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The Role of Digital Marketing Communication Strategies Through Social Media Networks in Developing the Tourism Sector in the Saudi City of Jeddah: A Survey Study of King Abdulaziz University Students (*)

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Abstract

The study aims to explore the impact of digital marketing communication strategies through social media networks on the development of the tourism sector in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The study is based on both the Relationship Marketing Theory and the Mass Communication Theory. It is a descriptive study, and a sample of 400 students from King Abdulaziz University was selected. The study found that the majority of the sample (54.5%) are constantly exposed to tourism content on social media. Additionally, (60.3%) of the sample are exposed to tourism content on social media for four hours or more daily, indicating a high level of engagement with this type of content. Moreover, (66.3%) of the sample are exposed to tourism content on social media daily, reflecting their ongoing interaction with this type of content. The platform "TikTok" emerged as the most favored social media platform for the participants to engage with tourism content, with (81.3%) of participants actively engaging with it. The personal computer or laptop is the most commonly used device by the sample to follow tourism content on social media, with (69.1%) of the total media used, followed by smartphones at (68.0%).

The results also reveal the success of digital marketing strategies through social media in enhancing the image of Jeddah as a tourist destination. The campaigns are distinguished by content diversity, reliable sources, and rich media usage, which helped in promoting positive perceptions and forming a strong image of the city. However, some aspects can be improved, such as increasing the focus on designing more personalized and interactive content to achieve deeper communication with the target audience. The study established a moderate positive relationship between the intensity of King Abdulaziz University students' exposure to tourism content on social media and the impact of social media on marketing communication for Jeddah's tourism. A moderate to strong positive relationship was found between the intensity of exposure to tourism content on social media and the evaluation of the effectiveness of tourism communication via social media for Jeddah. Furthermore, a moderate

(*)The Paper was received on December 26, 2024, and accepted for publication on March 01, 2025.

positive relationship was confirmed between the intensity of exposure to tourism content and the effectiveness of marketing communication through social media in enhancing Jeddah's image as a tourist destination.

The study recommends enhancing innovative tourism content. Given the high level of engagement by students with tourism content on social media, tourism marketers should focus on developing innovative and attractive content that aligns with the interests of the target audience.

Keywords: Digital Marketing Communication - Tourism Sector Development – Relationship Marketing.