

AN EVALUATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON BRAND AWARENESS FOR HYATT REGENCY HOTEL HARARE

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Abstract

The study was necessitated by the observation that the Zimbabwean hospitality sector particularly city hotels is confronted by a significant challenge in utilizing social media marketing to enhance brand awareness. In spite of the low growth rate in the accommodation sector and increasing importance of online platforms, the adoption of social media particularly Facebook remains limited. The study employed an explanatory research approach to assess the influence of social media marketing on brand awareness as it helps in understanding the relationships between social media marketing and brand awareness and explaining why these relationships exist. The study population comprised of managers, employees and customers of Hyatt Regency hotel who were selected using simple random and stratified sampling methods. A structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data. The study's results showed that social media marketing influences brand awareness for Hyatt Regency Hotel. More explicitly, the research discovered that social media marketing has a significant impact on prompting consumer perception of the services offered by Hyatt Regency Hotel and that social media marketing can be used to complement other marketing strategies to enhance brand awareness. The study identified that Hyatt Regency Hotel need to unceasingly monitor and manage social media platforms to ensure effective communication with customers. Based on the findings, the study recommends that Hyatt Regency Hotel should continually invest in social media marketing to enhance brand awareness and customer engagement. Future research should explore other ways in which social media marketing can be used to influence brand awareness and customer engagement for Hyatt Regency Hotel.

Keywords

Digital Marketing, Facebook, Customer Engagement, Social Media Platforms, Customer Perception

1.0 Introduction

The digital age has witnessed social media becoming an influential marketing tool in promoting brand awareness and customer engagement in businesses. The hospitality industry is no exception, as more hotels are turning to social media marketing to increase their brand awareness and attract potential customers. The purpose of this study is to appraise the effectiveness of social media marketing in promoting brand awareness for Hyatt Regency hotels. This study examines various social media platforms used by hotels which much focus on Facebook. The research findings provide insights and recommendations on how hotels can enhance social media marketing strategies to improve brand awareness and eventually increase occupancy rates.

1.1 Background of Study

For the past decade, the internet is increasingly becoming a popular tool for planned travel. Consequently, the tourism sector has undergone a significant transformation due to internet, which has compelled hospitality enterprises to broaden their existing marketing strategies. Among social networking sites, Facebook has the largest user base and is expanding rapidly in the international market, according to eMarketer reports from 2019 to 2021 (Kang and Yang, 2020). In a survey of internet users' expectations for information and customer support, Oracle (2019) found that a company's Facebook page is the most commonly mentioned tool. According to Facebook

(2020), as of 2019, more than 40,000 businesses have created Facebook pages for their companies, potentially reaching over 800 million Facebook users with their marketing initiatives. In like manner also, hotels are not only providing information and options for direct booking on their Facebook pages, but they are also utilizing the platform to boost interactions and establish connections with customers.

Fans of The New York City District Hotel's Facebook page can receive discounts of up to 25% when they make hotel reservations through Facebook. Likewise, the Beacon Hotel located in South Beach Miami utilizes the "Facebook-it" functionality, which enables users to access the hotel's website booking system directly and receive a 15% discount if they are Facebook Friends. Facebook also offers a non-threatening way for managers to monitor customer feedback, interactions, and sales opportunities, as noted by Trusov et al. (2019). According to Chan and Guillet (2021), some hotels are not making the most of Facebook's interactive potential and are instead treating it simply as another advertising channel to post promotions, without actively engaging with customers. This can include ignoring customer inquiries or failing to provide feedback, potentially leading to loss of business. Not replying to customer comments can also result in negative perceptions of the company by customers, as noted by eMarketer in 2019.

Chan and Guillet (2021) conducted a study on social media marketing in the Hong Kong hotel industry, using five criteria to evaluate hotels' social media performance: attraction, engagement, retention, learning, and relating. Some hotels had dormant Facebook pages with obsolete information, which deterred customers from revisiting the page. According to Chan and Guillet (2021), lack of interaction between hotels and customers was a common leading to customers choosing other hotels, as their inquiries were ignored.

5700 marketers were polled by Social Media Examiner to gain insight into how they utilize social media in Europe to expand and advertise their company. Findings revealed a vast majority of marketers (92%) viewed social media as a crucial aspect of their business. Among the top four social media platforms utilized by marketers, Facebook had the highest percentage (94%), followed by Twitter (68%), LinkedIn (56%), and Instagram (54%). Recent studies have focused on the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool (Sharma, 2021; Bashar et al. 2012; Divya and Regi 2014; Icha, 201). Other studies have looked into the impact of social media activities on business growth and performance. (Sengar, 2021; Paniagua and Sapena, 2014; Shabbir et al. 2021; Singh and Sinha, 2021; Grenier et al. 2014). Furthermore, some studies have examined how social media affects consumer choice, as noted by Maalouf (2024) and Bronner and Hoog (2014). These researches concluded that social media had a favorable impact on customer choice, corporate performance, and business growth.

Social media usage is increasing in Africa due to the affordability of smartphones and data. In 2020, Facebook was the leading platform with a 54.77% share of the social media market, followed by YouTube with 22.78%, Pinterest with 9.39%, Twitter with 7.47%, and 5.27% for others. Nonetheless, it is vital to note that around 600 million people in Africa still lack internet access. Several studies have extensively examined social media marketing in developed countries (Salkhordeh, 2010; Stankov et al., 2010; Armutcu, 2023). However, research on this subject in the context of developing nations is still lacking.

Zimbabwe has faced significant hurdles in the adoption and use of ICT technologies due to economic and political problems, with poor internet infrastructure and bandwidth hindering access. However, the introduction of mobile 4G internet recently has made it easier for many people to access the internet (Techzim, 2020). Moreover, the government has exempted tourism industry equipment from duty to promote growth (Karambakuwa et al., 2017). In Zimbabwe, social media has been utilized by companies regardless of size as a cost-effective means in a harsh economic environment the country is currently experiencing. The use of mobile devices and social media has made it easier to use mobile social media for marketing purposes (Rambe et al., 2017). A study on the social media landscape in Zimbabwe discovered that Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn were the most popular social networks, with about 4.2 million Facebook users as of August 2016. (Goldstuck, 2019) Social media has been associated with trip planning as it provides an easy way for travelers to gather more information about their intended destination (Matikiti, Manyevere, and Kruger, 2019). The Sowetan (2018) testified that Holiday Inn guests can use the hotel's Facebook page to check room availability and make reservations directly.

Scholars admit that social media data is vital to tourists when they are planning trips (Kitcharoen, 2019; Matikiti, Manyevere, and Kruger, 2019; van der Bank and van der Bank, 2014). However, some researchers argue that tourists do not view social media as a reliable information source to make informed decisions when planning a trip. This makes it difficult to use Facebook as a tool for brand awareness as advocated by Matikiti-Manyevere & Kruger (2019). It is against this background that this study sought to evaluate the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1. Social media marketing

According to Tichafa and Nyoni (2017), social media refers to interactive technologies that enable the creation and sharing of content within virtual networks and communities. Khan (2022) submits that the term "social" in the context of media indicates that platforms are user-focused and encourage social interaction among users. Therefore,

social media can be understood as an online tool that facilitates and strengthens human networks, or as a network of individuals that promotes social connectivity. Social media platforms are usually accessed by users via web-based desktop applications or by downloading mobile applications on their smartphones or tablets. Yadav and Rahman (2018) observe that social media is utilized for various purposes, such as creating memories, discovering new information, self-promotion, making friends, and generating ideas through the production of blogs, podcasts, films, and gaming websites. Dolega et al. (2021) report that some of the most popular social media platforms with over 100 million registered users include Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Telegram, WhatsApp, and TikTok. Social media marketing is therefore the use of social media platforms to produce material that users can share to assist businesses in expanding their client base and brand awareness in various geographies (Seo and Park, 2018). Shuang et al. (2022) contend that the terms social media marketing, digital marketing, and e-marketing can be used interchangeably. Therefore, good social media presence enables businesses to establish commercial relationships, lower marketing and advertising expenses and boost revenues. While there is a wide range of social media platforms frequently used by businesses as previously mentioned, this study focused on Facebook.

2.2 Importance of Brand Awareness

According to Bilgin (2018), the degree to which consumers can recognize or recall a brand under varied circumstances is what is referred to as brand awareness. Goeltom et al (2020), points out that the decision to buy something is generally based on the consumer's capacity to recognize or recall a brand adding that consumers must first be aware of a product category and a brand within it in order to proceed with a purchase. Similarly, Azzari and Pelissari (2021), contents that in order to make a purchase, customers must be able to recall enough distinctive qualities, which does not necessarily mean that they must be able to recall a specific brand name. With a close to similar perspective, Sivaram and Hudaya (2019), shares the view that brand awareness is a marketing term that describes how well-known and well-remembered a company's brand is within the targeted market. As put forward by Matinhire and Vingirayi (2021) companies can achieve a competitive edge through branding by the use of practices that differentiate the company's brand from competing firms from the perspective of the customers. Through surpassing customers' expectations in comparison to competitors in the market, Domazet (2017), suggests that businesses can protect their market and ensure success by focusing on their brand recognition.

According to Novansa (2017), there are four different levels of brand awareness that includes brand unawareness, recognition, recall and top of mind. Chaudhari et al, (2017) postulates that most memories are based on what was said or the customer's experience at the point of sale hence when a customer can recall a brand's details based on a product category and demands met, the customer would have demonstrated brand recall. Companies utilize a variety of metrics to measure the degree of brand awareness which includes brand search, in which businesses examine the number of people that seek up their brands online. The number of times a particular brand is mentioned on social media is another indicator of brand awareness. Lastly companies use the engagement rate, which indicates the number of people who have liked, commented on, or shared marketing posts on social media Sinha and Verma (2018). By tracking website traffic with the Google Analytic tool and counting the number of customers that visit the business' website, brand awareness may be measured.

Steenkamp (2020) suggests that marketers and organizations must therefore use social media to connect with their current clients and obtain new ones in a competitive business environment where growth is constantly sought after. Studies have indicated that when social media gets more ingrained in society, it influences social interaction and purchase decisions hence social media should thus be largely used by marketers to promote their brands. Typically, the result is purchasing contemplation, which also shows customer behavior. Social media platforms are appealing for the co-creation of value for companies as they remain at the forefront as the most effective platforms to reach customers at each stage of the customer journey (Lubis et al, 2019). Customers begin to review products and share their experiences with a brand or product at no cost to the marketer, and this co-creation of value is realized. Due to this possibility, customers are now driving innovation because marketers may learn from the patterns emerging through social media. Generally, customer-generated ideas frequently surpass those developed by marketers.

2.3 The Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing

According to Kottler (2006), enterprises should identify social media channels that fit their marketing goals and strategy. This entails the use of social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube which enable businesses to run more interactive advertising campaigns with a wide audience at a reasonable price. Tatar (2016), puts forward that these platforms serve as a quick method of getting information from businesses to their target clients, and because they have no territorial restrictions, they can reach a large market. According to Melati and Febianty (2016), when marketing through social media, communication across national boundaries can however be hampered by different cultures and languages. It is also challenging to confirm that responders are the right demographic the business intended to target (Callarisa, 2012). According to Chan (2011), brand exposure occurs when customers engage in marketing communication on social networking sites without intending to buy anything. However, Kim et al. (2015) asserts that overexposure is the biggest threat to branding because consumers can

simply become tired of seeing the same advertisements every day, pay less attention to the content being promoted, and are constantly looking for something new. On the other hand, electronic word of mouth is a potent marketing strategy because customers trust recommendations from friends and family. According to Callarisa (2012), information disseminated by word of mouth is associated to new users joining brand websites and that it sticks in customers' memories for a longer period of time. Offering inducements that will appeal to new customers and encourage them to recommend brands to other consumers on social media platforms can go a long way to increase the visibility of a brand as well as its awareness. On the other hand, bad word of mouth has negative impact on brand names.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The proposed framework focuses on the relationship between social media marketing activities and brand awareness. Social media marketing constructs used in this study include Facebook, Instagram and Twitter while brand awareness was broken down into consumer perception, brand recall and brand recognition.

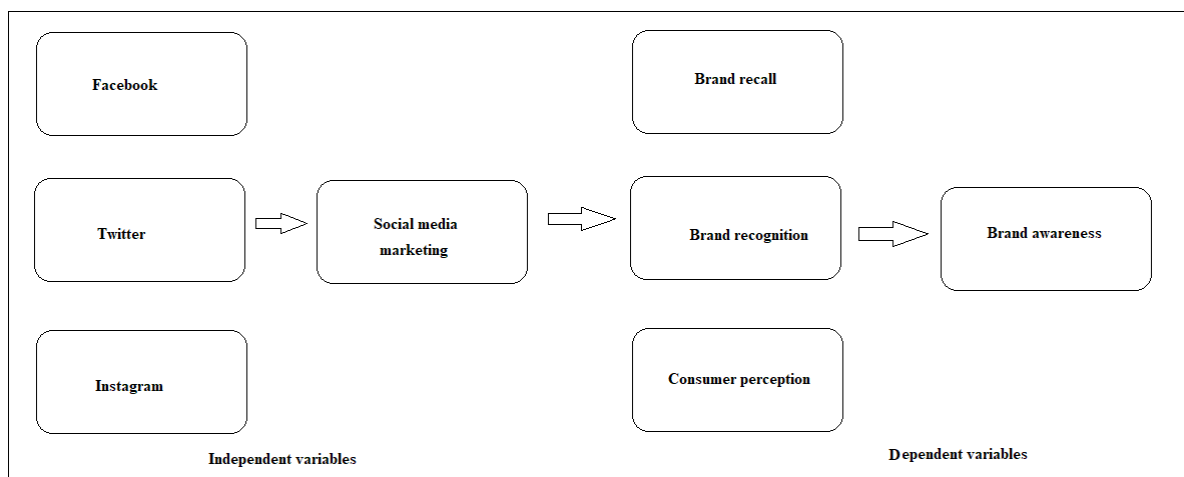


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework

Source: Adapted from Mahaputra and Saputra, (2021)

2.5 The Influence of Social Media Marketing (SMM) on brand Recognition

A study by Obinwanne and Ukabuilu (2017) offers an overview of the influence of SMM on brand equity and brand awareness of firms in Nigeria. The study adopted mixed methods methodology, which involved analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data collected from 30 producers in Lagos. The study results show that social media marketing significantly affects raising brand awareness.

Ketter (2016) carried a research study to investigate the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness for hotels in Nepal between 2010 and 2016. This study provided a theoretical framework for understanding the impact of SMM in restoring the image of Nepal brand as a tourism destination after the Nepal's Gurkha earthquake. Social media marketing was found to be a useful marketing tool to create brand awareness by promoting products or services, sharing engaging content, building relationships with customers, and driving engagement.

Kapoor et al, (2018) conducted research to examine how user interactions on social media platforms affect the brand awareness and purchase intention of catering service companies operating in India utilizing ITC's Facebook page as a case study. The study found that by leveraging the enormous user base and sophisticated targeting options, hotels can effectively reach out to their target customers and build a loyal following. In addition, Ezzaouia and Gidumal (2020), conducted a study based on how Moroccan firms in the tourism and hospitality sector can utilize Facebook to effectively market their services concluded that using Facebook to large extent increases the visibility of tourist destinations.

Evidence from time series data collected for Hotels in Zambia also show that by encouraging followers to share photos, reviews, and other content, hotels can amplify brand awareness and reach new audiences, which ultimately results in an increased customer base (Mweemba et al.,2018). This shows that Facebook marketing is a powerful tool for hotels to build their brand and drive customer engagement and by strategically using social media to raise brand awareness and improve customer satisfaction, hotels can increase their profitability significantly.

2.6 The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Stimulating Consumer Perceptions.

According to Zimbabwe Digital Marketing and Advertising Report (2020), Facebook is the most dominant platform for digital marketing in Zimbabwe with over 2.2 million users. Therefore, Facebook marketing has become a vital business tool to stimulate perceptions of their target market. A study by Ukpere et al. (2014)

indicated that Facebook can be used by businesses to personalize their marketing strategies to suit the needs of target markets. The platform allows businesses to create targeted advertisements based on demographics such as age, location, and interests. A survey conducted by Zhou (2018), to evaluate the perceptions of international tourists in Victoria Falls on social media marketing found that Facebook marketing has enabled tourism destinations in Zimbabwe to engage with international customers and prop customer loyalty.

Woyo (2019), nevertheless concluded that for domestic tourists mainly those with low to medium income, slow bandwidth and high data costs have scuffled the adoption of more interactive marketing techniques such as live videos and chatbots. Secondly, the lack of understanding of social media marketing by some players in the local tourism industry has restricted the adoption of effective marketing strategies. Lastly, the study highlighted that the absence of social media marketing regulations has led to unethical practices in the use of Facebook by some unscrupulous businesses such as lodges that advertise services that they do not offer. In conclusion evidence shows that Facebook marketing has become a crucial tool for businesses in Zimbabwe and the world over to increase brand awareness and promote their products and services. However, businesses need to understand the challenges in adopting this marketing strategy and craft effective strategies that suit their target market. Furthermore, social media marketing regulations need to be developed to promote ethical business practices.

3.0 Research Design

The study adopted an explanatory research design as it gave the researcher the ability to view the participants from a particular perspective and compare them to related theories under consideration.

3.1 Sample size and Techniques

The study used a sample of 77 Hyatt Regency stakeholders, which is 45% of the total population. A 45% proportion of the sample is sufficient for an explanatory design as alluded to by West (2016). The respondents who received the communication, were the brand managers, supervisors, and other departmental staff working for Hyatt Regency in Harare. Using stratified technique further grouping was done. The sample was divided into corresponding subgroups, and these are called strata. Simple random sampling technique was used to select sampling units from each stratum.

Respondents	Population	Sample	Sampling rate
Managers	20	12	$12/20*100=60\%$
Employees	55	22	$22/55*100=40\%$
Clients	95	43	$43/95*100=45\%$
Total	170	77	45%

Table 3.1: sample size

Source: Research findings (2024)

3.2 Data collection method

Structured questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data.

3.3 Research instruments

Data was collected from the target sample population using Likert scale type of questions administered by the researcher via structured questionnaires. Data was obtained through a close ended questionnaire, divided into three sections. Section A dealing with demographic information, section B, section C on the influence of social media marketing on stimulating consumer perception on the services while section D investigated information on other ways on how social media marketing influences brand awareness for Hyatt Regency hotel.

3.4 Data analysis and presentation method

Data in this study was presented using tables created by Microsoft excel. The tabulated data was therefore analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. The decision to use SPSS was based on its proficiency in managing substantial amounts of data and its capability to execute all the analysis. SPSS is widely utilized in both the social sciences and the business industry.

3.5 Ethical considerations

The research was guided by the general ethical considerations for research commonly known as the five (5) Cs of research ethics principles specifically, Confidentiality, Coercion, Consent, Care and Communication.

4.0 Results and Discussion

This chapter focuses on results and discussion of present research.

4.1 Response rate

The researcher distributed 77 questionnaires to stakeholders of Hyatt Regency hotel. Out of 77 questionnaires, 62 were returned and usable constituting an 81% response rate. According to Davidoff (2019) a high response rate of 80% or more is desirable, which implies that the response rate of 81% was acceptable. This indicates that the majority of Hyatt Regency stakeholders participated in this research study.

4.2 Demographic information

In this portion of the study, the researcher examined the demographic characteristics of the study participants by analyzing their gender distribution, educational levels and age.

4.2.1 Gender

Table 4.1 below shows

For the purpose of having reliable, consistent and unbiased data, the study must have opinions from both men and women (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2015). To confirm to this the study added a section which allowed respondents to classify themselves according to gender as shown below

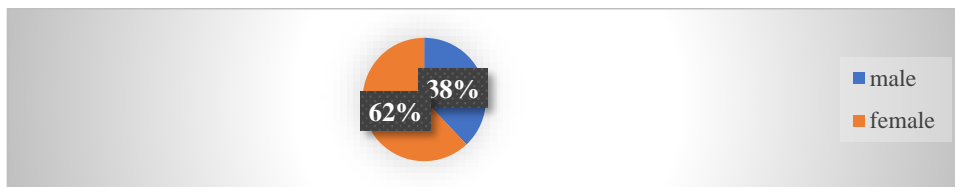


Figure 4.1: Gender distribution

Source: research findings (2024)

The findings shown above shows that there is a higher proportion of females than males. According to the data, 62% of the respondents who completed the study were women, while 38% were men. This aligns with the findings of a previous study by ZimStat (2016), which also reported a higher proportion of women compared to men in Zimbabwe. The slight variation in the data can be explained by this trend. The slight variation in the data can be explained by the existing trend observed in the broader population.

4.2.2 Age

Figure 4.2 below illustrates the age distribution of participants who completed a questionnaire regarding the influence of social media marketing on brand awareness for Hyatt Regency hotel. The graph shows the percentage of respondents in different age groups, ranging from 20-30 years to 61 years and above.

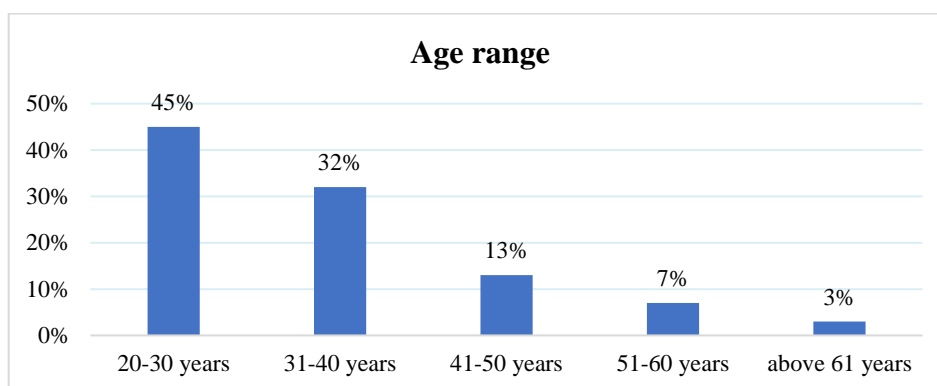


Figure 4.2: Age Range

Source: research findings (2024)

According to the results, the largest group of respondents falls into the 20-30 age range, which accounted for 45% of the total respondents. The second-largest group was the 31-40 age range, which constituted 32% of respondents. The 41-50 years and 51-60 age ranges represented 13% and 7% of respondents, respectively. Only 3% of respondents were in the 61 years and above age group. Hence, the implications may be that Hyatt Regency Hotel should focus its social media marketing efforts on younger

adults to maximize the impact of its marketing strategy.

4.2.3 Level of Education

It is possible that the results of the study may be biased and unreliable if all the responses are coming from illiterate participants. To address this issue, the study allowed respondents to self-report their educational level by selecting the appropriate category. The results of this classification are summarized in the following figure.

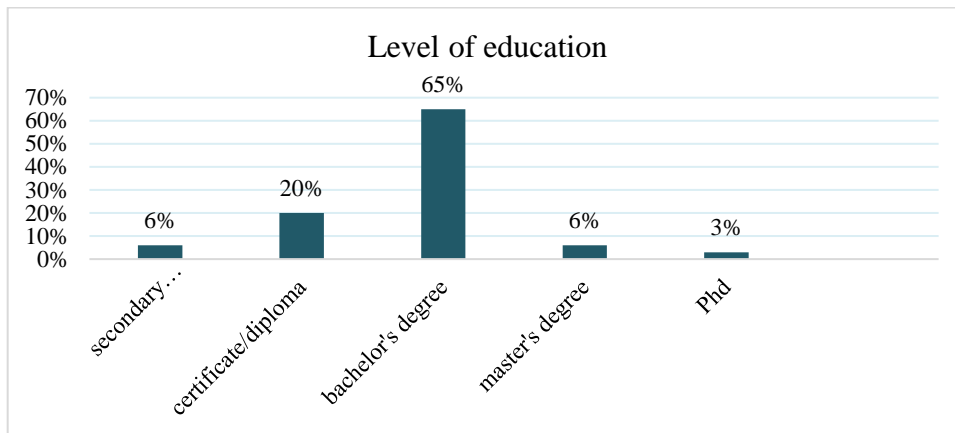


Figure 4.3 Level of education

Source: Research Findings (2024)

According to the figure, the majority of the sampled respondents are educated and literate. Specifically, 65% of respondents had completed a bachelor's degree, indicating a high level of education. Additionally, 20% of respondents had certificate/diploma qualifications, while 6% had secondary education, and 6% had completed a master's degree. Only 3% of the population had PhD qualifications which increases the reliability and validity of the study results.

4.3 The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Brand Awareness for Hyatt Regency Hotel

4.3.1 Results of Awareness of Social Media Marketing Among Respondents

The results indicate that a large majority of respondents, 85%, have heard of social media marketing. This suggests that this concept is widely recognized and known among the participants. It implies that a significant portion of individuals is aware of the utilization of social media platforms for marketing purposes, such as promoting products or services, engaging with customers, and building brand awareness. On the other hand, 15% of respondents have not heard of social media marketing. This indicates that there is a smaller group of individuals who are less familiar with this marketing strategy. It is possible that they may have limited exposure to social media platforms or have not actively explored the potential benefits of social media marketing for their business or personal use.

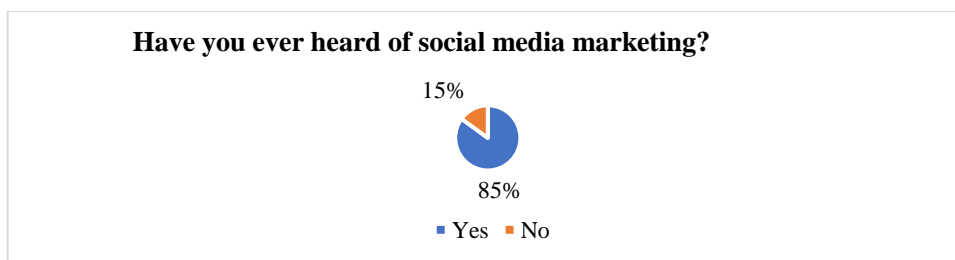


Figure 1: Have you ever heard of social media marketing

Overall, the majority awareness of social media marketing among the respondents suggests that it is a widely recognized and established marketing approach in today's digital landscape. The smaller percentage of individuals who have not heard of it may represent an opportunity for further education and awareness-building about the benefits and impact of social media marketing.

4.3.2 Social Media Implementation at Hyatt Regency Hotel

The analysis of the results shows that 41% of Hyatt Regency implement social media marketing all the time, indicating a consistent and active engagement with their target audience. Another 29% do so

regularly, allocating resources and time to leverage the benefits of social media. Approximately 15% implement social media marketing occasionally, using it for specific events or promotions. On the other hand, 8% and 5% of organizations use social media marketing not so often and rarely, respectively, suggesting a lower priority or limited understanding of its potential. Only 1% do not use social media marketing at all, while another 1% are unsure about its implementation.

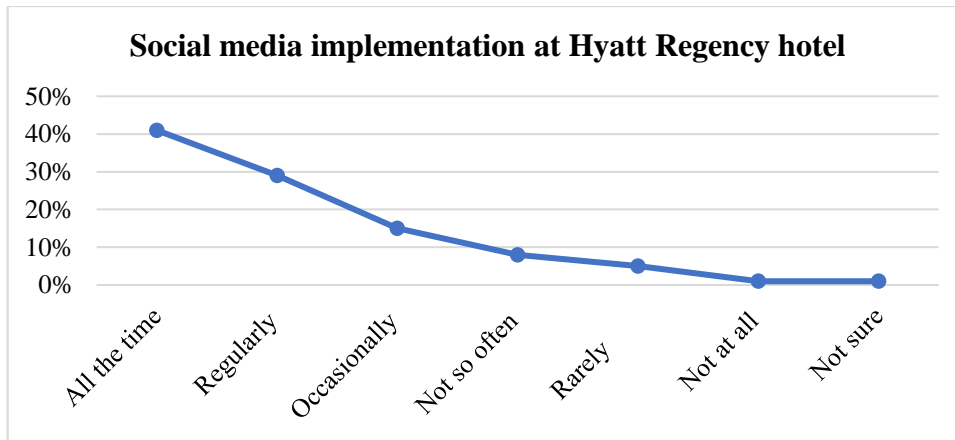


Figure 2: Social Media Marketing Implementation

Overall, while a significant portion recognizes and utilizes social media marketing, there is still room for improvement in leveraging this powerful tool for audience engagement and brand growth.

4.3.3 Evaluation of the Level of Social Media Marketing Implementation at Hyatt Regency Hotel

The evaluation of the level of implementation of social media marketing practices at Hyatt Regency Hotel reveals that the majority of respondents, 58%, perceive it to be extremely high, indicating a robust and highly effective social media marketing strategy. An additional 18% consider the level to be very high, reflecting a strong presence and activity on social media platforms. 10% of respondents view the implementation as high, showcasing commendable efforts in utilizing social media for brand promotion. A small percentage, 8%, remains neutral on the matter, while 6% perceive the level to be very low, suggesting potential areas for improvement. Interestingly, none of the respondents perceive the implementation to be extremely low, indicating at least some effort in utilizing social media.

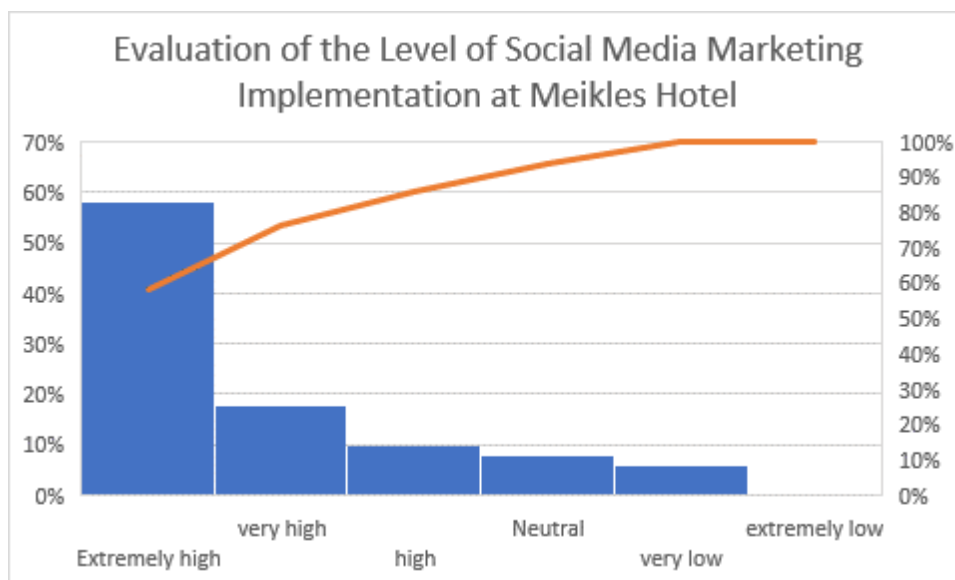


Figure 3: Evaluation of Social Media Marketing Implementation at Hyatt Regency

Overall, the results indicate that a significant portion of respondents view Hyatt Regency Hotel's implementation of social media marketing practices as extremely high or very high. This reflects a strong and effective utilization of social media to promote their brand and engage with their audience. However, there is a small percentage that perceives the level of implementation to be neutral or low, suggesting areas for improvement in their social media marketing strategy to maximize their online presence and audience engagement.

4.3.4 Experimental Results: Influence of Social Media Marketing on Brand Awareness Evaluation

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Social media platforms enable two-way communication	35%	24%	2%	20%	10%
Real time communication enables more customer trends	18%	51%	1%	16%	14%
Social media builds customer relationships	39%	23%	8%	20%	10%
Social media shares more information quickly	18%	26%	9%	31%	16%
The promotion of content is done through social media	41%	20%	6%	21%	12%
Social sites are central in enabling engagement	27%	29%	8%	18%	18%
Social sharing happens on social media	17%	20%	12%	39%	12%

Table 1: Influence of Social Media Marketing on Brand Awareness

Regarding real time communication only 18% strongly agreed to the notion, 51% agreed that this would be significantly important as it enables a better understanding of customer trends. This highlights the importance of timely and immediate interactions through social media platforms in capturing and responding to emerging customer preferences. The respondents also noted that social media builds relationships and promotion of content is done through social media is useful in enhancing brand awareness. The variables had a total of 62% and 61% respectively of the total sample. This indicates a recognition of social media's capacity to establish and nurture connections with customers, fostering brand loyalty and engagement.

In terms of sharing information quickly, opinions were divided. While 44% agreed or strongly agreed that social media platforms enable swift dissemination of information, 9% expressed neutrality, and 47% disagreed or strongly disagreed. These responses suggest varying perceptions of the effectiveness of social media in facilitating rapid information sharing.

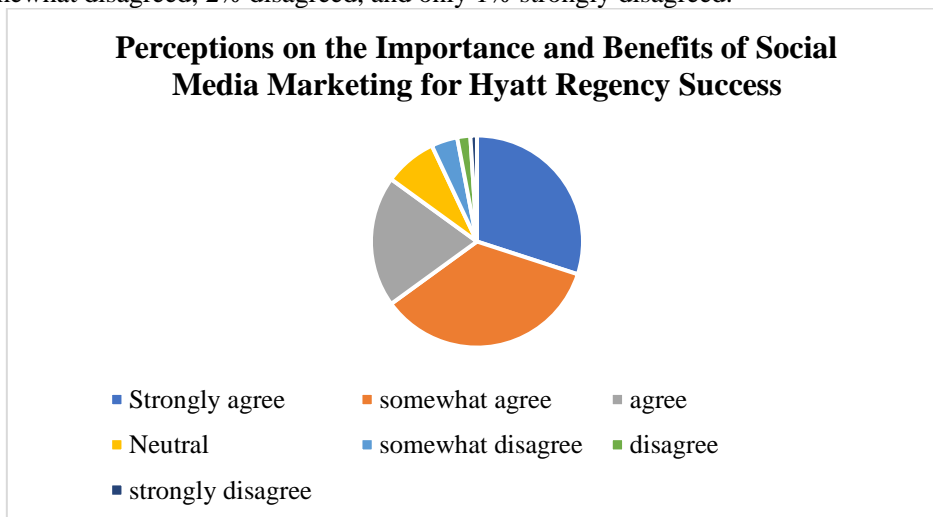
Concerning content promotion, a majority of 41% agreed or strongly agreed that it is effectively done through social media. This highlights the importance of leveraging social media platforms as a means of reaching a broader audience and increasing brand visibility.

These statistics showcase the diverse perspectives among participants regarding the influence of social media marketing on brand awareness. While a substantial proportion agrees with the positive impact on aspects such as customer relationships, content promotion, and real-time communication, others express skepticism or neutrality. The percentages provide a quantitative representation of the participants' responses and contribute to our understanding of the varying viewpoints on the influence of social media marketing on brand awareness.

4.4 The influence of Social Media Marketing on Stimulating Consumer Perception on the Services of Hyatt Regency hotel

4.4.1 Perceptions on the Importance and Benefits of Social Media Marketing for Hyatt Regency Success

The evaluation results reveal a range of perspectives on the importance and benefits of social media marketing in shaping consumer perceptions. A majority of participants (30%) strongly agree that social media marketing is crucial and can benefit their company in influencing consumer perceptions. Additionally, 35% somewhat agree and 20% agree with this statement. On the other hand, 8% remained neutral, 4% somewhat disagreed, 2% disagreed, and only 1% strongly disagreed.



While a significant proportion of participants agree or somewhat agree with the positive impact of social media marketing, there are also those who express neutrality, skepticism, or disagreement. These diverse viewpoints highlight the need for businesses to understand the individual perspectives within their organization and tailor social media marketing strategies accordingly.

4.4.2 Perceived Importance of Social Media Marketing for Stimulating Consumer Perceptions at Hyatt Regency Hotel

The results indicate participants' opinions on the extent to which Hyatt Regency Hotel needs social media marketing to stimulate consumer perceptions. The majority of respondents (35%) believe that social media marketing is needed to a very large extent. An additional 25% expressed that a larger extent of social media marketing is necessary, while 20% believe it is needed to a fairly large extent. There is a small percentage (8%) of participants who are not sure about the level of social media marketing required. On the other hand, 6% believe that social media marketing is needed to a fairly lesser extent, followed by 4% who believe it is needed to a lesser extent. Lastly, only 2% of respondents feel that social media marketing is needed to a very lesser extent.

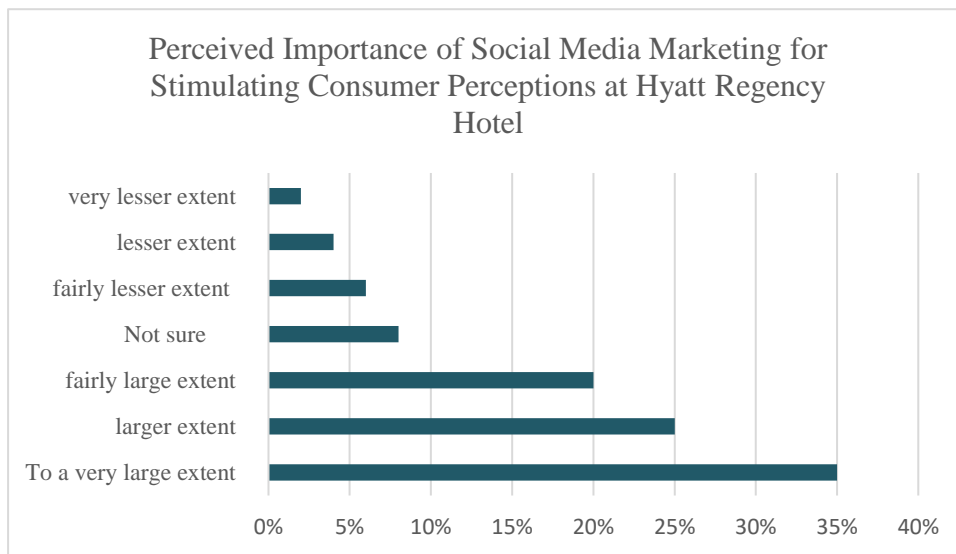


Figure 4: Perceived importance of social media marketing

These results highlight the varying perspectives on the importance of social media marketing in stimulating consumer perceptions for Hyatt Regency Hotel, with a significant portion emphasizing its significant role.

4.4.3 Evaluating the Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Perception

In terms of social media allowing instant responses through comments, 30% of respondents strongly agree while 15% agree on this statement. This suggests that a significant portion of participants recognize the ability of social media to facilitate prompt interaction and engagement with consumers.

Regarding the ability of customers to communicate with brands, 25% of respondents agreed to this statement. This implies that a considerable number of respondents acknowledge the importance of social media as a channel for communication between customers and brands.

When it comes to the promotion of belief status and reputation, 40% of participants rated this statement as a 1 (strongly agree) and 20% as a 2 (strongly agree). This indicates that a significant majority of respondents believe that social media can effectively contribute to promoting and enhancing a brand's belief status and reputation.

Regarding the influence of social media in keeping an actual occurrence to enhance brand choice, 25% of respondents agreed to this statement. This suggests that a substantial number of participants perceive social media as a platform that can provide real-time updates and information to influence consumer decisions positively.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Social media allows instant responses through comments	30%	15%	20%	15%	20%
Customers can communicate with brands	28%	22%	15%	20%	15%
Promotion of belief status and reputation	40%	20%	10%	20%	10%
Keeping an actual occurrence to enhance brand choice	25%	15%	20%	25%	20%

Table 2: Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Perceptions

Overall, the results indicate a general agreement among participants on the positive influence of social media marketing in terms of enabling instant responses, facilitating customer communication, promoting belief status and reputation, and enhancing brand choice. These findings highlight the significance of utilizing social media effectively to engage with consumers and shape their perceptions in a favorable manner.

4.5 Ways on how Social Media Marketing Influences Brand Awareness for Hyatt Regency Hotel

4.5.1 Is social media marketing important towards influencing brand awareness

The results indicate participants' views on the importance of social media marketing in influencing brand awareness.

The results indicate that 30% of participants consider social media marketing to be extremely important in influencing brand awareness. Additionally, 25% perceive it as somewhat important, while 20% view it as important. A neutral stance is taken by 10% of respondents, while 10% believe it to be less important. Only 3% consider it not important, and 2% perceive it as extremely lesser important.

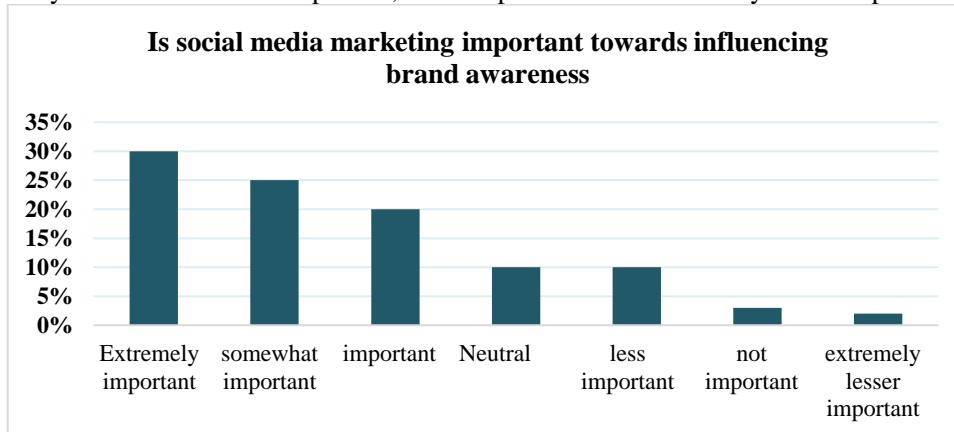


Figure 5:Importance of Social Media Marketing

These results reflect a range of opinions regarding the importance of social media marketing in influencing brand awareness. While a significant portion acknowledges its significance, there are varying degrees of importance attributed to it, with some participants expressing a more neutral or less important viewpoint.

4.5.2 The Results Indicate the Respondents' Views on the Importance of Social Media Marketing in Influencing Brand Awareness.

A majority of 70% of participants answered "Yes," indicating that they believe social media marketing is important for influencing brand awareness. This suggests that they recognize the significant impact that social media can have on increasing brand visibility and recognition among the target audience. They understand that leveraging social media platforms can effectively reach a wider audience and generate awareness about their brand.

On the other hand, 20% of the respondents answered "No," indicating that they do not consider social media marketing to be important in influencing brand awareness. This suggests a contrasting viewpoint where these participants may believe that other marketing strategies or channels have a more significant impact on brand awareness.

Furthermore, 10% of the participants answered "Not sure," indicating a lack of certainty or limited knowledge about the influence of social media marketing on brand awareness. These respondents may require more information or evidence to form a conclusive opinion.

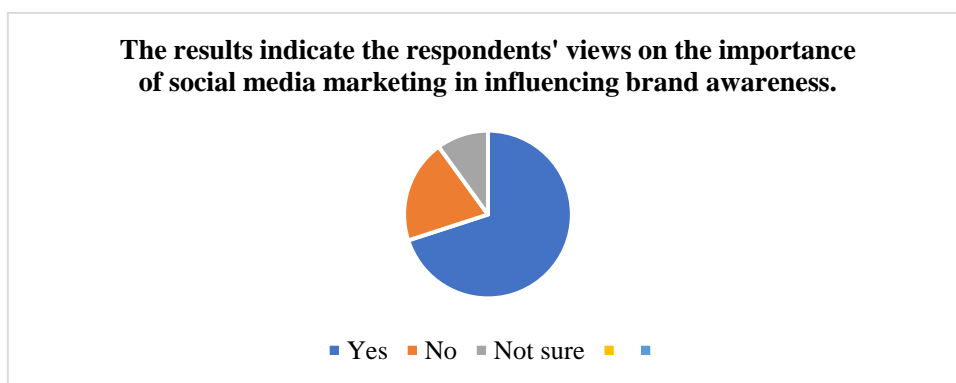


Figure 6: Results on the Importance of Social Media Marketing on Brand Awareness

The results show a range of perspectives on the importance of social media marketing in influencing brand awareness. While a significant portion believes in its importance, there are those who hold contrasting views or are uncertain. It highlights the diversity of opinions and the need for further discussion or research to fully understand the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness.

4.5.3 Ways on how social media marketing influences brand awareness

The results demonstrate participants' opinions on various strategies and actions related to social media marketing.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Choose the right platform for your audience	18%	50%	2%	15%	14%
Deliver content and engage with your audience	17%	27%	5%	39%	12%
Encourage your audience to share your content	25%	28%	8%	25%	14%
Connect with and learn from influencers	28%	32%	8%	20%	12%
Mention influencers partners and customers	27%	29%	7%	27%	10%
Maintain relationships with customers	23%	39%	8%	17%	13%

Table 3: Ways on how Social Media Marketing Influences Brand Awareness

Looking at the data, we can see that the most highly rated strategy is "Deliver content and engage with your audience", with 39% of respondents strongly agreeing and a further 27% agreeing that this is an effective strategy. This strategy was rated as effective for three out of the five goals.

The second most highly rated strategy is "Connect with and learn from influencers", with 28% of respondents strongly agreeing and a further 32% agreeing that this is an effective strategy. This strategy was rated as most effective for one goal (encouraging the audience to share content).

The third most highly rated strategy is "Encourage your audience to share your content", with 25% of respondents strongly agreeing and a further 28% agreeing that this is an effective strategy. This strategy was rated as most effective for one goal (choosing the right platform for the audience).

The other strategies ("Choose the right platform for your audience", "Mention influencers, partners, and customers", and "Maintain relationships with customers") were also rated as effective by a significant proportion of respondents, but received slightly lower ratings compared to the top three strategies.

Overall, the data suggests that delivering content and engaging with the audience is perceived as the most effective strategy for achieving multiple goals in social media marketing, followed by connecting with and learning from influencers, and encouraging the audience to share content. Choosing the right platform for the audience, mentioning influencers, partners, and customers, and maintaining relationships with customers were also rated as important strategies, but received slightly lower ratings.

5.0 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The recommendations based on the findings aim to assist Hyatt Regency Hotel in effectively leveraging social media marketing to enhance brand awareness and stimulate consumer perception of their services. By implementing these recommendations, Hyatt Regency Hotel can maximize the benefits of social media platforms and establish a strong competitive advantage in the hospitality industry.

5.2 Achievement of research aim and objectives

The study's results demonstrated a robust positive relationship between social media marketing endeavors and brand awareness for Hyatt Regency hotel. The hotel's "proactive engagement on social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram," played a significant role in boosting brand visibility and recognition among the desired audience. This observation is supported by academic research conducted by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), which highlights the influence of social media on brand awareness and customer engagement.

5.3 Recommendations

The research findings and objectives have led to the development of the following recommendations aimed at improving the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness for Hyatt Regency hotel:

Develop a Comprehensive Social Media Strategy: Hyatt Regency hotel should establish a well-defined social media strategy that aligns with its overall marketing goals. This strategy should outline specific objectives, target audience segments, content themes, and engagement tactics. By developing a cohesive and strategic approach to social media marketing, the hotel can maximize its impact on brand awareness.

Leverage Influencer Marketing: Collaborating with influencers or brand ambassadors can amplify Hyatt Regency hotel's social media reach and enhance brand awareness. Identifying influencers within the hospitality industry who align with the hotel's brand values and target audience can help generate authentic and engaging content, reaching a wider audience. Research by Jin and Phua (2014) suggests that influencer marketing can positively impact consumer perception and brand awareness.

Encourage User-Generated Content: Hyatt Regency hotel should actively encourage guests to share their experiences on social media platforms by creating dedicated hashtags, running contests, and showcasing user-generated content. User-generated content not only fosters a sense of community and engagement but also serves as valuable social proof, enhancing brand credibility. Scholars such as Zhang et al. (2014) have emphasized the significance of user-generated content in building brand awareness and trust.

Monitor and Respond to Online Feedback: The hotel should actively monitor social media channels for customer feedback and promptly respond to inquiries, comments, and reviews. Timely and personalized responses demonstrate the hotel's commitment to customer satisfaction and can positively influence consumer perception of the brand. Research by De Vries et al. (2012) indicates that responding to online feedback can significantly impact brand image and consumer satisfaction.

Collaborate with Local Influencers and Tourism Boards: Hyatt Regency hotel should consider

collaborating with local influencers, tourism boards, and other relevant stakeholders to promote the destination and its services. Partnering with key influencers in the region can help expand the hotel's reach to a broader audience and enhance brand awareness within the tourism industry. Scholarly research by Gretzel et al. (2015) emphasizes the potential benefits of collaboration with local influencers in destination marketing.

By implementing these recommendations, Hyatt Regency hotel can strengthen its social media marketing efforts and optimize brand awareness among its target audience. However, it is essential for the hotel to continually evaluate and adapt its strategies based on the evolving social media landscape and consumer preferences.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The study also suggests that future research should explore other ways in which social media marketing can be used to influence brand equity and customer engagement for Hyatt Regency Hotel.

5.5 Conclusion

The study concluded there is a positive impact of social media marketing in enhancing brand visibility and stimulating consumer perception of the hotel's services. The recommendations provided offer actionable strategies to further optimize Hyatt Regency hotel's social media marketing efforts and improve brand awareness. By embracing social media platforms as valuable marketing tools and implementing effective strategies, Hyatt Regency hotel can solidify its position as a leading brand in the hospitality industry and effectively engage with its target audience.

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