than 0.70 therefore, all items have been reserved. One item under personalised email marketing has been eliminated as the outer loading value was less than 0.70. Similarly, the mean values of all items are between 3.59 and 4.08, and the standard deviation values of all items under this study are between 0.932 and 1.30, which is a good indication for further analysis.

Table 3: Correlation Coefficients Matrix and Quality Criteria

	Display Ads	SEM	Emails	SM Marketing	Video Ads	Personalised DM
<b>Display Ads</b>	1					
<b>SEM</b>	0.463	1				
<b>Emails</b>	0.426	1.017	1			
<b>SM Marketing</b>	0.672	0.498	0.461	1		
<b>Video Ads</b>	0.706	0.607	0.586	0.980	1	
<b>Personalised DM</b>	0.613	0.524	0.506	0.711	0.891	1
<b>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</b>	0.718	0.758	0.856	0.747	0.646	0.799
<b>Composite Reliability (CR)</b>	0.910	0.904	0.922	0.899	0.845	0.923
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	0.8368	0.8505	0.689	0.8493	0.8069	0.8183

Source: Author's Calculations

The above table-3 denotes the correlation coefficient matrix and quality criteria results. The correlation coefficients matrix shows a moderate or good correlations between corresponding variables. However, the correlation coefficient values are not so high therefore, the chance of multicollinearity is less. Similarly, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values of each variable are more than 0.50 which indicates the mean of squared loading for all variables. It also reflects above 50% variance in its item therefore, convergent validity is proved. The shared variance of all variable are more than AVE then the discriminant validity is also proved. The Cronbach's Alpha value of each variable is more than 0.70 therefore, the internal consistency reliability is also proved.

### 4.3 Model Fit Indices

Table-4: Model Fit Indices

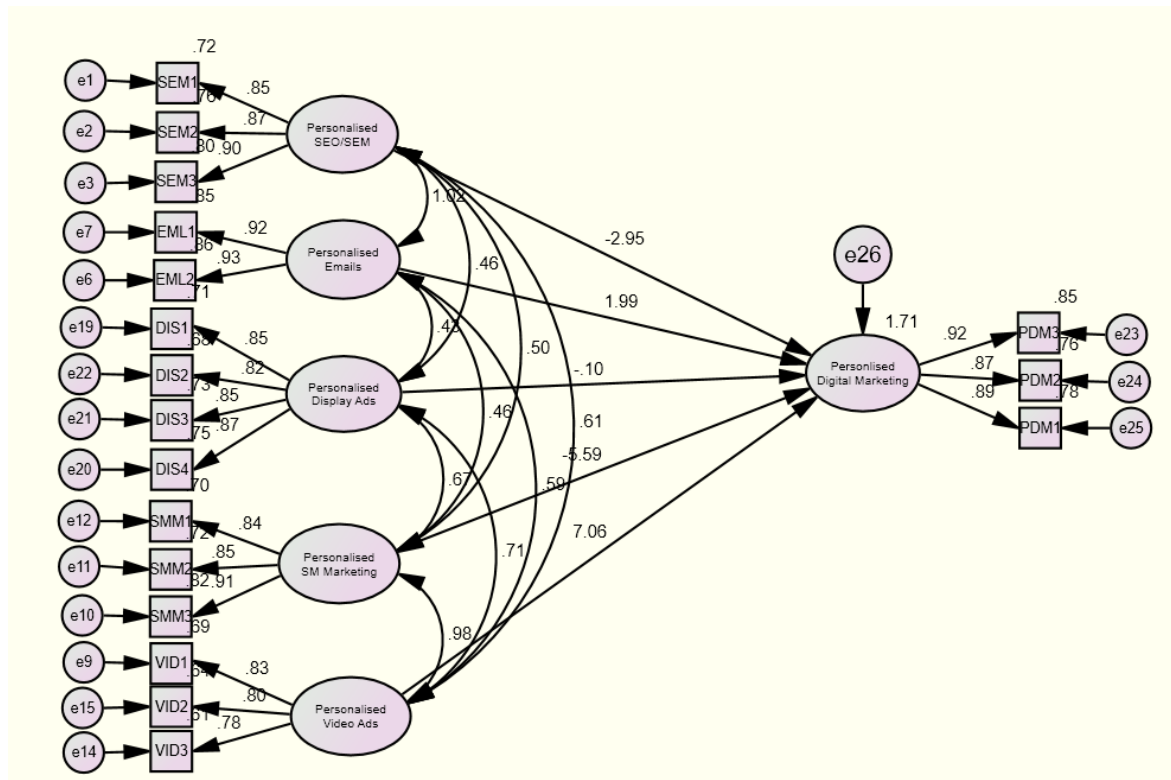
Fit Indices	Calculated Value	Threshold Range	Decision
<b>GFI</b>	0.913	>0.90	Accepted
<b>CFI</b>	0.904	>0.90	Accepted
<b>NFI</b>	0.921	>0.90	Accepted
<b>RFI</b>	0.907	>0.90	Accepted
<b>IFI</b>	0.919	>0.90	Accepted
<b>TLI</b>	0.910	>0.90	Accepted
<b>RMSEA</b>	0.101	<0.10	Accepted
<b>CMIN/df</b>	2.273	Between 2 and 5	Accepted

Source: Author’s Calculations

The above table-4 indicated the model fit indices. The data is fit for all the applicable indices therefore for it is accepted in all the grounds. The GFI, CFI, NFI, RFI, IFI, and TLI values are 0.913, 0.904, 0.921, 0.907, 0.919, and 0.910 respectively. These indices values are more than the threshold values therefore all model fit indices are accepted. Similarly, RMSEA value and CMIN/df values are 0.101 and 2.273 which are again within the threshold range. Therefore, the data is fit for model testing from all the aspects.

### 4.4 Structural Equation Model

Figure-2: Path Diagram



Source: Author’s Calculations



The above figure-2 indicates the path relationship diagram of the conceptual model. The path diagram indicates that the personalised SEM/SEO, and display ads have an inverse impact whereas, personalised emails, social media marketing, and video ads have a positive impact on personalised digital marketing in the tourism industry.

Table 5: Structural Model Assessments

Hypotheses			Beta Estimate	S.E.	t-values	Final Decision
H1	Personalised SEM/SEO	→	-2.984	2.994	0.319** *	Accepted
H2	Personalised Emails	→	0.181	0.051	0.376** *	Accepted
H3	Personalised Display Ads	→	-0.099	0.366	0.787** *	Accepted
H4	Personalised SM Marketing		0.597	6.868	0.337** *	Accepted
H5	Personalised Video Ads		7.050	8.196	0.288** *	Accepted

\*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.10

Source: Author's

Calculations

The above table-5 indicates structural model assessments and hypotheses accepted decision. All hypotheses under this study are significant and accepted. The personalised SEM/SEO, emails, display ads, social media marketing, and video ads have a significant impact on personalised digital marketing. It also reveals that there is an inverse relationship between personalised SEM/SEO and digital marketing, and Display Ads and digital marketing but the impacts are significant.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of this study is to find the various forms of digital marketing which can be applied for personalised. The personalised digital marketing outcomes are better than the general digital marketing. Search engine marketing is based on the keyword used by a person to search for a particular tourist destination and related services. However, most common keywords can use to optimise websites and conduct search engine marketing to increase indirect traffic. Personalised email marketing is an important form of marketing a destination and destination-related service as it targets to base on their history and interest. Banner ads or display ads are also an important format of digital marketing however, it is not advisable for destination marketing. But, the tourism industry can allocate a small budget for this form of advertising to have an integrated approach.

Similarly, social media marketing is also important for the advertising tourism industry. It gives good outcomes if prospects are targets based on their interest and preferences. Video ads are again an important form of digital marketing which is very soon going to replace traditional television advertisements. It plays the most important role in personalised digital marketing. Overall, we can say that instead of spending and allocating on mass marketing it is better to have targeted personalised digital marketing.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Digital marketing is becoming the backbone of the advertising industry. Every industry is allocating budget for digital marketing however they are not able to achieve their objective due to mass concentration. This study helps to identify the most important format of digital advertisement which could be better for the tourism industry. The search engine has a significant role in the planning of a tourist destination visit. It is because of a popular practice of beginning the trip plan with searching for information with the help of search engines about destination and related services (TIA, 2005, 2008). Search engine marketing is gaining a better importance for marketing of tourist services (Xiang & Pan, 2011). This study provides a new insight into the digital marketing perspectives and practices in the tourism industry. Visual ads through Google display networks, social media platforms, and YouTube provide an integrated link to the company's website. Most of the time when a target customer finds convincing advertisement then there is a high chance that they visit the website of the company and the chance of lead generation is high. So it will be very useful for destination marketers to utilise personalised digital marketing using rich media or big data.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The presence of traditional media is still in the market because of the nature of customers. There some customers who don't use digital platforms so that to target them marketers use traditional media. Cost-wise traditional media is high and do not have accountability. However, the millennium and alpha generation is hanging more on digital media so to target them marketers are using digital platforms to advertise their products. Digital marketing has become very popular because of personalisation of content. It allows us to target audience based on their interest and hobbies. Floating common messages to mass customers do not give effective outcomes but sharing customised and personalised messages to target audience results in an effective outcome. Therefore, digital media provide to personalise and target individual customer which may not be possible through traditional media. Destination service marketers make a practice of personalised marketing to increase the number of visitors.

Further, empirical study can be conducted on the same subject area in different locations in the future. Future studies can be conducted on trip advisors, booking agents, etc. as a sample unit to provide more evidence. Furthermore, future studies can be conducted by interviewing destinations service providers to have more practical outcomes.

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