

Effect of Digital Marketing Adoption on Business Performance in Selected Hospitality Firms in Kitwe: A Literature Review

Lumbwe Kaoma Constance^a ; Francis Mukosa^b

^{a,b}School of Business Studies, ZCAS University, Zambia

ABSTRACT

This literature analysis examines the influence of digital marketing implementation on the performance of certain hospitality enterprises in Kitwe, Zambia. This study utilizes peer-reviewed journal articles, dissertations, and industry reports from 2015 to 2024 to ascertain the impact of digital marketing tools, including social media, email marketing, and online booking systems, on business performance metrics such as customer satisfaction, brand visibility, and revenue growth. The review employs the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Resource-Based View (RBV) to analyze the determinants affecting the adoption and strategic use of digital platforms. Research indicates a favorable association between the adoption of digital marketing and firm success, while also identifying significant hurdles such as inadequate digital literacy, infrastructural limitations, and organizational reluctance. Recommendations encompass more empirical research, digital training initiatives, and supporting policy structures.

Article history:

Received 15 April 2025

Revised 20 April 2025

Accepted 25 July 2025

Available online 7 Oct 2025

Corresponding author email:

lumbwe@yahoo.com

KEYWORDS: *Digital Marketing, Business Performance, Hospitality, Zambia, TAM, RBV, Social Media*

Introduction and Background

Digital marketing has become a crucial instrument for improving corporate performance in several industries, including the hospitality sector, in an increasingly digitalized global economy. Search engine optimization (SEO), email marketing, social media, and mobile applications are examples of internet-based platforms and technologies that are used in digital marketing to advertise goods and services (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). These platforms give companies the ability to interact with clients directly, build rapport, and customize service, all of which increase client happiness and income.

Because of its emphasis on the needs of its clients, the hotel sector stands to gain the most from digital marketing. In addition to search engines and booking websites, social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TripAdvisor have revolutionized the way hospitality businesses advertise their offerings and engage with clients (Leung *et al.*, 2013). Businesses in the hospitality industry may increase customer engagement and loyalty by using these digital platforms to effectively manage customer reviews, launch focused advertising campaigns, and expedite reservation processes.

Numerous studies conducted worldwide have shown that the hotel industry's embrace of digital marketing is positively correlated with better company outcomes, such as expanded market reach, client retention, and profitability (Sigala, 2018). However, there is still a dearth of study in emerging countries like Zambia, although the transformative effect of digital marketing in improving performance is well accepted in established economies. Although obstacles including low digital literacy, inadequate infrastructure, and erratic internet connectivity continue to exist, the Zambian hotel industry is progressively using digital marketing tactics, especially in secondary cities like Kitwe and Livingstone (Mwila & Mweetwa, 2022).

This literature analysis seeks to examine the impact of digital marketing adoption on the performance of selected hospitality enterprises in Kitwe, Zambia. It analyses insights from several academic sources that have enhanced the comprehension of digital marketing strategies in the hotel sector.

Research Objectives

To determine the influence of Adoption of digital marketing on Hospitality Business Performance.

Research Questions

What is the relationship between Adoption of digital marketing and Hospitality Business Performance?

Literature Review

Digital marketing has transformed the way tourism businesses operate and market their products and services. With the advent of technology, businesses can now reach out to a larger audience and promote their products and services to them through various digital platforms. In this review, we will discuss the impact of digital marketing on tourism businesses and how it has changed the way they operate.

Key Concepts and Definitions

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing refers to the use of digital channels, platforms, and technologies to promote products and services. This includes social media marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), email marketing, content marketing, and online advertising (Chaffey, & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Hospitality Business Performance

Hospitality Business Performance encompasses various metrics used to evaluate the success of the hospitality business, including revenue growth, customer satisfaction, market share, and operational efficiency (Hemmington, 2007).

Literature Review Process and Justification

Various researchers have extensively reviewed the existing literature on "The Effect of Digital Marketing Adoption on Hospitality Business Performance, to gather relevant studies, multiple computerized databases have been utilized, including Google Scholar, Emerald Insight, ScienceDirect, Springer, SAGE, and ResearchGate. These databases were accessed to obtain a comprehensive range of scholarly articles and publications related to the topic. By

utilizing these resources, the researcher aimed to gather a diverse collection of literature from different sources, enabling to gain valuable insights into the relationship between digital marketing adoption and hospitality business performance specifically in the context of Kitwe, Zambia.

Perceived Usefulness in the Adoption of Digital Marketing

Islam and Kamal (2020) conducted a study on the adoption of digital marketing by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Bangladesh. They found that perceived usefulness (PU) significantly influenced the adoption of digital marketing by SMEs. The study also highlighted the importance of perceived risk and social influence in moderating the relationship between PU and adoption.

Ayozie and Eze (2017) investigated the factors that influence the adoption of digital marketing by small and medium enterprises in Nigeria. The study found that PU significantly influenced the adoption of digital marketing. The study also highlighted the importance of organizational readiness and government support in increasing PU.

A study by Shang et al. (2019) examined the relationship between perceived usefulness and the adoption of digital marketing among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in China. The study found that perceived usefulness has a significant impact on the adoption of digital marketing among SMEs. The study also found that perceived usefulness mediates the relationship between attitude towards digital marketing and the adoption of digital marketing among SMEs.

Another study by Tarhini et al. (2015) examined the relationship between perceived usefulness and the adoption of e-commerce among SMEs in Jordan. The study found that perceived usefulness has a significant impact on the adoption of e-commerce among SMEs. The study also found that the perceived ease of use of e-commerce can influence the adoption of e-commerce among SMEs.

A study by Alalwan et al. (2018) examined the impact of perceived usefulness on the intention to use digital marketing among SMEs in the United Arab Emirates. The study found that perceived usefulness has a significant impact on the intention to use digital marketing among SMEs. The study also found that the perceived ease of use of digital marketing can

influence the intention to use digital marketing among SMEs.

A study by Ahn and Kim (2018) examined the relationship between perceived usefulness and the adoption of mobile marketing among smartphone users in South Korea. The study found that perceived usefulness has a significant impact on the adoption of mobile marketing among smartphone users. The study also found that perceived ease of use and attitude towards mobile marketing can influence the adoption of mobile marketing among smartphone users.

Perceived Ease of Use on Adoption of Digital Marketing

A study by Hassan & Khan (2019) investigated the impact of perceived ease of use on the intention to adopt digital marketing in Pakistani SMEs. The findings revealed that perceived ease of use has a significant positive effect on the intention to adopt digital marketing. The study suggested that digital marketing can be perceived as easy to use and can facilitate the adoption of digital marketing by SMEs in Pakistan.

Alee and Park (2017) did a study that looked especially at Twitter usage in the hotel sector to examine the relationship between people's acceptance of social media and their assessment of how simple it is to use. The results showed that users' approval of social media platforms increases when they believe the sites are simple to use. Additionally, because of this acceptability, hospitality organizations are more likely to use digital marketing methods. The study suggested that hospitality organizations can increase the usability of social media by providing user-friendly interfaces and clear instructions.

An investigation into the value of digital channels in the context of industrial marketing communications was done by Karjaluoto et al. (2015). The outcomes showed that industrial organizations use digital marketing techniques in a way that is positively influenced by perceptions of ease of use. According to the report, providing employees with training and support would help them develop their digital skills and expertise, which will facilitate the adoption of digital marketing.

The adoption of Internet advertising by China's small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) was the subject of research done by Zhou et al. (2018). The conclusions showed that the adoption of internet advertising is positively influenced by perceived simplicity of use. This is so that the adoption process can be facilitated, and the perceived complexity associated with digital marketing is reduced when SMEs find it simple to use. According to the survey, to increase user- user-friendliness and promote wider acceptance of online advertising, digital marketing service providers should put priority on making their platforms more user-friendly and providing adequate support to their clients.

The usage of mobile applications for hotel services in South Korea was examined in a study conducted by Han & Hyun (2017). The results showed that perceived usability has a favorable impact on hotels' adoption of mobile applications because it improves the usability and accessibility of digital marketing tools. According to the report, hospitality organizations should concentrate on offering their clients user-friendly mobile applications that provide value-added services. Ab Aziz et al. (2018) researched the use of social media for business by Malaysian hotels. The results showed that perceived ease of use has a positive effect on the adoption of social media since it facilitates user interaction and customer communication.

Perceived Risk on Adoption of Digital Marketing

Pavlou (2003) argues that while perceived risk can initially deter businesses, it can also prompt proactive measures to mitigate risks, such as enhanced data security and transparency. Through a quantitative survey and structural equation modeling, Pavlou's study demonstrated how risk awareness leads to the adoption of risk-reducing strategies, ultimately fostering trust and supporting the transition to digital marketing. Similarly, Awasthi and Sangle (2012) highlighted that perceived risk encourages businesses to adopt digital marketing incrementally. Their mixed-methods study, combining surveys with interviews, showed that organizations address concerns like data privacy by adopting secure, user-friendly platforms in the initial phases of digital marketing adoption. These

measures mitigate risk while facilitating broader integration over time.

However, perceived risk is also widely recognized as a barrier to adoption, especially among SMEs. Featherman and Pavlou (2003) used a quantitative survey of 250 businesses to explore how concerns over privacy breaches, fraud, and system failures create hesitation in adopting digital marketing tools. Their findings indicated that businesses often delay or avoid adoption due to fears of reputational damage and financial losses. Clohessy, Acton, and Morgan (2019), through qualitative case studies, further emphasized how SMEs' resource limitations and organizational resistance to change exacerbate the perceived risks of digital transformation. In their study, in-depth interviews with 15 business leaders revealed that technological complexity and stakeholder resistance were major barriers to the adoption of digital marketing.

Similarly, Yang, Lee, and Zo (2017) employed experimental methods to simulate decision-making scenarios and found that businesses, particularly in high-trust industries, were less likely to adopt digital tools when the perceived risks of data breaches and technological failures were high Kurnia et al. (2019) conducted a study on the adoption of online shopping by consumers in Indonesia. They found that perceived risk negatively affected the adoption of online shopping. The study also highlighted the importance of trust and perceived usefulness in moderating the relationship between perceived risk and adoption.

An investigation by Islam and Kamal was conducted in 2020 about small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Bangladesh using digital marketing. There is evidence that perceived risk has a detrimental influence on SMEs' adoption of digital marketing. Additionally, the study underscored how important perceived utility and social influence are for determining the relationship between perceived risk and adoption.

To better understand how perceived risk affects Indian customers' adoption of mobile banking, Maity and Dass (2016) conducted a study. The findings showed that consumers' perceptions of risk significantly impede their adoption of mobile banking. The study

also discovered that perceived utility and perceived usability are important elements that may influence the adoption of mobile banking. In other words, the likelihood that customers will use mobile banking improves when they believe it to be convenient and beneficial.

In a study published in 2016, Liu and Li investigated the relationship between perceived risk and the adoption of cloud computing by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in China. The results showed that perceived risk has a large, unfavorable impact on how widely SMEs adopt cloud computing. The survey also revealed that perceived utility and perceived ease of use are elements that may influence SMEs' adoption of cloud computing. The study concludes that SMEs can use cloud computing services more frequently if the perceived risk is reduced and the perceived benefit and ease are highlighted.

Li and Wang (2016) conducted a study on the adoption of mobile payment by consumers in China. They found that perceived risk negatively affected the adoption of mobile payment. The study also highlighted the importance of trust, perceived usefulness, and social influence in moderating the relationship between perceived risk and adoption.

Bhatiasevi and Arunnakul (2019) investigated the adoption of mobile banking by consumers in Thailand. They found that perceived risk negatively influenced the adoption of mobile banking. The study also highlighted the importance of trust, perceived usefulness, and social influence in moderating the relationship between perceived risk and adoption.

Social Media Marketing on Adoption of Digital Marketing

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), through a conceptual framework analysis, argue that SMM democratizes access to digital marketing by enabling businesses to leverage platforms like Facebook and Twitter at minimal cost. This low barrier to entry, they contend, encourages firms to explore and adopt broader digital tools, particularly in competitive industries. Similarly, Tuten and Solomon (2018) used a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys and focus groups, to demonstrate that businesses often view SMM as a

gateway to more advanced strategies such as programmatic advertising and AI-driven personalization. Their findings highlight how the simplicity and immediacy of social media campaigns provide businesses with the confidence to expand their digital efforts. Supporting this, Dwivedi et al. (2021) conducted a meta-analysis of 65 studies, quantitatively showing that the real-time analytics offered by SMM boost businesses' trust in digital marketing technologies, promoting further adoption of integrated tools.

However, despite these advantages, SMM also introduces significant challenges that can hinder broader digital adoption. Constantinides (2014), using qualitative content analysis, found that while social media provides an accessible entry point, its scalability is limited for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) due to resource constraints and a lack of expertise. This restricts their ability to transition to advanced digital tools, creating a digital divide. Mariani et al. (2021) reinforced this finding through longitudinal case studies, showing that algorithmic dependency on platforms like Instagram and Facebook can stifle long-term growth. Their analysis revealed that frequent changes to platform algorithms negatively impacted visibility and engagement, discouraging businesses from adopting other digital strategies reliant on similar technologies. Harrigan et al. (2020), employing experimental designs, highlighted consumer fatigue as another limitation of SMM. Their experiments demonstrated that excessive reliance on social media campaigns led to declining customer engagement and reduced trust, undermining broader digital marketing efforts.

A study by Hsu et al. (2016) examined the impact of social media marketing on the adoption of e-commerce among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Taiwan. The study found that social media marketing has a significant positive impact on the adoption of e-commerce among SMEs. The study also found that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use can influence the adoption of e-commerce among SMEs.

Another study by Kim et al. (2016) examined the impact of social media marketing on the adoption of online sales channels by SMEs in Korea. The study

found that social media marketing has a significant positive impact on the adoption of online sales channels among SMEs. The study also found that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use can influence the adoption of online sales channels among SMEs (Sikalumbi, 2023).

A study by Zhang and Mao (2017) examined the impact of social media marketing on the adoption of mobile payment among consumers in China. The study found that social media marketing has a significant positive impact on the adoption of mobile payment among consumers. The study also found that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use can influence the adoption of mobile payment among consumers.

The adoption of online-to-offline (O2O) commerce by small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in China was examined by Chen et al. (2017) in their study to determine the impact of social media marketing. According to the research, social media marketing has a significant and advantageous impact on how O2O commerce is adopted by SMEs. The survey also found that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are important characteristics that can affect how widely SMEs adopt O2O commerce. In conclusion, the study contends that social media marketing, while highlighting the perceived benefits and simplicity of O2O commerce, might encourage broader adoption among SMEs in China.

Customer engagement served as a mediating variable in a study done by Li et al. (2019) to examine the impact of social media marketing on corporate innovation. The results showed that social media marketing had a notable favorable impact on both client involvement and business innovation. Additionally, the study found that consumer engagement somewhat mediates the link between social media marketing and corporate innovation. In conclusion, the study contends that social media marketing is essential for increasing customer interaction, which in turn fosters corporate innovation.

Using customer relationship management as a mediating variable and environmental uncertainty as a moderator, Wang et al. (2020) investigated the impact of social media marketing on company performance.

According to the research, social media marketing significantly improves customer relationship management, which in turn has a major positive impact on business performance. The study also showed that the relationship between social media marketing and customer relationship management is impacted by environmental uncertainty. In conclusion, the study contends that the degree of environmental uncertainty influences the relationship between social media marketing and the performance of businesses via improving customer relationship management.

Digital Marketing on Hospitality Business Performance

A study by Lee et al. (2015) examined the effects of digital marketing on customer satisfaction and loyalty in the Korean leisure hotel industry. The study found that digital marketing has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty, which in turn positively influences performance.

In a subsequent study, Chen and Chen (2017) looked at how Taiwanese heritage visitors' pleasure, perceived value, and behavior correlated. The study discovered that digital marketing significantly improves experience quality, perceived value, and satisfaction, which in turn improves behavioral intentions and hotel performance.

Han and Hyun's (2018) research looked at how South Korean hotels performed with online and offline social networks. According to the study, social media marketing, in particular, has a considerable beneficial effect on hotel performance by raising brand awareness, customer happiness, and loyalty.

An investigation of the impact of social media on Greece's hotel business was done by Kavoura et al. (2018). The results showed that social media platforms have a significant and advantageous role in improving hotel performance. By raising consumer engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty, this is accomplished. In conclusion, the study contends that by promoting better client connection, higher levels of consumer satisfaction, and enhanced loyalty, social media use as a component of digital marketing strategies greatly helps the performance of hotels in Greece.

A study by Yang and Lee (2020) examined the impact of hotel digital marketing on brand equity and customer loyalty in Taiwan. The study found that digital marketing has a significant positive impact on brand equity and customer loyalty, which in turn positively influences hotel performance. The study also found that brand equity partially mediates the relationship between digital marketing and customer loyalty. In a different study, Quach and Duong (2019), looked at how digital marketing affected hotel performance in Vietnam. According to the research, digital marketing, especially through online channels, has a considerable beneficial effect on hotel performance since it raises customer happiness, loyalty, and word-of-mouth advertising.

On the positive side, quantitative surveys, such as those conducted by Kim and Ko (2012), demonstrate that social media platforms enable businesses to engage customers effectively through interactive and personalized content. Their methodology involved collecting data from a large sample of hotel customers and employing structural equation modeling to analyze the relationship between social media usage and customer loyalty. Similarly, longitudinal case studies by Leung, Xue, and Bai (2015) reveal how digital marketing tools like pay-per-click advertising and email campaigns contribute to revenue growth. By tracking the implementation of these tools over time and analyzing quantitative performance metrics, their study provided robust evidence of the financial benefits of real-time analytics in optimizing marketing campaigns.

Mixed-methods approaches further enrich the understanding of digital marketing's benefits. Wang, Xiang, and Fesenmaier (2016) integrated qualitative interviews with quantitative analysis of online customer reviews to explore the effects of personalized marketing. Their findings highlight that tailored customer interactions, made possible by data-driven strategies, enhance guest experiences and foster repeat bookings. This method allowed the researchers to triangulate findings, ensuring a comprehensive view of digital marketing's effectiveness in building customer relationships.

However, the negative implications of digital marketing are equally significant, as revealed through other methodological approaches. Buhalis and

Mamalakis (2015) employed ethnographic methods to uncover the risks associated with over-reliance on digital platforms. Through in-depth interviews and observations with hospitality managers, they found that dependency on platforms like Google and Facebook renders businesses vulnerable to data breaches and algorithm changes, which can abruptly impact visibility and revenue. This qualitative approach offered nuanced insights into the operational challenges faced by managers.

Qualitative case studies, such as those conducted by Sigala (2018), highlighted the disparities in digital marketing adoption. By analyzing the strategies of both large hotel chains and smaller independent establishments, her study revealed how limited resources and expertise hinder smaller businesses from leveraging advanced digital tools. This methodology provided a detailed comparison of digital readiness and its effects on competitiveness. Lastly, experimental designs, as used by Harrigan et al. (2020), focused on consumer behavior in response to digital marketing. By conducting controlled experiments to test the effects of frequent promotional emails and advertisements, they identified consumer fatigue and diminishing trust, demonstrating the risks of over-promotion.

Theoretical Framework

The ideas that were found to bolster and develop arguments connected to the study's conceptual framework are covered in this portion of the report. The theoretical framework provides a basis for comprehending the connection between the performance of hospitality businesses and the use of digital marketing. It incorporates several ideas and theories that clarify how digital marketing tactics might affect company results in the hospitality industry, especially in Kitwe, Zambia. The Resource-Based View (RBV) by Barney (1991), the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI) by Everett (1962), the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by Ajzen (1991), and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis (1980) are the theories that have been identified to explain the research phenomenon and to synthesize the literature (Sikalumbi, 2025). The theories that underpin this study are discussed below:

Resource Based View

A strategic management theory called the Resource-Based View (RBV) highlights the significance of uncommon, precious, unique, and non-replaceable resources as major sources of a company's competitive advantage Kraaijenbrink, et al. (2010). RBV may be used in the hotel sector, especially in Kitwe, Zambia, to comprehend how digital marketing tactics and technologies are vital assets that improve company success.

Valuable Resources in Digital Marketing: Digital marketing in the hotel industry includes a range of techniques, including data analytics, email marketing campaigns, social media platforms, and search engine optimization (SEO). Because they allow firms to reach a wider audience, interact with consumers more efficiently, and customize their services depending on client preferences, these technologies are seen as significant resources. For example:

Social Media Engagement: Hospitality businesses that leverage social media can try brand awareness and foster customer loyalty by interacting directly with guests.

SEO Strategies: By optimizing their online presence through SEO, hotels and restaurants can improve their visibility on search engines, attracting more potential customers.

Data Analytics: Utilizing data analytics allows businesses to gain insights into customer behavior and preferences, enabling them to make informed decisions about marketing strategies and service offerings.

Rare Resources

A resource must be uncommon among rivals to contribute to a competitive advantage under RBV. Due to a lack of finance or expertise, many companies in Kitwe's hospitality sector might not be making full use of cutting-edge digital marketing strategies. Businesses that use these tactics can set themselves apart from rivals that just use conventional marketing techniques. Increased market share and client loyalty may result from this uniqueness.

Inimitable Resources

A lasting competitive advantage comes from resources that are hard for rivals to copy. An unmatched resource for Kitwe's hospitality enterprises may be produced by combining distinctive digital marketing techniques designed especially for regional markets, such as locally relevant content or promotions. For instance: Through individualized social media interactions, a hotel may build a strong online community and establish a distinctive brand identity that is difficult for rivals to imitate. Forming alliances with regional tourist boards or influencers may increase awareness and reputation in ways that are difficult to replicate.

Non-Substitutable Resources

Resources should not have easily accessible alternatives if they are to maintain a competitive edge over time. Regarding the use of digital marketing in the hotel industry:

Technology-enabled customer service, such as chatbots for real-time communication or smartphone applications for reservations, offers experiences that are unmatched by conventional approaches. Real-time data analysis enables companies to respond swiftly to consumer input or shifts in the market, something that older methods cannot do.

Hospitality companies in Kitwe may greatly improve their performance metrics by including cutting-edge digital marketing technologies in their resource portfolio:

Customer Attraction and Retention: Making good use of digital media promotes customer loyalty among current clients while increasing exposure and interaction with new ones.

Revenue Growth: More direct reservations and sales result from an improved web presence as opposed to depending only on third-party platforms.

Operational Efficiency: By matching services to client expectations, data-driven decision-making enhances operational procedures.

Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory offers a framework for comprehending how novel concepts and technological advancements are

disseminated and embraced within societal structures. This notion is especially pertinent when analyzing how hospitality businesses are implementing digital marketing strategies in Kitwe. Stakeholders may gain a better understanding of how digital marketing innovations might improve corporate performance by examining the elements that affect their adoption and diffusion (Lundblad, 2003).

The Key Components

The DOI theory identifies several key components that affect the diffusion process:

Innovation:

In this context, digital marketing tactics and technologies (including email marketing, social media platforms, and search engine optimization) are advances that hospitality companies may use to enhance their operations.

Communication Channels

The ways that firms exchange knowledge regarding developments in digital marketing are quite important. Within Kitwe's hotel business, these channels might include peer networks, internet forums, workshops, and industry conventions.

Social Systems

The speed and efficacy of innovation adoption are influenced by the features of the community or organization. The adoption process in Kitwe will be influenced by elements including the local way of life, the state of the economy, and the infrastructure of technology already in place.

Adopter Categories

Rogers divides adopters into five categories: laggards, innovators, early adopters, early majority, and late majority. Knowing where Kitwe's hospitality companies fit into these groups might assist in finding possible advocates for the use of digital marketing.

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), an individual's behavior is best predicted by their intentions. This is so because an individual's purpose suggests how much effort and difficulty, they are prepared to put up to carry out the activity. In general,

the more strongly a behavior is intended to be performed, the more likely its indication should be (Ajzen, 1991). According to TPB, a particular course of action has three precedents: a person's attitude, a subjective standard, and the behavior's perceived behavioral control. The degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the action in issue is first and foremost known as attitude toward the behavior; (Ajzen, 1991, 188). Second, a subjective norm is defined as "the perceived social pressure to engage in or refrain from engaging in a specific activity;" (Ajzen, 1991, 188).

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a widely used framework in psychology and social sciences that has been applied to various fields, including digital marketing. Developed by Icek Ajzen in the late 1980s, the TPB proposes that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence an individual's intention to perform a specific behavior.

In the context of digital marketing, the TPB has been used to understand consumers' behavior, including their intention to purchase a product or service online, share content on social media, or engage with digital advertising (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). By understanding the factors that influence consumers' intention to engage in digital behavior, marketers can develop more effective strategies to influence consumer behavior.

Several studies have applied the TPB to digital marketing and found that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly influence consumers' intention to engage in digital behavior. For example, a study by Park and Lee (2009) found that perceived usefulness, ease of use, and perceived enjoyment significantly influenced consumers' intention to engage in online shopping.

Moreover, studies have also shown that the TPB can be used to predict and explain consumers' behavior in digital marketing. For instance, a study by Hu and Chau (2014) found that the TPB was a reliable predictor of consumers' intention to share branded content on social media.

The TPB has been widely used in digital marketing research and has also been adopted by practitioners to

develop effective marketing strategies. By understanding the factors that influence consumers' intention to engage in digital behavior, marketers can develop more targeted and persuasive marketing messages (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

In conclusion, the Theory of Planned Behavior has been a valuable framework for understanding consumers' behavior in digital marketing. The TPB has been widely applied to various digital marketing contexts and has helped researchers and marketers better understand the factors that influence consumers' intention to engage in digital behavior.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), is a widely used framework in information systems research that has also been applied to various fields, including digital marketing. Developed by Fred Davis in the late 1980s, the TAM proposes that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are the key determinants of an individual's intention to use technology.

In the context of digital marketing, the TAM has been used to understand consumers' behavior, including their intention to use digital technologies such as mobile apps, social media, and websites (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). By understanding the factors that influence consumers' intention to use digital technologies, marketers can develop more effective strategies to influence consumer behavior.

Several studies have applied the TAM to digital marketing and found that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use significantly influence consumers' intention to use digital technologies. For example, a study by Nysveen et al. (2005) found that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use significantly influenced consumers' intention to use a mobile banking app.

Moreover, studies have also shown that the TAM can be used to predict and explain consumers' behavior in digital marketing. For instance, a study by Liu and Liang (2016) found that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use significantly influenced consumers' intention to purchase products on mobile shopping apps.

The TAM has been widely used in digital marketing research and has also been adopted by practitioners to develop effective marketing strategies. By understanding the factors that influence consumers' intention to use digital technologies, marketers can develop more user-friendly and appealing digital platforms and tools (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).

In conclusion, the Technology Acceptance Model has been a valuable framework for understanding consumers' behavior in digital marketing. The TAM has been widely applied to various digital marketing contexts and has helped researchers and marketers better understand the factors that influence consumers' intention to use digital technologies.

The Link Between Theory and Digital Marketing in Hospitality Business Performance

The connection between theoretical frameworks and the real-world implementation of digital marketing in the hotel sector is essential to comprehending how these tactics may boost company performance and create successful plans that provide better results. The Resource-Based View (RBV), the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and the Theory of Planned Behavior, are some of the marketing theories that may be used to examine this relationship. These offer a perspective through which to examine the effects of digital marketing on hospitality enterprises. Hospitality businesses may improve customer connections, maximize technology utilization, and make use of special resources for a competitive edge by incorporating theoretical viewpoints like TAM and RBV into their operations. The utilization of these ideas offers an organized method for comprehending how digital marketing affects performance indicators in the hotel industry (Vinnakota, 2017).

Factors that May Influence Adoption of Digital Marketing in Kitwe's Hospitality Sector

The adoption of digital marketing strategies may be influenced by several elements unique to Kitwe's hotel industry, such as:

Perceived Attributes of Innovation:

DOI theory states that innovation's perceived benefits have a big influence on how widely it is adopted. For example, digital marketing is more likely to be used by hospitality organizations if they believe it may boost customer interaction or improve operational efficiency.

Compatibility with Existing Values and Practices

Digital marketing's adoption in Kitwe will depend on how well it fits in with conventional corporate procedures. Companies may be more likely to adopt these advances if they perceive a clear link between digital strategy and their current customer service methods.

Trialability

Adoption may be aided by the chance to test digital marketing products on a limited basis before full deployment. For instance, before investing a lot of money, hotels may test email newsletters or social media adverts to see how well they work.

Observability

Other companies may be inspired to implement digital marketing when successful examples are evident in the community, such as local hotels seeing an increase in reservations because of successful online campaigns.

Implications for the Hospitality Business in Kitwe

Education and Training: Offering training sessions on successful digital marketing techniques may boost adoption overall and lessen apprehension among prospective users (Sikalumbi & Situmba, 2019).

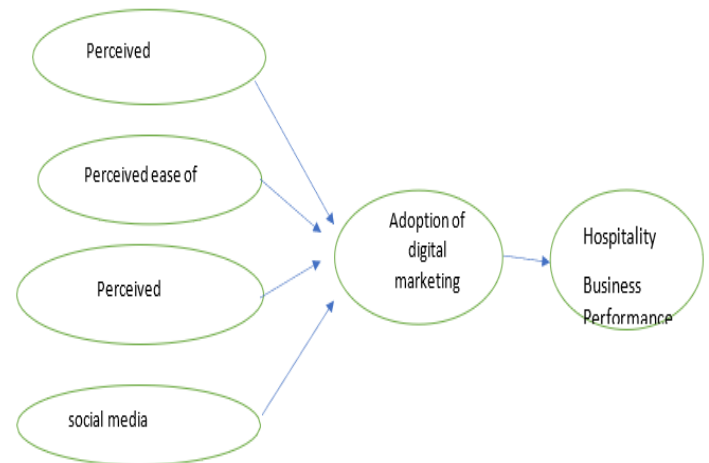
Building Networks: Collaboration between nearby companies may foster a helpful atmosphere where information about effective digital strategies is exchanged (Hamilandu & Sikalumbi, 2025).

Leveraging Local Success Stories: Showcasing case studies of nearby organizations that have effectively implemented digital marketing might provide strong inspiration for other companies thinking about using comparable strategies.

Conceptual Framework for this Study

Considering the preceding contrasts, the following conceptual model is developed to shed light on the relationships of the variables under consideration. Each of these relationships results in the development of the hypotheses in section 2.11.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Hypotheses Development

The postulated relationships that are the subject of the study are the main emphasis of this section. The study has five hypotheses that are based on the conceptual framework shown in Figure 2.1. Below is a discussion of these hypotheses, which have their roots in institutional theory and theory of planned behavior.

Perceived Usefulness Positive and Adoption of Digital Marketing

According to a study by Kavoura et al. (2018) investigating the impact of social media on the hotel industry in Greece, digital marketing, including social media, has a significant positive effect on hotel performance through enhanced customer engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty; however, organizations may face challenges in recognizing the usefulness of digital marketing (Kavoura et al., 2018). Additionally, Chen et al. (2017) found that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use influence the adoption of digital

marketing strategies, but limited resources, technical expertise, and concerns about privacy and security can hinder successful adoption (Chen et al., 2017; Kavoura et al., 2018). As a result, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

H1 Perceived usefulness has a positive influence on the Adoption of digital marketing.

2.11.2 Perceived Ease of Use and Adoption of Digital Marketing.

The study by Zhou et al. (2018) investigated the factors influencing online advertising adoption by small and medium-sized enterprises in China. The results showed that perceived ease of use has a positive effect on online advertising adoption, as it reduces the perceived complexity of digital marketing and facilitates the adoption process. The study suggested that digital marketing service providers should focus on improving the ease of use of their platforms and providing adequate support to their clients. The findings are supported by Ab Aziz et al. (2018), who investigated the adoption of social media for business purposes by Malaysian hotels. The results showed that perceived ease of use has a positive effect on the adoption of social media, as it facilitates communication and engagement with customers. Therefore, the hypothesis is developed as follows:

H2 perceived ease of use has a positive effect on the Adoption of digital marketing.

Perceived Risk and Adoption of Digital Marketing.

According to Liu and Li (2016), perceived risk negatively impacts the adoption of cloud computing among SMEs, with concerns about complexity, data security, and financial risks acting as barriers to adoption, while Maity and Dass (2016) found that perceived risk negatively influences the adoption of mobile banking, driven by concerns about security and lack of trust. Additionally, Zhou et al. (2018) emphasize that addressing perceived risks, such as complexity and data security, through user-friendly platforms and adequate support can positively impact the adoption of online advertising by SMEs (Liu & Li, 2016; Maity & Dass, 2016; Zhou et al., 2018). Based on the preceding discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H3 perceived Risk has a negative influence on the Adoption of digital marketing.

2.11.4 Social Media Marketing and Adoption of Digital Marketing.

The adoption of social media in digital marketing has both negative effects, including privacy concerns and information overload (Gupta & Kim, 2017), and positive effects, such as enhanced customer engagement, brand awareness, and satisfaction (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Mangold and Faulds, 2009), requiring organizations to address the challenges while leveraging the benefits to maximize the impact of their digital marketing efforts (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). As a result of the preceding discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H4 social media marketing has a positive influence on the Adoption of digital marketing

2.11.5 Adoption of Digital Marketing and Hospitality Business Performance.

The adoption of digital marketing in the hospitality industry has both negative and positive effects. Challenges include the potential impact on traditional marketing channels and resource allocation (Sigala, 2018; Xiang et al., 2015), while benefits encompass improved customer targeting, enhanced brand visibility, and increased customer satisfaction leading to improved business performance (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Xiang et al., 2015). As a result of the preceding discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H5 Adoption of digital marketing has a positive effect on Hospitality Business Performance

In this chapter, the theoretical foundations of the study are discussed, including the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). These theories provide frameworks for understanding consumers' behavior and intentions in digital marketing. The chapter then presents a conceptual framework that illustrates the relationships between variables such as perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, perceived risk, social media marketing, adoption of digital marketing, and hospitality business performance. Based on this framework, five hypotheses are developed, focusing on the relationships between these variables. The chapter establishes a strong foundation for the

subsequent analysis of the effect of digital marketing adoption on hospitality business performance.

Gaps in Literature

The hotel industry is becoming increasingly aware of the value of digital marketing as a tool for improving company performance, especially in developing nations like Zambia. Nevertheless, there are still important gaps in the literature that need to be filled despite the expanding corpus of research on digital marketing and how it affects small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). Within the framework of the dissertation subject about the impact of digital marketing adoption on hospitality business performance, this exposition will concentrate on these gaps.

1. Limited Contextual Studies in Emerging Markets

The absence of contextual studies that concentrate only on developing markets like Zambia is one of the main gaps in the body of extant knowledge. Many studies often focus on industrialized nations where digital marketing strategies are more well-established and extensively used. The distinct socioeconomic circumstances, cultural elements, and technology infrastructure found in Kitwe may have an impact on the efficacy and implementation of digital marketing techniques. It is essential to comprehend these local variables to create customized tactics that can improve the performance of the hotel industry.

2. Insufficient Focus on Specific Digital Marketing Tools

Although a lot of studies have been done on digital marketing in general, few studies have broken down technologies and their effects on SMEs in the hotel industry. For example, social media marketing has been recognized as a potent engagement tool, but its precise impacts, like brand impression or consumer loyalty—are frequently not thoroughly examined. Likewise, more research is necessary to fully comprehend the unique contributions of other technologies, including email marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), and online review management, to company success measures like occupancy rates or revenue growth.

3. Lack of Quantitative Data Linking Digital Marketing to Performance Metrics

Numerous studies offer qualitative insights into the ways that digital marketing affects brand recognition and customer engagement, but they are unable to quantitatively connect these efforts to quantifiable commercial consequences. Empirical studies that measure the correlation between certain digital marketing activities (such as targeted advertising campaigns) and key performance indicators (KPIs) like ROI, client acquisition expenses, or sales growth are needed. For hotel companies trying to defend their expenditures on digital marketing, this information would be priceless.

4. Underexplored Impact of Consumer Behaviour Changes Due to Digital Marketing

Another gap in the research is the speed at which consumer behavior is changing because of growing internet penetration and mobile device usage. Particularly in Kitwe's hotel sector, research must examine the impact of digital marketing on customer decision-making processes. Although they sometimes go unnoticed in previous research, elements like social media impact, online reviews, and tailored marketing messages are crucial in determining customer choices.

5. Integration Challenges with Traditional Marketing Strategies

How SMEs in the hotel industry use digital marketing with conventional marketing techniques is another area that needs focus. Many companies still mostly rely on traditional strategies like word-of-mouth recommendations and print advertising. Knowing how these two strategies might work in tandem and what obstacles can come up during this integration can help maximize the efficacy of marketing (Sikalumbi, 2022).

Conclusion

This Chapter is a literature review on the impact of digital marketing on the performance of hospitality businesses. The Chapter has outlined the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin the research, providing a comprehensive overview of how digital marketing strategies are linked to various performance metrics within the hospitality sector. Additionally, existing research gaps in the literature were identified and discussed, highlighting areas where further exploration is needed. The next Chapter is Methodology.

References

- Aziz, A., Khan, S., & Haque, I. U. (2024). Gender differences in response to digital marketing: analyzing purchase intentions and behaviors. *Market Forces*, 19(1).
- Buhalis, D., & Mamalakis, A. (2015). The role of technology in the hospitality industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(7), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-05-2014-0225>.
- Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2019). *Digital marketing*. Pearson UK.
- Clohessy, T., Acton, T., & Morgan, L. (2019). SMEs' resistance to digital transformation: A case-based analysis of perceived risks. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 57(5), 1568–1590. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12410>.
- Constantinides, E. (2014). Foundations of social media marketing. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 148, 40–57. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.023>.
- Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 319–340.
- Featherman, M. S., & Pavlou, P. A. (2003). Predicting e-services adoption: A perceived risk facets perspective. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 59(4), 451–474. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1071-5819\(03\)00111-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1071-5819(03)00111-3).
- Harrigan, P., Evers, U., Miles, M., & Daly, T. (2020). Consumer fatigue in digital marketing: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Business Research*, 111, 146–157. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.11.051>.
- Hemmington, N. (2007). From service to experience: Understanding and defining the hospitality business. *The service industries journal*, 27(6), 747–755.
- Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. (2012). Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? *Journal of Business Research*, 65(11), 1480–1487. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.11.017>.
- Kraaijenbrink, J., Spender, J. C., & Groen, A. J. (2010). The resource-based view: A review and assessment of its critiques. *Journal of Management*, 36(1), 349–372.
- Leung, X. Y., Xue, X., & Bai, B. (2015). The influence of social media on hospitality marketing: A case study approach. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 48, 113–121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2015.05.010>.
- Lundblad, J. P. (2003). A review and critique of Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory as it applies to organizations. *Organization Development Journal*, 21(4), 50.
- Mariani, M., Borghi, M., & Cappa, F. (2021). Digital marketing in hospitality: Investigating the role of algorithmic decision-making. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 45(2), 129–146. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348020903259>.
- Pavlou, P. A. (2003). Consumer acceptance of electronic commerce: Integrating trust and risk with the technology acceptance model. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 7(3), 69–103. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10864415.2003.11044275>.
- Hamilandu, K., & Sikalumbi, D. A. (2025). Influence of Social Networks on In-Service Teachers' Intentions to Start Businesses in Chongwe District of Zambia. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Project Management*, 10(3), 52–65. <https://doi.org/10.47941/jepm.3078>.
- Sikalumbi Arona Dewin, Situmba Gabriel (2019). Recruitment and Selection Practices on the Performance of ZESCO Employees in Zambia, Texila International Journal of Management, Special Edition, Dec 2019.
- Sikalumbi Arona Dewin (2022). The entrepreneurial cooperative, an economic measure to alleviate poverty in developing countries, Printgraphix Zambia, Lusaka.

- Dewin Arona Sikalumbi, Jonas Simbeye, Beatrice Chirwa. (2025) Exploring Ethical and Cultural Factors Influencing Participation in Snowball Sampling Studies. *International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science*. 3(47). doi: 10.31435/ijitss.3(47).2025.3494
- Sigala, M. (2018). Social media and customer engagement in the hospitality industry: A research agenda. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(1), 179–197. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-06-2017-0320>.
- Sikalumbi Arona Dewin, Nalumino Margaret, Phiri William, Miyanda Simabwachi (2023), Effectiveness of the Marketing Strategies in Increasing Student Enrollment in Public Universities in Zambia, 3rd ZAPPAC International Conference.
- Sikalumbi Arona Dewin (2023). Success in research, the researcher's companion, Printgraphix Zambia, Lusaka.
- Tuten, T. L., & Solomon, M. R. (2018). *Social media marketing*. Sage Publications.
- Yang, H., Lee, H., & Zo, H. (2017). User acceptance of smart home services: An extension of the technology acceptance model. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 117(1), 68–89. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMDS-01-2016-0017>.