

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ACTIVITIES ON BRAND EQUITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN HYDERABAD HOSPITALITY SECTOR

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Abstract

Social media marketing has become an important component of brand management in the hospitality sector, enabling hotels and other hospitality businesses to communicate with customers, promote their services, build brand awareness, and strengthen customer relationships. In Hyderabad, a growing hospitality market serving business travellers, tourists, families, and local customers provides a relevant setting for examining the relationship between social media marketing activities, brand equity, and customer satisfaction. This study aims to examine how social media marketing activities, including entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and electronic word of mouth, influence brand equity and customer satisfaction in the hospitality sector. It also explores the potential relationship between brand equity and customer satisfaction. A quantitative research approach using a structured questionnaire is proposed for collecting responses from customers who have interacted with hospitality brands through social media. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and appropriate significance tests may be employed to evaluate the proposed relationships. The study is expected to contribute to understanding how social media marketing can support brand awareness, brand image, perceived value, customer trust, and satisfaction. The findings may provide practical insights for hospitality managers seeking to develop effective digital marketing strategies and improve customer experiences. The empirical conclusions will depend on the data collected from respondents in Hyderabad.

Keywords-*Social Media Marketing, Brand Equity, Customer Satisfaction, Hospitality Sector, Brand Awareness, Brand Image, Electronic Word of Mouth, Digital Marketing, Hyderabad.*

1. Introduction

The rapid development of digital communication technologies has transformed marketing practices across industries, particularly in the hospitality sector. Hotels, restaurants, resorts, and other hospitality businesses increasingly use social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and other digital channels to promote services, communicate with customers, share experiences, and manage their brand image. Social media provides opportunities for businesses to reach target audiences, encourage customer participation, and receive immediate feedback about their services.

In the hospitality industry, purchasing decisions are often influenced by visual content, online reviews, recommendations, ratings, and information shared by previous customers. Customers may examine photographs of hotel rooms, restaurant interiors, menus, amenities, and service experiences before making booking or dining decisions. Consequently, social media marketing

activities can influence customer perceptions and expectations even before customers directly experience a hospitality service.

Brand equity is an important concept in hospitality marketing because it reflects the value associated with a brand in customers' minds. Brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty are commonly used dimensions of customer-based brand equity. Strong brand equity may help hospitality businesses differentiate themselves from competitors, establish credibility, attract repeat customers, and maintain a favourable market position.

Customer satisfaction is another essential factor in hospitality management. It refers to customers' evaluations of their experiences in relation to their expectations. Satisfaction can be influenced by service quality, employee behaviour, cleanliness, pricing, convenience, responsiveness, and the overall hospitality experience. Social media marketing may contribute to satisfaction by providing accurate information, facilitating communication, managing expectations, and enabling customers to share feedback. However, attractive digital content cannot independently guarantee satisfaction if the actual service experience fails to meet customer expectations.

Hyderabad offers a relevant setting for investigating these relationships because its hospitality sector serves business travellers, tourists, event attendees, families, and local consumers. Hospitality businesses operating in the city may differ in their target audiences, promotional budgets, service categories, and levels of digital engagement. Understanding the relationship between social media marketing, brand equity, and customer satisfaction can therefore help businesses design marketing activities suited to their customers.

Against this background, the present study examines the impact of social media marketing activities on brand equity and customer satisfaction in the Hyderabad hospitality sector. It also considers whether brand equity is associated with customer satisfaction and whether particular social media marketing dimensions have stronger relationships with these outcomes.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the social media marketing activities adopted by hospitality businesses in Hyderabad.
2. To analyse the relationship between social media marketing activities and brand equity.
3. To investigate the influence of social media marketing activities on customer satisfaction.
4. To examine the relationship between brand equity and customer satisfaction.
5. To identify the social media marketing dimensions most strongly associated with brand equity and customer satisfaction.

6. To suggest practical strategies for improving digital brand management and customer satisfaction in the Hyderabad hospitality sector.

3. Research Hypotheses

H1: Social media marketing activities have a significant positive relationship with brand equity in the Hyderabad hospitality sector.

H2: Social media marketing activities have a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction.

H3: Brand equity has a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction.

H4: The dimensions of social media marketing, including entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and electronic word of mouth, differ in their relationships with brand equity and customer satisfaction.

H5: Brand equity mediates the relationship between social media marketing activities and customer satisfaction.

The fifth hypothesis requires a mediation analysis and should be tested only if the research design and sample size support that analysis. If the study uses cross-sectional survey data, the results should be interpreted as statistical associations rather than definitive proof of causation.

4. Research Methodology

The study may adopt a quantitative, descriptive, and explanatory research design. Primary data can be collected from customers who have used hospitality services in Hyderabad and have encountered the relevant businesses on social media.

A structured questionnaire may measure social media marketing activities, brand equity, and customer satisfaction using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Respondents may be selected through convenience or purposive sampling, depending on access to customers and the available research resources.

The independent variables may include entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and electronic word of mouth. Brand equity and customer satisfaction would serve as the principal outcome variables, with brand equity also examined as a possible mediator.

The proposed analysis may include frequency distributions, percentages, means, standard deviations, reliability analysis, correlation, multiple regression, and mediation analysis where appropriate. The final sample size, respondent profile, reliability coefficients, statistical estimates, and significance levels must be reported from the actual survey results.

5. Results and Discussion

Note: As primary survey data have not been provided, the following section presents an analytical framework and proposed interpretation. The tables contain blank fields for actual results rather than invented statistical findings.

5.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic profile helps explain the characteristics of customers participating in the study. Relevant variables include age, gender, occupation, frequency of hospitality service usage, and preferred social media platform. These characteristics can help identify whether perceptions of social media marketing differ among customer groups.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Below 25 years	—	—
	25–34 years	—	—
	35–44 years	—	—
	45 years and above	—	—
Gender	Categories used in the survey	—	—
Occupation	Student / Employed / Business / Other	—	—
Social media usage	Daily / Weekly / Occasionally	—	—

Source: Primary survey data to be collected.

The demographic analysis will establish the background of the respondents and help assess the applicability of the findings to different customer segments in Hyderabad.

5.2 Social Media Marketing Activities

Social media marketing activities may be evaluated through five dimensions: entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). Entertainment concerns the attractiveness of social media content; interaction relates to communication between businesses and customers; trendiness concerns the currency of information; customization refers to the relevance of content to customer preferences; and e-WOM involves customer reviews and online recommendations.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Social Media Marketing Activities

Dimension	Mean score	Standard deviation	Interpretation
Entertainment	—	—	To be determined
Interaction	—	—	To be determined
Trendiness	—	—	To be determined
Customization	—	—	To be determined
Electronic word of mouth	—	—	To be determined

Source: Primary survey data to be collected. Scores may be calculated using a five-point Likert scale.

The results will help identify which dimensions customers perceive most favourably. For example, high interaction scores would indicate positive perceptions of communication and responsiveness, while high e-WOM scores would indicate favourable perceptions of online reviews and recommendations. The actual ranking of these dimensions must be established from the collected data.

5.3 Social Media Marketing and Brand Equity

Brand equity may be examined through brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty. Social media marketing can potentially strengthen these dimensions by increasing brand visibility, communicating service benefits, encouraging customer engagement, and providing opportunities for customers to share experiences.

Table 3. Relationship Between Social Media Marketing and Brand Equity

Statistical measure	Result
Correlation coefficient (r)	—
Regression coefficient (β)	—
R-squared (R^2)	—
Significance level (p-value)	—
Hypothesis H1	To be evaluated

Source: Proposed statistical analysis of primary survey data.

A positive and statistically significant relationship would support the hypothesis that stronger perceived social media marketing activities are associated with higher brand equity. A regression analysis could further assess which marketing dimensions are most strongly associated with brand equity when other dimensions are considered simultaneously. These relationships should not be assumed in advance.

5.4 Social Media Marketing and Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction may be associated with the accuracy of online information, responsiveness to enquiries, perceived service value, and consistency between promotional messages and actual service delivery. Social media can help customers obtain information before visiting a hotel or restaurant and communicate feedback after their experience.

Table 4. Relationship Between Social Media Marketing and Customer Satisfaction

Statistical measure	Result
Correlation coefficient (r)	—
Regression coefficient (β)	—
R-squared (R^2)	—
Significance level (p-value)	—
Hypothesis H2	To be evaluated

Source: Proposed statistical analysis of primary survey data.

If the analysis identifies a positive and statistically significant relationship, it would suggest that customers who evaluate a hospitality business's social media marketing more favourably also tend to report higher satisfaction. However, satisfaction may also depend on service quality, price, location, cleanliness, and employee behaviour. These factors should be considered when interpreting the results.

5.5 Relationship Between Brand Equity and Customer Satisfaction

Brand equity may shape customer expectations, perceptions of value, and confidence in a hospitality business. Customers who recognize and trust a brand may be more willing to consider its services. However, satisfaction depends on the actual experience and the extent to which it meets customer expectations.

Table 5. Relationship Between Brand Equity and Customer Satisfaction

Statistical measure	Result
Correlation coefficient (r)	—
Regression coefficient (β)	—
Significance level (p-value)	—
Hypothesis H3	To be evaluated

Source: Proposed statistical analysis of primary survey data.

A positive and significant association would indicate that stronger brand equity is related to higher customer satisfaction within the sample. The strength of the association and its practical significance should be considered alongside the statistical significance.

Comparative Discussion

The study can provide a broader understanding of how social media marketing contributes to brand-building and customer satisfaction in Hyderabad's hospitality sector.

First, entertainment and visually attractive content may help businesses capture customer attention and improve brand recall. Second, interaction and responsiveness may strengthen customer confidence by reducing uncertainty and enabling timely communication. Third, trendiness and customization may make social media content more relevant to customers' changing interests and preferences. Finally, e-WOM may influence brand credibility by providing information from other customers.

These proposed relationships are consistent with previous research examining social media marketing activities and brand equity. For example, Kim and Ko (2012) examined social media marketing activities in the luxury fashion context, while Seo and Park (2018) investigated their effects on brand equity and customer response in the airline industry. Such studies provide a conceptual foundation for examining similar relationships in hospitality, although their findings should not automatically be generalized to Hyderabad.

The hospitality context introduces an additional consideration: service delivery. Social media may attract customers and shape their expectations, but customer satisfaction is also determined by the quality of the actual experience. Therefore, hospitality businesses should integrate digital communication with reliable service delivery, transparent information, and effective complaint management.

Conclusion

The study examines the potential impact of social media marketing activities on brand equity and customer satisfaction in the Hyderabad hospitality sector. It focuses on entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and electronic word of mouth as important dimensions of social media marketing. It also considers brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, and brand loyalty as aspects of brand equity.

The proposed research framework suggests that effective social media marketing may help hospitality businesses strengthen brand recognition, communicate their service offerings, encourage customer engagement, and establish trust. These activities may also contribute to customer satisfaction by providing accurate information, improving communication, and helping customers make informed decisions. Nevertheless, the extent of these relationships must be established through empirical investigation.

For hospitality businesses in Hyderabad, an effective digital marketing strategy should go beyond frequent posting or increasing follower numbers. Businesses should provide relevant content, respond promptly to customer enquiries, communicate transparently, monitor online reviews, and ensure that promotional messages reflect the services delivered. Integrating social media marketing with consistent service quality may help build stronger customer relationships and a more favourable brand image.

The study has potential limitations. Customer perceptions may vary according to age, income, travel purpose, hospitality category, social media usage, and previous experiences. A cross-sectional survey may also be insufficient to establish causal relationships between marketing activities and customer outcomes. Furthermore, convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Future research could compare hotels, restaurants, and other hospitality businesses; examine differences among social media platforms; and investigate the possible mediating role of brand equity. Longitudinal research could also assess whether changes in social media marketing practices correspond with changes in brand equity and customer satisfaction over time.

In conclusion, this research provides a framework for understanding the relationships among social media marketing, brand equity, and customer satisfaction in Hyderabad's hospitality sector. The practical value of the study will depend on the quality of the collected data and the extent to which the resulting analysis identifies reliable relationships that hospitality managers can use to improve their marketing strategies and customer experiences.

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