

Measuring the Effects of Online Information Quality, User-Friendly Accessibility, and Digital Marketing Interactions on the Intentions to Visit Tourist Destinations: A Case of Libya

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Abstract

This study examined how online information quality, user-friendly accessibility, and digital marketing interactions influence tourists' decisions to visit a destination. Social media's rise has made online information a critical factor in tourism. Researchers and marketers increasingly explore these variables' effects on tourist decision-making. Moreover, a survey (n = 416) investigated how travelers use online information for trip planning, focusing on how content quality, accessibility, and interactivity influence destination choices. Data analysis (SPSS) employed non-parametric techniques, including Cronbach's alpha for reliability, descriptive statistics, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and Spearman's rank correlation. Lastly, the results indicate that online information quality significantly influences tourist decision-making more than other factors.

Keywords: Intention to visit, online information quality, user-friendly accessibility, digital marketing interactions, social media.

1. Introduction

The digital age has ignited a revolution in communication, transforming how tourists discover destinations. A torrent of online information now shapes travel decisions, prompting a surge of scholarly interest in the impact of social media and digital marketing on tourist behaviour [1,2]. As a result, social media has fundamentally reshaped communication and interaction on a global scale. Meaning its influence extends far beyond individual connections, impacting various aspects of human behaviour, including tourist decision-making. In particular, social media plays a significant role in shaping tourist intentions to visit a destination [2,3].

According to Cheung et al., (2020), the number of social-media monthly active users was more than three billion in 2019, with a 45% global social media penetration rate. Additionally, as mentioned by Dixon (2024), this number doubled to about 5.35 billion internet users worldwide, with nearly 143 minutes of social media usage per day. Given the undeniable influence of social media and digital mar

keting, online tourist destinations must prioritize these statistical inferences.

Furthermore, this fuels advancements in communication technologies, and the internet is becoming a vast repository of information about tourist destinations. This abundance of online content, heavily influenced by social media, presents complexities for travellers. Specifically, concerns arise regarding the quality and accessibility of information, which can ultimately influence tourists' decisions about where to visit [3,4].

The quality and user-friendliness of online information significantly impact tourists' decisions to visit a destination, as was mentioned multiple times before. It's often a key factor in shaping their overall impression, i.e., their destination image [5]. Easy-to-find and user-friendly information boosts tourist satisfaction. Finding what they need quickly creates a positive experience, making them more likely to choose one destination over another. On the other hand, high-quality content combined with user-friendly features builds trust in the destination, manages tourist expectations, and ultimately increases the chances of them visiting [1].

It's important to note that research conducted by Kim and Kim (2019) emphasized the significance of a destination's authenticity and image in establishing a robust online presence. After all, these factors aim to offer tourists a genuine experience of the destination's essence. When cultural and nature tourism fail to deliver authentic experiences, destinations risk becoming indistinguishable, fading into a sea of genericness. This lack of a unique identity can severely hamper their competitiveness in the travel industry, as well as hinder tourists' intentions to visit a destination [5].

Consequently, this study aims to address the gap in knowledge by examining the influence of online information quality, accessibility, and digital marketing interactions on tourist intentions. By identifying these key determinants, the study will provide valuable insights for marketers, especially those in Libya, and destination managers to optimize strategies, predict tourist behaviour, and ultimately increase visitor numbers.

1.1 Research Problem: Social media and digital marketing are increasingly important for travel destinations. With the emergence of Tourist Destination Online Content (TDOC), tourists can access to a wide range of information [6]. Social media platforms such as TikTok, Telegram, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are frequently used for digital marketing to attract potential tourists [1,7].

The increase in online information and content about services and products of tourist destinations on the internet has raised concerns about the quality and accessibility of this information [1,6]. Tourists value websites with digital interactions as they enable them to make travel plans, arrange accommodations, and access necessary information [8].

Although the influence of TDOC on tourist behaviour is undeniable, there is a gap in understanding how tourist intentions interact with digital marketing efforts. Current research does not fully explore this interaction, hindering our ability to definitively determine how TDOC influences tourist behaviour and their likelihood to revisit a destination, especially in the context of Libyan tourism.

The study addressed this gap by identifying the factors influencing tourist intentions, providing valuable guidance for marketers and destination managers, particularly in Libya. This knowledge helps them navigate the challenges associated with the abundance of TDOC and attract more tourists.

1.2. The Study Objectives: The study aimed to achieve the following objectives; **1)** Measure the effects of online information quality (OIQ) on the intentions to visit tourist destinations; **2)** Measure the effects of user-friendly accessibility (UFA) on the intentions to visit tourist destinations; and **3)** Measure the effects of digital marketing interactions (DMI) on the intentions to visit tourist destinations.

1.3 The Study Importance: The paper took a two-pronged approach to the subject, examining it from both theoretical and practical perspectives. The theoretical foundation delved into two critical aspects: **1)** It explored the influence of social media and digital marketing on tourist behaviour and decision-making. This section will examine how these forces shape tourists' choices and actions; and **2)** The paper investigated how tourists utilize online information for trip planning. Here, the focus was on understanding how online information quality, user-friendly accessibility, and digital marketing interactivity collectively influence tourists' intentions to visit a particular destination.

Furthermore, the findings hold particular weight when applied to Libya, a society undergoing a significant shift from a text-based orientation to a visually driven one fuelled by the rise of smartphones and social media. Data from 2023 shows that over half of Libya's population is online. Internet penetration reached an estimated 45.9% that year. However, the number of social media users in Libya increased by 18% between 2020 and 2021. This rapid growth in internet usage is crucial for understanding Libya's current social landscape. Thus, by recognizing this trend, we can better tailor services and approaches to meet the needs of the population.

Additionally, the aim is to provide invaluable insight to policymakers, businesses, and marketers to enhance destination visits and improve tourism experiences through effective digital marketing strategies.

On the contrary, the practical section of our paper aimed to examine the theories imposed by the previous section, hence understanding how tourists use online information to plan their trips. Specifically, exploring how the quality, accessibility, and interactivity of online content influence tourists' decisions to visit a particular destination.

It's important to recognize the significance of online information quality, user-friendly accessibility, and digital marketing interactivity in influencing tourists' intentions to visit. Additionally, it's crucial to implement strategies that encourage tourists to share their experiences through digital channels.

Ultimately, the study serves as a valuable resource for understanding tourists' perspectives on destination choice and offers recommendations for driving positive promotion and repeat visitation in the Libyan tourism industry.

1.4 Scope of the Study: The study aimed to investigate how online information, user-friendly websites, and digital interactions impact tourists' decision-making in Libya. It focuses on both domestic and international potential tourists to shed light on the digital factors that shape tourist intentions and destination choices within Libya.

The study explored the influence of the following factors: **1)** Quality of online information: This includes the accuracy, completeness, and user-friendliness of online information about Libyan destinations; **2)** User-friendly websites: This involves the accessibility and clarity of information on travel websites and platforms; and **3)** Digital marketing interactions: This explored the role of social media and marketing in shaping tourist perceptions and destination decisions, as well as understanding the impact it has on online reviews and recommendations compared to official tourism information websites.

By surveying 400 potential tourists within Libya, this paper aimed to provide valuable insights into these relatively unexplored digital drivers. Understanding these influences could help Libyan tourism stakeholders develop targeted online strategies to attract and retain visitors, ultimately contributing to the growth of the tourism sector.

1.5 Definitions:

Online Information Quality: “Online information quality refers to the overall excellence, accuracy, and reliability of the information available on the internet. It encompasses factors such as the credibility of the source, the currency and timeliness of the information, the relevance to the user's needs, the completeness and depth of the content, and the overall usefulness of the information” [9].

User-Friendly Accessibility: “User-friendly accessibility describes the ease with which people can access and use a product, service, or system. It refers to the design and implementation of interfaces, content, and features that enable users, including those with disabilities, to navigate, understand, and interact with the system with minimal effort and frustration.” (User-Friendly — What Does it Mean and How to Apply it?)

Digital Marketing Interactions: “Digital marketing interactivity refers to the two-way communication and engagement between a brand and its audience through digital channels and platforms. And its main goal is to build stronger consumer-brand relationships, increase engagement, and gather valuable insights about the target audience” [10,11].

2. Theoretical Framework

The growing importance of digital platforms in shaping tourist behaviour has highlighted the need to understand how online information quality, user-friendly accessibility, and digital marketing interactions influence the intention to visit tourist destinations. This paper sought to examine these factors within the context of Libyan tourism, where digital communication strategies are still evolving.

2.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB): The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1991), is a widely used model in understanding human behaviour, particularly in contexts where decision-making is involved (12).. TPB posits that an individual's intention to perform a particular behaviour (e.g., visiting a tourist destination) is influenced by three key factors:

- **Attitudes** toward the behaviour, which refer to the individual's positive or negative evaluations of performing the behaviour.
- **Subjective Norms**, which involve the perceived social pressures to perform or not perform the behaviour.
- **Perceived Behavioural Control**, which reflects the individual's perception of their ability to perform the behaviour.

In this study, TPB provides a foundation for understanding how tourists' intentions to visit Libyan destinations are formed. Specifically, it is hypothesized that positive attitudes toward online information quality, favourable subjective norms regarding digital marketing interactions, and high perceived control due to user-friendly accessibility will lead to stronger intentions to visit.

2.2 Online Information Quality: It focuses on the dimensions of information that impact its usefulness and effectiveness in decision-making processes. According to this, high-quality information is accurate, timely, relevant, complete, and reliable [6]. In the context of tourism, the quality of information available online (through websites, social media, and other digital platforms) can significantly influence tourists' perceptions and decisions [13,14].

In this study, the role of information quality was critical, as it was expected that higher quality information about Libyan destinations would enhance tourist trust and satisfaction, thereby positively influencing their intentions to visit. By measuring the quality of information extracted online, we could aim to provide a better pool of content to potential tourists, who are more likely to choose a destination.

2.3 Digital Marketing Interactions: Digital marketing has transformed how destinations communicate with potential tourists. Theories in digital marketing emphasize the importance of engagement, personalization, and user-generated content in influencing consumer behaviour [15]. In the tourism industry, effective digital marketing strategies, including the use of social media, search engine optimization (SEO), and targeted advertising, can significantly impact the attractiveness of a destination [16].

This study incorporated digital marketing theories to explore how various digital marketing interactions—such as the use of social media, online reviews, and targeted advertisements—affect the intention to visit Libyan destinations. The hypothesis was that positive digital marketing interactions would lead to higher engagement and a greater likelihood of tourists choosing to visit.

2.4 Influence of User-Friendly Accessibility on Tourists' Decision-Making: A significant aspect of this study was the exploration of user-friendly accessibility, a relatively under-researched area in the context of tourism. This paper aimed to fill the gap in the literature by examining how the ease of accessing and navigating online platforms influences tourists' decision-making processes and satisfaction, ultimately leading to the intention to visit.

User-friendly accessibility refers to the design and functionality of digital platforms that allow users to easily find and interact with the information they seek [17]. In tourism, this includes the accessibility of websites, the clarity of information presented, and the ease with which tourists can complete actions such as booking accommodations or finding travel tips [1].

The study posits that higher user-friendly accessibility contributes to lower cognitive load, which enhances user satisfaction by making information retrieval and decision-making processes more efficient and less frustrating [18]. When tourists find it easy to access and understand the information on a destination's website or social media page, they are more likely to develop positive perceptions of the destination, trust the information provided, and ultimately form a stronger intention to visit [17].

This aspect is particularly crucial for Libyan Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs), as improving user-friendly accessibility can be a key strategy in enhancing tourist satisfaction and encouraging more visits. By addressing this gap in the literature, the study not only contributes to the academic understanding of user-friendly accessibility but also provides practical insights for improving the digital presence of Libyan destinations.

To conclude, the very purpose of this study, was in succeeding to understand how online information quality, user-friendly accessibility, and digital marketing interactions affect tourists' intention to visit- as in what are the factors that lead them to decide on a particular destination? These decisions, as was mentioned countless times before, are influenced by a series of other behaviours that consequently lead them to think in such a way. Simply, before buying products as consumers we engage in dialogues (this is because we are social animals), and engaging in dialogues often includes word-of-mouth (i.e., recommendations, interviews etc), customers would also try out other products, they make internal stimulations regarding the product, they would search aimlessly for information about the product etc. before they make the purchase happen.

As marketers, understanding how tourists make such decisions based on the quality of information they receive, how easily they can navigate and access this information, and how effectively digital marketing strategies engage them, is crucial. With this invaluable piece of information, marketers can tailor their strategies to better meet the needs of potential tourists, ultimately increasing their satisfaction and the likelihood of them choosing a particular destination to visit.

2.5 The Study Hypotheses:

H0: Online Information Quality (OIQ) does not affect the behavioural intentions of tourists.

H1: Online Information Quality affects the behavioural intentions of tourists.

H0: User-Friendly Accessibility (UFA) does not affect the behavioural intentions of tourists.

H1: User-Friendly Accessibility affects the behavioural intentions of tourists.

H0: Digital Marketing Interactions (DMI) do not affect the behavioural intentions of tourists.

H1: Digital Marketing Interactions affect the behavioural intentions of tourists.

3. Literature Reviews

Human beings are complex creatures, akin to a puzzle with behaviors that need to be understood piece by piece. To comprehend these behaviors, one must delve into their origins. Consumers are no different; they navigate a web of influences that shape their decision-making, adding depth to their choices [19]. Psychology seeks to understand these behaviors by examining the underlying thoughts, emotions, and motivations that drive individuals. Recent literature has introduced several theories and models to explain the foundation of human behavior, including the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which emphasizes the role of intention in guiding actions [20].

The Theory of Planned Behavior, first introduced by Ajzen (1991), posits that our intention to engage in a specific behavior, such as traveling to a particular destination, is the most accurate predictor of whether we will follow through. This intention, however, is influenced by key factors: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control [20].

Actions are often influenced by a chain of behaviors leading to a certain outcome, meaning that consumers' actions are affected by their thoughts and behaviors before making a decision. Information obtained online, through platforms like social media, directly impacts tourists' choices and actions about traveling. A study by Kim et al. (2007) revealed that females tend to value general travel websites and official destination websites more when planning their trips, whereas males do not prioritize these channels as highly [21].

Moreover, females also rate printed travel materials, such as brochures and guidebooks, as more valuable sources of information. This suggests that women are more detailed and precise when extracting information, whether online or offline. The credibility of the source plays a crucial role; previous research suggests that the truthfulness and reliability of information from credible sources significantly influence customer perceptions and opinions [22].

Kim et al. (2007) also highlighted that information search facilitates decision-making by reducing risk and uncertainty, especially when information is scarce or lacks credibility. This can lead to frustration, diminishing motivation to engage further or even to visit a destination.

Compared to men, women tend to face a different set of judgements based on the decisions they make and the information they process. Men are often more impulsive and less aware of the risks involved in their decision-making process, particularly in travel-related decisions. Kim et al. (2007) found that, on average, more females spent time on the internet and social media and had positive attitudes towards both online and offline information sources.

A crucial aspect of understanding the psychology and dynamics of individual travelers is grasping how they form their perspectives about a destination based on the information they gather online. Psychologically, gathering information online about a product or destination is not just about obtaining it but involves discovering alternatives and making decisions before finalizing a purchase

[23]. The consumer decision-making process mirrors that of tourists, both aiming to acquire sufficient, valid, and reliable information before making a final decision.

One aspect that makes the consumer behavior decision-making process particularly compelling is the influence of word-of-mouth, whether electronic or in-person. Lee and Shin (2014) suggested that "people take the quantity of reviews as an indicator of the product's popularity or value." Another study noted that approximately 68% of consumers consider online reviews and recommendations about a destination before reserving their trips [1,24].

The importance of information quality cannot be overstated, as it significantly influences user satisfaction, which in turn affects trust. Research indicates that when users receive high-quality information that meets their needs, their overall satisfaction increases [14,23]. This satisfaction can lead to a stronger sense of trust in various Tourist Destination Online Contents (TDOC), such as official websites and social media channels [6].

TDOCs are particularly significant because tourists often turn to online sources for readily available information about a destination. These platforms enable tourists to arrange accommodations, make travel plans, search for further information, and complete necessary transactions for their visit [1]. High-quality TDOCs can attract visitors, enhance their experiences, and encourage positive word-of-mouth marketing. For instance, compelling visuals on a destination's website can pique interest, while detailed blog posts offering insider tips can add value to a trip. Conversely, negative reviews or inaccurate information can deter potential tourists and harm a destination's reputation [6].

Another study by Vila et al. (2018) suggested that the ease of accessing high-quality information also contributes to user confidence. If a platform is user-friendly and presents information clearly and organized, users are more likely to trust it. A seamless user experience, combined with quality content, reinforces the perception that the platform values its users and is committed to providing the best possible information [1].

Vila et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of destination marketing organizations prioritizing website accessibility and complying with legal requirements to ensure equal access to information for all. However, the study also highlighted prevalent shortcomings in European travel websites, such as navigation challenges, compatibility issues, adaptability, text alternatives, and integration with assistive technologies.

Despite Norway's high expenditure on disability policies and a large population benefiting from accessibility programmers, the country faced significant website accessibility issues, particularly with navigation and link descriptions. Similarly, the United Kingdom and Germany, which have a large representation of disabled people and a significant share of the accessible tourism market, also exhibited many website accessibility warnings, primarily concerning compatibility and validation issues [17].

Websites designed with clarity and simplicity help reduce cognitive load, making it easier for users to process information. High cognitive load can lead to frustration and site abandonment. Hewitt and He (2022) found that when users face fewer distractions and can easily locate relevant information, their overall experience improves, increasing the likelihood of completing desired actions, such as making a booking or sharing content.

However, despite the importance of accessible online content, the literature on usability and user-friendliness remains scarce. Many studies also conflate the concept of "accessibility," which can refer to both physical environmental accessibility and digital/online accessibility. This confusion is

understandable, as both types of accessibility are crucial for creating an attractive, inclusive image of a destination—one that is accessible to all people, regardless of ability. More work is needed to disentangle the different meanings of accessibility and provide guidance on how destinations can optimize their digital presence to serve the diverse needs of visitors.

In a study conducted by Deng and Liu (2021), the authors argued that user-generated content (UGC), such as photos posted on platforms like Instagram, offers valuable insights into destination image formation. By using facial and image recognition technologies to analyze a dataset of Beijing tourism photos, the study revealed significant differences in preferred points of interest (POIs) and background imagery based on tourists' age and gender preferences.

In recent studies comparing professional photos with UGC pictorials posted online, UGC photos were seen as more realistic and appealing, making a better impression on potential tourists than photos generated and modified for professional travel sites [16]. According to Bakhshi et al (2014), approximately 38% of photos shown online containing people's faces are more popular than those without, which further supports the theory that tourists' gaze reflects the most valuable and vivid parts of a destination [25].

Destinations are like brands; they must be experienced to be trusted. The more tourists interact with official destination platforms, such as a destination's website or social media channels like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Pinterest, the more these interactions shape their perceptions and inform their travel decisions [15].

Social media plays a crucial role in influencing the decisions of different generations, as Roller (2022) states that over 90% of millennials are influenced by social media international travel decisions. Meaning if you're not actively promoting on social media, you're potentially missing out on reaching a growing market with disposable income. Millennials and Gen Z are recognized for their consumption and use of such platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram to access content that is easily accessible and visually appealing [27]. Visual content, particularly photographs, profoundly influences millennials' perceptions of a destination's attractiveness by showcasing the destination's popularity and key features.

A Polish study on Generation Y's use of social media and other digital platforms for communication purposes found that more than half of the young population used Facebook, and about 61.8% used Instagram. This finding aligns with another study by Jiménez-Barreto et al. (2020), which suggested that Instagram stands out from other platforms because of its visual experience, while Facebook is valued for its multimedia richness and access to other users' opinions and recommendations, making it prevalent in attracting attention to destinations and fueling the intention to visit.

3.1 Reflections: The literature on consumer behavior, digital marketing, and the decision-making process in tourism provides a robust foundation for understanding the intricate dynamics at play when tourists decide whether to visit a destination. The importance of online information quality, accessibility, and digital marketing interactions cannot be overstated, especially in the context of tourism in Libya, where these factors are increasingly shaping the intentions of potential visitors.

One of the key insights from the literature is the role of information quality in influencing tourist behavior. High-quality information that is accurate, reliable, and meets the needs of users not only increases satisfaction but also builds trust in the sources, whether they are official destination websites, social media platforms, or other digital content. In the Libyan context, where tourism infrastructure is still developing, ensuring that online information is of the highest quality is crucial.

This is particularly important as potential visitors may rely heavily on online sources due to limited availability of other forms of information about the destination.

The literature also emphasizes the importance of user-friendly accessibility. The ease with which users can navigate websites and access the information they need plays a significant role in shaping their perceptions and intentions. In Libya, where digital literacy and internet accessibility may vary among potential tourists, ensuring that tourism websites and digital platforms are accessible to a broad audience is essential. This includes considering factors such as website design, mobile compatibility, and the clarity of information presented. A seamless user experience reduces cognitive load, minimizes frustration, and increases the likelihood of tourists completing desired actions, such as booking a trip or sharing content.

Moreover, digital marketing interactions have emerged as powerful tools in influencing tourists' intentions. The literature suggests that platforms like social media are not just channels for information dissemination but are also spaces where tourists can engage with destinations through user-generated content (UGC), reviews, and social interactions. In Libya, leveraging digital marketing to create compelling narratives and visuals about the destination can significantly enhance its attractiveness, particularly among younger, tech-savvy audiences who rely heavily on these platforms for travel inspiration.

The research conducted in Libya, therefore, stands to offer substantial benefits to Libyan marketers and Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs). By understanding how online information quality, accessibility, and digital marketing interactions influence tourist behavior, these organizations can tailor their strategies to better meet the needs and expectations of potential visitors. This involves not only improving the technical aspects of their digital presence but also ensuring that the content they provide is engaging, trustworthy, and accessible.

Furthermore, the unique cultural and historical assets of Libya can be more effectively marketed through these channels, appealing to niche markets interested in cultural tourism. Digital platforms offer the opportunity to highlight lesser-known destinations within Libya, showcase the country's rich history, and provide virtual experiences that can inspire future visits. By doing so, Libyan DMOs can position the country as a unique and attractive destination in the competitive global tourism market.

In conclusion, the reflection on the literature highlights the critical role that online information quality, accessibility, and digital marketing interactions play in shaping tourist intentions. For Libya, where the tourism industry has immense potential for growth, understanding and leveraging these factors can lead to more effective marketing strategies, improved tourist satisfaction, and ultimately, increased visitor numbers. The insights gained from this study will not only benefit Libyan marketers but also contribute to the broader field of tourism studies by providing a case study of how digital factors influence tourism in a developing country context.

4. Methodology

Briefly, the study used a quantitative research approach, employing a survey-structured questionnaire to gather data from the general public that is currently residing in Libya. In addition, the questionnaire was carefully translated from English into Arabic to attain more accuracy from the respondents. Moreover, the survey questionnaire consisted of around 18 questions divided methodically into four sections, to measure the variables separately, as well as, test their effects on the main variable which is

in this case the intention to visit a destination. Furthermore, respondents were asked to answer on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates strong disagreement, and 5 indicates strong agreement:

Table 1: Likert’s Measurement Scale

Range	4.21-5.00	3.41-4.20	2.61-3.40	1.81-2.60	1.00-1.80
Agreement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Classification	Positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Negative

On the other hand, demographical information was carefully added to the survey questionnaire to measure both the behavior of the respondents towards their usage of the internet or social media overall as well as, their demographic dimensions, which help in gathering on-the-surface information indicating whether females are more inclined to use social media for travel purposes as opposed to their male counterparts. Not to mention, that these minor measurements to the overall information can magnify the reliability of the data collected from the respondents.

The study employed simple random sampling, a probability sampling technique, to gather data from readily available respondents until the desired sample size 400 was reached. Then the data was analyzed using IBM SPSS software to ensure that it was reliable and effective as the data itself was complex.

4.1 Population and the Sample Size: This study aims to understand the factors that influence people's decisions to visit tourist destinations in Libya. This includes both local travelers (Libyan citizens) and international tourists visiting Libya for leisure, business, or extended stays.

Although the total population of Libya is around 6.96 million with a growth rate of approximately 1.07%, specific data on domestic and international tourist volumes over the last five years is currently unavailable.

The lack of tourism statistics in Libya shows the need for this research. By collecting data from a representative sample of the target population, the study aims to uncover the factors influencing potential tourists' decisions to visit destinations within Libya.

According to the Krejci and Morgan (1970) sample size table, a sample size of around 400 individuals would be suitable if the intention is to target the entire population of 6.96 million. However, depending on available resources and the desired level of accuracy, a smaller yet statistically significant sample size might also be feasible [27]. The final sample size determination will be addressed in the sampling methods section of the research methodology.

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361

45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	1000000	384

Figure 1: Table of Determining Sample Size (S), where N is a Population Size (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970).

4.2 Sampling Technique: To obtain a representative sample of potential tourists in Libya. The study used a probability sampling technique called simple random sampling. This method provides an equal chance of selection for every member of the population. We aimed to survey approximately 400 respondents. While it was desirable to have a normal distribution in the data for certain statistical tests, it's not always essential, especially with larger samples. In our case, with a sample size of 400, the central limit theorem assures us that the distribution of sample means was approximately normal, even if the underlying population distribution was not perfectly normal. Moreover, a sample size of 400 is likely sufficient to yield statistically significant results, considering Libya's population size of around 6.96 million.

Furthermore, the collected data was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics software. Descriptive statistics were used to understand the sample characteristics and distribution of key variables. Further analysis involved techniques such as correlation and regression to examine the relationships between factors like online information quality, user-friendly accessibility, and digital marketing interactions with tourist intentions.

Overall, through a well-defined sampling approach and leveraging the analytical capabilities of SPSS, this study aimed to derive meaningful insights from the data collected and contribute to a deeper understanding of tourist decision-making in Libya.

4.3 Data Collection: To understand the factors influencing tourist intentions, this study employed a self-administered questionnaire designed to gather data from a sample of potential tourists. This instrument functioned as a key tool for capturing insights into their decision-making processes and travel preferences.

The questionnaire itself was meticulously crafted and comprised of five distinct sections. The initial section (demographic information) consisted of six targeted questions. These questions served the purpose of collecting background information about the respondents, encompassing factors such as age, gender, nationality, and, importantly, their social media or in other words their internet rate usage. One specific question delved deeper, aiming to comprehend the significance of social media in the lives of the participants and their level of dependence on these platforms. This demographic data provides a

valuable foundation for understanding participant behaviors and identifying trends within the target audience.

4.4 Unit of Analysis: The unit of analysis is a vital part of any research study. It is the entity that is examined and analyzed to address the research problem. It determines what the collected data describe and what the analysis focuses on, establishing the boundaries for what is included and excluded in the study. In a study conducted by Casteel and Bridier (2021), they emphasized its significance by stating it as the "most important part of any research," as the entire study process depends on it.

Furthermore, when the research aims to explore individual characteristics such as psychological constructs, perceptions, and behaviors, the individual becomes the unit of analysis (28). Therefore, this research investigates the factors influencing intentions to visit tourist destinations. Additionally, our unit of analysis for this study is the individual potential tourist, by aligning this choice directly with the research question, which centers on understanding the psychological construct of intentionality at the individual level.

Data was collected through surveys distributed to the general public, encompassing a broad range of potential tourists. The analysis will delve into individual decision-making processes to identify how online information quality, user-friendly accessibility of travel websites, and digital marketing interactions on various platforms influence their intention to visit a specific destination. While social media usage and interactions play a role in shaping these intentions, the focus lies on understanding the "why" behind individual choices. By examining individual-level behavioral factors, the study aimed to shed light on the complex decision-making processes that lead potential tourists to form intentions to visit a particular destination.

4.5 Instrument of Validity: "Haynes, Richard, and Kubany (1995) defined content validity as, the degree to which elements of an assessment instrument are relevant to, and representative of, the targeted construct for a particular assessment purpose" (29)(30).

Hence, to ensure the questionnaire accurately captures the intended constructs of this study, we employed content validity by having academic professionals and scholars review the items for comprehensiveness and relevance to the target audience. This process was particularly crucial for the Arabic translation, where we encountered limitations in language usage that required careful attention to maintain the intended meaning. Additionally, by addressing these complexities, we ensured the Arabic version conveyed the same depth of meaning as the English version. Distributing the questionnaire in Arabic not only allows us to reach a wider range of potential tourists but also fosters a deeper connection with the target population by presenting the survey in their native language.

Moreover, the design construct of the questionnaire was initially inspired by a study by Armutcu et al. (2023) to assess the influence of social media on tourists' behavior, and the various factors that are used to examine the effect of the variable being studied. In addition to this, the original questionnaire consisted of around 33 questions, but in our case, we only used 18 of these questions to match the relevancy of our study, which includes 6 more questions for the demographic information section- a critical starting point in all academic research.

All 24 questions included in the questionnaire aim to gather comprehensive information from respondents about their demographic factors, views on information quality, usage of digital social platforms for education, and behaviors related to the intention to visit. Additionally, the questions provide respondents with the freedom to express their thoughts on the subject matter and answer according to their beliefs and personal truth.

5. Results

Data analysis was conducted using the SPSS software (version 27). A range of tests was utilized to achieve a thorough understanding of the data.

First, frequency analysis explored the demographic characteristics of the respondents, revealing any potential differences within the sample. Next, reliability testing ensured the internal consistency of the questionnaire. Cronbach's Alpha specifically assessed the reliability of the measurement instrument used in the research. Data normality was then evaluated, and due to a non-normal distribution, subsequent analyses followed non-parametric methods. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Spearman test served as the primary non-parametric test in this instance.

Finally, to examine the research hypotheses, additional tests were conducted to analyze the relationships between the independent variables and their influence on the dependent variable. Through this multi-faceted approach to data analysis, we were able to glean valuable insights into the research questions and hypotheses.

5.1 Instrument of Reliability: “Reliability concerns the extent to which a measurement of a phenomenon provides stable and consistent results (31). Testing for reliability is important as it refers to the consistency across the parts of a measuring instrument. Hinton et al. (2004) suggested four cut-off points for reliability, which include excellent reliability (0.90 and above), high reliability (0.70-0.90), moderate reliability (0.50-0.70), and low reliability (0.50 and below)” [32,33].

To assess the consistency of the survey instrument, a Cronbach's Alpha test was employed. This test evaluates the internal reliability of the questionnaire, which refers to the degree to which the questions measure the intended concept consistently. The results, presented in Table 2, indicate strong reliability for all variables within the study.

Table 2: Reliability Test.

Variables of Study	Cronbach Alpha	(N) of Items
Intention to visit	0.708	4
Online information Quality	0.748	5
User-Friendly Accessibility	0.818	5
Digital Marketing Interactives	0.854	4
Total	0.903	18

In Table 2, it is evident that the measurement instrument itself is reliable. Each variable's reliability coefficient surpassed the commonly recommended threshold of 0.70 [34,35]. Thanks to these high-reliability values, we can place confidence in the survey's ability to achieve the primary research objective: measuring the influence of online information quality, user-friendly accessibility, and digital marketing interactions on tourists' intention to visit specific destinations.

5.5 Demographic Information: In this section of the data analysis, our goal was to delve deeper into the relationship between the participants and their response rate, with accordance to their demographic data. The initial segment of the questionnaire covered the demographical data, encompassing gender, age, nationality, education level, occupation, and a pivotal question that directly engages the participant: the duration of their daily internet usage.

Table 3: Gender of Respondents.

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	141	33.9
Female	275	66.1
Total	416	100.0

In Table 3, it is shown that the majority of respondents were female, accounting for 66.1% of the responses, while male respondents comprised approximately 33.9% of the total. This suggests that female solo or group travellers heavily rely on accessible, high-quality online information when choosing a tourist destination. However, it's important to consider that this gender imbalance might indicate potential bias in the sample.

Table 4: Age of Respondents.

Age	Frequency	Percent
18 or less than 30 years	150	36.1
30 or less than 50 years	183	44.0
More than 50 years	83	20.0
Total	416	100.0

Furthermore, according to Table 4, the findings reveal that 44.0% of respondents belonged to the age group of 30-50, while 36.1% represented the age range of 18-30. As expected, individuals aged 50 or above exhibited a notably lower response rate of 20.0%. Therefore, these results strongly suggest that the majority of respondents were predominantly younger, aligning with the anticipated notion that this demographic possesses greater digital literacy and, hence, relies more on information that is extracted through digital platforms.

Table 5: Nationality of Responders.

Nationality	Frequency	Percent
Libyan	373	89.66
Non-Libyan	43	10.34
Total	416	100.0

Based on the data presented in Table 5, it is evident that the majority of respondents, accounting for 89.66%, were of Libyan nationality. This suggests that the respondents primarily consisted of domestic tourists, while international tourists who visited Libya represented approximately 10.34% of the total.

Table 6: Education Level.

Education	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	64	15.38
Undergraduate	206	49.52
Masters	85	20.43
PhD	61	14.66
Total	416	100.00

The educational background of the respondents varied, as indicated in Table 6. The largest proportion (49.52%) held an undergraduate degree, while 20.43% had a Master's degree. Diploma holders made up 15.38% of the sample, followed by those with doctorates at 14.66%.

Table 7: Occupation.

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Student	31	7.45
Employee	235	56.49
Self-Employed	140	33.65
Retired	10	2.40
Total	416	100.00

Table 7 shows that 56.49% of respondents were employed, 33.65% were self-employed, 7.45% were students, and 2.40% were retirees.

Table 8: Internet Usage.

Internet Usage	Frequency	Percent
Less than an hour	14	3.37
1-3 hours	146	35.10
More than 3 hours	256	61.54
Total	416	100.00

In Table 8, we examine the internet and digital platform usage of the participants, focusing on social media. Higher usage rates enhance the validity of the results, as they show that a significant portion of participants (61.54%) use social media for more than 3 hours daily. This is in contrast to those who use it for 3 hours or less.

4.6 Normality Test: A normality test helps determine whether a set of data follows a normal distribution (also known as a bell curve). If the data isn't normally distributed, a nonparametric analysis is often a more suitable approach (36). In our case, the data exhibited a non-normal distribution, making nonparametric tests more appropriate for our analysis.

Table 9: Normality Test.

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Intention to Visit	0.139	416	0.000

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed that all our variables had significance values (p-values) less than 0.05. This indicates that the data wasn't normally distributed. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, we employed nonparametric methods for analysing this data.

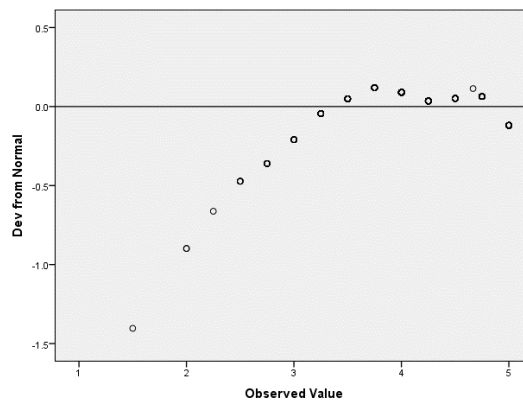


Figure 2: Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot of Intention to Visit.

Additionally, Figure 2 strengthens this point by showing a detrended representation of the data distribution. In a normal distribution, the data points typically form a bell-shaped curve. However, the observed pattern of the dependent variable (intention to visit) differs from this expected pattern, suggesting a non-normal distribution of the data.

4.7 Hypothesis Testing: Hypothesis testing is more often than not “considered as the principal instrument in research”, and its main function is to make “inferences about a population parameter’s using data from a sample.” (37).

Most research studies include a dedicated section for hypothesis testing. This test evaluates whether to reject or retain the null hypothesis based on the data distribution, the chosen analysis method then depends on the outcome of the hypothesis test.

In our case, to assess the validity of the null hypothesis, we first calculated the probability value (p-value) of the observed data. Following the common convention, a lower p-value (closer to 0) indicates stronger evidence against the null hypothesis. In this scenario, we would likely reject the null hypothesis and proceed with alternative analyses.

To lay the groundwork for our analysis, we will first present the research hypothesis and then explore its potential impact on the dependent variable (intention to visit):

H0: Online Information Quality (OIQ) does not affect the behavioural intentions of tourists.

H1: Online Information Quality affects the behavioural intentions of tourists.

H0: User-Friendly Accessibility (UFA) does not affect the behavioural intentions of tourists.

H1: User-Friendly Accessibility affects the behavioural intentions of tourists.

H0: Digital Marketing Interactions (DMI) do not affect the behavioural intentions of tourists.

H1: Digital Marketing Interactions affect the behavioural intentions of tourists.

Table 10: Correlations.

		Online Information Quality	User-Friendly Accessibility	Digital Marketing Interactions
Intention to Visit	Correlation Coefficient	0.533**	0.471**	0.392**

	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000
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Our first hypothesis investigated the potential influence of online information quality on tourists’ intention to visit a destination. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.533, indicating a low to moderate positive relationship between these variables. Furthermore, the significance level (p-value) of 0.000, less than the commonly accepted threshold of 0.05, suggests that we can reject the null hypothesis.

In simpler terms, the observed relationship between online information quality and intention to visit is statistically significant. Therefore, we can conclude that higher-quality online information likely plays a role in influencing tourists’ decisions to visit a destination.

H0: Online Information Quality (OIQ) does not affect the behavioral intentions of tourists.	Rejected
H1: Online information quality affects the behavioral intentions of tourists.	Accepted

Our second hypothesis examined the potential role of user-friendly accessibility of online tourist destination content in influencing tourists’ visit intentions. The analysis yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.471, suggesting a low to moderate positive relationship between these variables. However, the significance level (p-value) of 0.000, which is less than the standard threshold of 0.05, indicates that we can reject the null hypothesis. While statistically significant, it’s important to consider the strength of the correlation.

In this case, the relatively low to moderate coefficient suggests that user-friendly accessibility may be one factor among many influencing tourist decisions, and not necessarily a dominant one. Further research may be needed to explore the specific aspects of user-friendly design that influence tourists' intentions most.

H0: User-friendly accessibility (UFA) does not affect the behavioral intentions of tourists.	Rejected
H1: User-friendly accessibility affects the behavioral intentions of tourists.	Accepted

Our third hypothesis examined the impact of digital marketing interactions on tourists’ intention to visit. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.392, indicating a moderately positive relationship between these variables. This suggests that there is a statistically significant association between digital marketing interactions and intention to visit. Interestingly, the significance level (p-value) of 0.000 is significantly lower than the accepted threshold of 0.05, leading us to reject the null hypothesis. In simpler terms, this means that the observed relationship between digital marketing interactions and intention to visit is statistically significant.

H0: Digital Marketing Interactions (DMI) do not affect the behavioral intentions of tourists.	Rejected
H1: Digital Marketing Interactions have an effect on the behavioral intentions of tourists.	Accepted

ists.	
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However, it is important to note that although there is a positive relationship, the strength of the correlation implies that digital marketing interactions may serve as a supportive factor in tourist decision-making. It has the potential to influence some tourists but may not be the dominant factor for everyone. Further research can explore strategies to enhance the effectiveness of digital marketing in attracting tourists.

Table 11: Summary of the Tested Hypothesis.

H0: Online Information Quality (OIQ) does not affect on the behavioral intentions of tourists.	Rejected
H1: Online Information Quality has an effect on the behavioral intentions of tourists.	Accepted
H0: User-Friendly Accessibility (UFA) does not affect on the behavioral intentions of tourists.	Rejected
H1: User-Friendly Accessibility has an effect on the behavioral intentions of tourists.	Accepted
H0: Digital Marketing Interactions (DMI) do no affect on the behavioral intentions of tourists.	Rejected
H1: Digital Marketing Interactions have an affect on the behavioral intentions of tourists	Accepted

6. Discussion

This study aimed to explore the impact of online information quality, user-friendly accessibility, and digital marketing interactions on tourists' behavioral intentions to visit a destination. We hypothesized that each of these independent variables would have a distinct effect on the dependent variable, intention to visit. Therefore, the following discussion analyzed the findings about these objectives, ultimately contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing tourist decision-making.

Firstly, the findings revealed that the majority of respondents were female, accounting for about two-thirds of the sample size (66.1%), with an age range predominantly between 30 and 50 years old (44%). This indicates that a significant portion of respondents were either millennials or older women who have a more visible digital presence and pay close attention to the quality of online information about destinations. These results align well with Kim et al. (2007), who also found that females are subject to different sets of judgements directly influenced by the decisions they make and the information they process, compared to men. Furthermore, Kim et al. (2007) suggested that, on average, women spend more time on the internet and social media than men, resulting in a more positive attitude towards online information sources. While this finding may generate significant scholarly interest in the future, concerns about its generalizability arise due to the possibility that the sample may not adequately represent a diverse population.

Additionally, another study by Ramkissoon and Nunkoo (2012) reflects similar findings, indicating

that travelers who exhibit strong feminine traits tend to engage in a more thorough and comprehensive information search, drawing on both internal and external sources before making any decisions. In other words, travelers with high levels of femininity, such as women, tend to give equal weight to information relevant to themselves and others, ultimately seeking to assimilate all available information before arriving at a conclusive decision [38].

Secondly, another notable finding was the high rate of social media usage among participants. A significant number spent over three hours daily on these platforms. Given the rapid growth of digitalization, the heavy reliance on social media, especially among Gen Z and Gen Y, is evident. This trend is critical for marketers, as Roller (2022) reports that over 90% of Millennials are influenced by social platforms. Consequently, a strong social media presence is essential for reaching a substantial portion of the potential tourist market. This finding also correlates with other scholarly studies by researchers such as Kim et al., (2007); Ramkissoon & Nunkoo (2012); Roller (2022); and Werenowska & Rzepka, (2020); Javed et al., (2020) [39].

Thirdly, another finding highlighted the critical role of online information quality and user-friendly accessibility in determining tourist decision-making processes aimed at the intention to visit a destination. According to Table 10, online information quality (0.533) and user-friendly accessibility (0.471) have a significant effect on the intention to visit. This demonstrates that the quality of online information about a destination is crucial in determining whether tourists will visit that destination. Additionally, the user-friendliness of online services positively affects tourists' intentions to visit.

Multiple scholars such as Choi et al., (2017); Lee & Shin (2014); Oliveira et al., (2019); Tan & Chen (2012); and Veasna et al., (2013) corroborate the notion that online information significantly influences destination understanding and travel intent. Veasna et al. (2013) emphasized that high-quality, credible information plays a crucial role in the decision-making process for tourists, indicating that travellers often seek out user-generated content, such as reviews and testimonials, to inform their choices about destinations, accommodations, and activities. When TDOCs (Tourist Destination Organisations and Communities) provide credible information, it enhances the likelihood that tourists will make informed decisions, leading to more satisfying travel experiences [6]. Conversely, misinformation can lead to poor choices and negative experiences, potentially harming the reputation of the information provided online by marketers.

User-friendly accessibility is a critical determinant of tourist attraction. Studies such as Hewitt and He (2022) have underscored the negative impact of cognitive overload on website usability. Conversely, platforms that prioritize intuitive navigation and engaging user experiences foster higher visitor satisfaction. These findings highlight the importance of designing websites that are not only visually appealing but also functionally efficient to optimize tourist engagement. Another study by Vila et al. (2018) echoed this sentiment, emphasizing that accessibility is not just physical but also intangible in many aspects.

Moreover, the study revealed a connection between active social media use and the range of information sources consulted by tourists. Several research papers, including Armutcu et al., (2023); Jiménez-Barreto et al., (2020); and Werenowska & Rzepka, (2020), have agreed that the intensity of social media usage can enhance the perceived attractiveness of a destination. Frequent users are more likely to encounter visually appealing content, such as stunning images and engaging videos, which can create a positive image of the destination. Studies indicate that social media marketing can

improve destination attractiveness, leading to increased tourist intentions to visit. The more users engage with such content, the stronger the influence on their travel decisions.

7. Conclusion

This study has revealed the significant influence of gender demographics, social media usage, online information quality, and user-friendly accessibility on tourists' decision-making processes. The findings emphasize the importance of catering to the specific information-seeking behaviors of female travelers, leveraging social media for destination marketing, and prioritizing high-quality, user-friendly online experiences to optimize tourist engagement and satisfaction. These insights provide valuable implications for destination marketers and tourism organizations aiming to meet the evolving needs of digital-savvy tourists and enhance the overall travel experience.

7.1 Limitations: This study has several limitations that influence the generalizability of its findings. Firstly, financial and time constraints limited the research scope and sample size. A larger budget and more time could have allowed for a more comprehensive data collection process and recruitment of a more diverse participant pool.

Secondly, the study sample consisted of a disproportionate number of female respondents. This gender bias may have skewed the results towards information-seeking behaviors and preferences more typical of female tourists. Future research should aim for a more balanced sample across genders to provide a more comprehensive understanding of tourist decision-making processes.

Finally, the study focused solely on Libyan respondents. This limits the generalizability of the findings to tourist populations outside of Libya. Future study could explore the information-seeking behaviors and online information preferences of international tourists considering destinations like Libya. This broader investigation would provide a richer understanding of how online information shapes tourist decision-making across different cultures and nationalities.

Overall, these limitations can be effectively addressed in future research, leading to a more comprehensive and generalizable understanding of the factors influencing tourists' decision-making processes.

8. Recommendations and Implications

This study underscores the critical role of online information in shaping tourist destination choices. In the digital age, travelers rely heavily on online resources to research potential destinations, and the quality, authenticity, and accessibility of this information significantly influence their decision-making. Here, we explore actionable recommendations for tourism destinations and the broader implications for the industry as a whole.

Building trust with potential visitors is paramount for any tourist destination. This study highlights the importance of crafting and disseminating online content that accurately captures the essence of the destination. Captivating visuals, comprehensive descriptions, and information that aligns with the actual tourist experience are key elements. Tourists who arrive to find a destination that lives up to its online portrayal are more likely to have a positive experience and become repeat visitors or enthusiastic advocates. Transparency is crucial in this regard. By ensuring online content reflects reality and delivers on promised expectations, destinations can build stronger relationships with potential visitors.

The findings presented exciting opportunities for the tourism industry to leverage the power of digital platforms. Destination marketers can navigate the challenges of competing in a crowded online space by

providing authentic experiences while capitalizing on the ability of these platforms to reach and engage with potential tourists. This involves showcasing the destination's cultural heritage, historical significance, and present-day offerings through compelling narratives and interactive content. Social media and digital marketing channels can be particularly effective tools, allowing destinations to connect with potential visitors on a personal level and foster a sense of community.

Furthermore, the quality, reliability, and accessibility of online information significantly impact tourist destination choices. By harnessing the power of digital tools, tourism providers can enhance the user experience by providing accurate, up-to-date information in an easily digestible format. This includes utilizing clear website navigation, offering multilingual content, and ensuring mobile-friendliness to cater to users across various devices. Building trust through accessibility and reliable information is essential for influencing tourist decision-making in a positive way.

As for the ever-growing number of online media users, it is crucial for tourism providers and Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) to understand the substantial influence of online travel information sources on destination image. Online reviews, social media comments, and travel blogs all contribute to shaping public perception. By actively managing their online presence, destinations can cultivate a positive image that attracts tourists and fosters a thriving tourism industry. This might involve engaging with online communities, responding to reviews (both positive and negative), and utilizing AI-powered technology to identify tourist interest areas and enhance their online visibility.

By implementing these recommendations and staying attuned to the evolving digital landscape, tourist destinations can leverage the power of online information to build trust, attract visitors, and ensure a sustainable tourism future.

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