

Social Media Presence and Hospitality Business Performance: A Structural Equation Modelling Approach

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Abstract: This research paper investigates the impact of social media presence on the performance of hospitality businesses emphasising on brand awareness, customer engagement, operational efficiency and overall business performance. The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional research design. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 200 owners, managers and marketing executives of hotels, restaurants, cafés, homestays and other hospitality establishments. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, reliability and validity tests, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with AMOS. The measurement model demonstrated adequate reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity and fit of the model. The structural model also had a good fit with $\chi^2/df = 1.18$, CFI = 0.961, TLI = 0.951, RMSEA = 0.057 and SRMR = 0.048. All four hypotheses were supported at $p < .001$. The presence on social media positively influenced brand awareness ($\beta = 0.712$), customer engagement ($\beta = 0.634$), operational efficiency ($\beta = 0.681$), and overall business performance ($\beta = 0.693$). The most associated with social media presence was brand awareness. The results indicate that a consistent and well-executed social media strategy can have positive impacts across several dimensions of hospitality business performance

Keywords: Social Media Presence; Hospitality Industry; Hotel and Restaurant Performance; Brand Awareness; Customer Engagement; Operational Efficiency; Business Performance; Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

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I. INTRODUCTION

The exponential growth of social media in the last few years has radically changed the hospitality industry. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Youtube are not only for entertainment but for search information about hotels and restaurants. Lots of customers like to check social media pages, online reviews, user ratings and photos from other users before booking or visiting a restaurant. For hospitality businesses, social media has become a key communication and marketing tool (Ho et al., 2022; Tajvidi & Karami, 2021).

Social media is becoming a powerful tool for hotels and restaurants to promote their services, communicate offers, introduce new products and directly interact with customers. Regular posts, videos, customer reviews and promotional campaigns can help businesses attract more customers and

create a positive image (Singh et al., 2022; Yost et al., 2021). Also, social media businesses get to know the tastes of consumers and can respond to feedback quickly. With those advantages in mind, many hospitality organisations are investing more time and money in managing their online presence.

It is believed that a good social media presence increases brand awareness, as it makes companies more visible to potential customers. The more people see the content of the hotel or restaurant online, the more likely they are to remember the brand and think of it when making a purchase decision (Mule, 2022). Social media also helps to increase customer engagement through likes, comments, shares and online discussions. Increased engagement can often lead to better relationships with customers but the level of success varies from business to business.

Outside of the marketing benefits, social media can be a plus for hotels and restaurants on a day-to-day basis. It's a quick and inexpensive way to send important information, answer customer questions, gather feedback, and advertise special offers. This can reduce communication delays to a certain degree and improve operating efficiency. This can translate higher customer satisfaction, service quality and overall business performance for the business (Tajvidi & Karami, 2021; Sasitharan & Udayanga, 2022).

Many hotels and restaurants are actively engaging with social media, but there is still a degree of uncertainty about the extent to which it really contributes to different areas of business performance. Some businesses experience better engagement with clients and enhanced brand recognition while others don't get the same results even when they are doing the same things online. So having a social media account is not always better performance.

More specifically, prior research has investigated the link between social media marketing and customer behaviour. There is however less research on a direct impact of social media presence on brand awareness, customer engagement, operational efficiency and overall business performance through a comprehensive research framework. Most of the current studies have only examined one or two outcomes, which leaves a gap in knowledge about the wider effects of social media on hospitality businesses.

The study aims to investigate the impact of social media presence on brand awareness, customer engagement, operational efficiency and overall business performance within the hotel and restaurant industry. The study attempts to get a better understanding of these relationships through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and to provide useful insights for hospitality managers and business owners. The insights can help them craft better social media strategies to elevate their brand, improve customer engagement, streamline operational workflows, and sustain business growth.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

➤ *Social Media Presence*

Social media presence is the activity of a business on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Youtube, and TikTok. Hotels and restaurants are using these platforms to promote their services, communicate with their customers and share updates about their business. Today, social media is one of the most important tools for marketing, as many customers check online information prior to choosing a hotel or restaurant.

Yost et al. (2021) state that if a business is social media active, customers will be more engaged, which can lead to better sales results. The more frequently you update and respond to comments, the more likely it is that your customers will trust you. Tajvidi and Karami (2021) also found that the use of social media, if used properly, along with good marketing strategies can help hotels improve their business performance.

Garrido-Moreno et al. (2018) found that social media can create value for hotels by facilitating customer engagement and strengthening social customer relationship management, which can contribute to improved organisational performance.

D'Souza (2025) also explained that influencer marketing, customer content creation, and regular online communication have become very important for hotels and restaurants. The research shows that having a robust social media presence is fast becoming an essential for hospitality businesses.

➤ *Social Media Presence and Brand Awareness*

Brand awareness is the degree to which a customer can identify or recall a particular hotel or restaurant. The more a consumer recalls a brand the more likely they are to choose it over other competitors. Thru social media businesses will be visible to customers as customers will see photos, videos, advertisements and customer reviews regularly.

Social media activities increase brand awareness and positively impact the image of hospitality businesses (Tajvidi and Karami, 2021). When hotels and restaurants upload good and attractive content regularly, more people get to know the brand. Influencer marketing and content created by users also help businesses reach a wider audience and increase brand awareness, D'Souza (2025) suggested that companies that are very active on social media can build up greater brand awareness than companies that are not as active online. So social media is turning into an effective instrument to build a strong brand image.

➤ *Social Media Presence and Customer Engagement*

Customer engagement is the way customers interact with a business through likes, comments, shares, reviews and messages. Higher engagement usually means that customers are interested in the content that the company is sharing.

According to Yost et al. (2021), social media customer engagement has a positive effect on hospitality businesses, as engaged customers are more likely to recommend the business to others. Similarly, Wang et al. (2026) clarified that hotels that communicate with customers regularly and respond to their comments get better engagement than less active businesses.

It also added that the interactive content like short videos, live sessions and customer testimonials promotes more engagement among consumers (D'Souza, 2025). These studies indicate that the presence of social media plays an important role in increasing consumer engagement.

➤ *Operational Efficiency & Social Media Presence*

Operational efficiency means how well a hotel or restaurant works day-to-day, saving time, cost and resources. Businesses may utilise social media to swiftly communicate with customers, address questions, advertise offers, and collect feedback without incurring significant costs.

Garrido-Moreno et al. (2018) found that effective use of social media can enhance customer engagement and contribute to organisational performance in the hospitality sector.

Social media has also been identified to improve coordination, speed up information sharing and enhance operational activities of different organisations (Li et al., 2022).

Social media can be used by hotels and restaurants to quickly resolve customer complaints and inform customers about new services or promotional offers. For this reason, a number of researchers believe that social media leads to improved operational efficiency, although the outcome may vary depending on the business.

➤ *Social Media Presence & Business Performance Overall*

The performance of a business encompasses a range of factors, including sales growth, customer satisfaction, profitability and the overall success of the organization. Many hospitality businesses are investing in social media because they believe it may improve these performance outcomes.

Tajvidi and Karami (2021) found the positive impact of social media use on hotel performance is more prominent when it is integrated with marketing practices.

Li et al. (2022) also identified a positive association between social media use and organisational performance in different industries. Their research showed that social media has a positive impact on customer relationship, innovation, and financial performance.

According to Garrido-Moreno et al. (2018), hospitality businesses with higher social media presence perform better than those with lower social media presence. The effect may vary in degree from one organization to the next, but most studies suggest that social media has become an important factor in improving business performance.

Based on the above studies, the social media presence has a positive effect on brand awareness, social media engagement, operational efficiency, and overall business performance. However, only few studies have examined all these variables together using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), particularly in the hotel and restaurant sector. Thus, this study tries to fill this research gap by investigating these relationships in one research model.

➤ *Research Gap*

The role of social media in hospitality has been studied by many researchers. The majority of the previous studies have mainly focused on customer satisfaction, online reviews, purchase intention, customer loyalty or digital marketing strategies. Some of the research also looked at the relationship between social media and business performance. However, limited research has been done on the direct impact of social media presence on brand awareness, customer engagement, operational efficiency and overall business performance in a single research model.

Another gap found in the literature is that many studies have only focused on hotels or only focused on restaurants. Few studies have included both hotels and restaurants within one study. Therefore, the total influence of social media presence on the hospitality industry is hard to comprehend.

In addition, most of the existing studies have also used simple statistical techniques such as correlation or regression analysis. There are relatively less studies using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in investigating the direct relationship between social media presence and various organisational outcomes. SEM allows for a better understanding of multiple relationships simultaneously, but its use in this area is still limited.

Moreover, social media platforms and customer behaviour are evolving at a very rapid pace. "Hotels and restaurants are now talking to customers in new ways, with new platforms, influencer marketing, short-form video and content created by users playing a role. Most of the earlier studies were carried out prior to these recent developments and their findings may not adequately explain the current scenario.

Therefore, this study aims to fill these gaps by investigating the influence of social media presence on brand awareness, social media engagement, operational efficiency and overall business performance among hotels and restaurants using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The results of this study could be useful to hospitality managers, restaurant owners and future researchers interested in digital marketing and business performance.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study aims to examine the impact of social media presence on different dimensions of hotel and restaurant performance. The specific objectives of the study are:

- To examine the impact of social media presence on brand awareness.
- To analyse the effect of social media presence on customer engagement.
- To investigate the influence of social media presence on operational efficiency.
- To examine the impact of social media presence on overall business performance.

Based on these objectives and the review of previous literature, the following hypotheses were developed for empirical testing:

- H1: Social media presence positively affects brand awareness.
- H2: Social media presence positively affects customer engagement.
- H3: Social media presence positively affects operational efficiency.
- H4: Social media presence positively affects overall business performance.

These hypotheses were tested using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to determine whether social media

presence has a significant positive relationship with each of the four dependent variables.

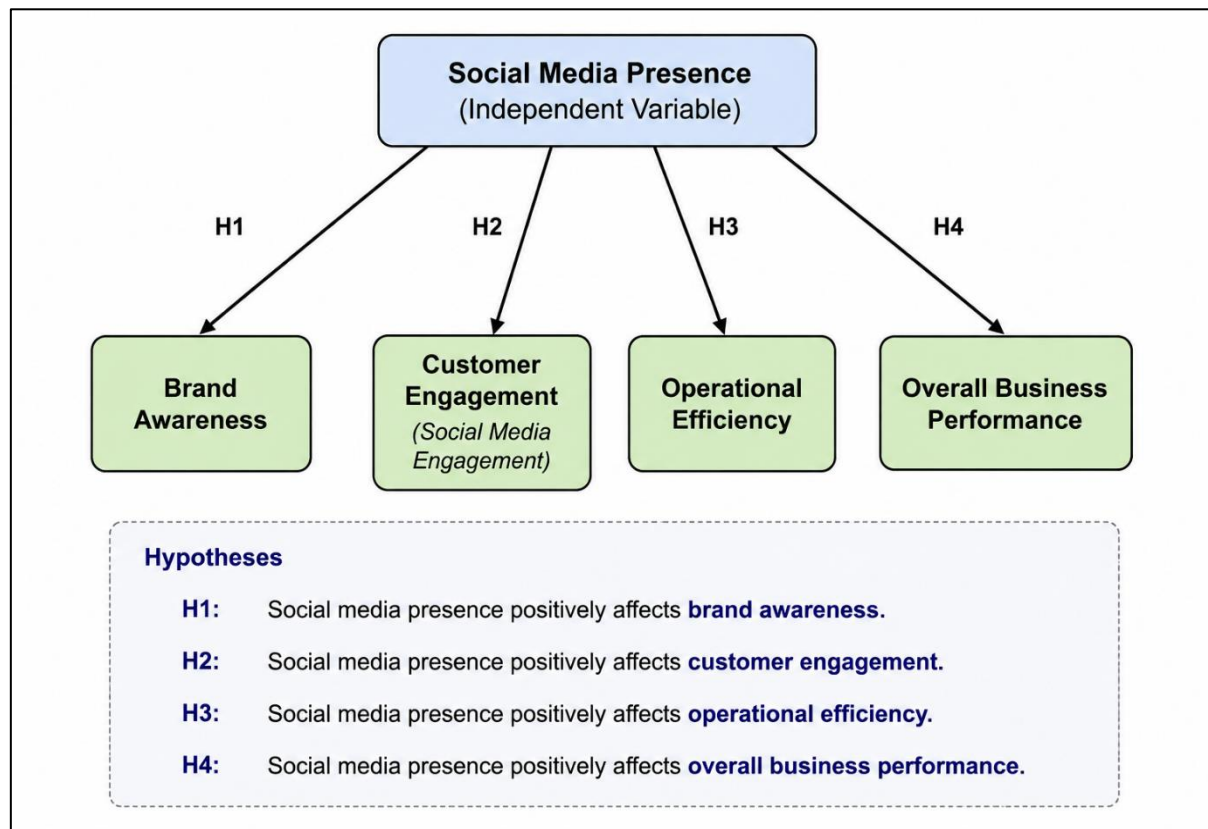


Fig 1 Conceptual Framework of the Impact of Social Media Presence on Hotel and Restaurant Performance

Source: Developed by the Researcher (2026), Based on the Review of Literature.

The current study takes a quantitative research design to examine the influence of social media presence on brand awareness, social media engagement, operational efficiency and overall business performance in the hotel and restaurant industry. A quantitative method was chosen because it helps in collecting numerical data and analysing the relationship between different variables in a systematic way (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study is a cross-sectional research design where data is collected from the respondents at a single point of time.

The population studied in this research are owners, managers and marketing executives of hotels and restaurants who are actively using social media to promote their business. These respondents were selected because they have practical knowledge about the use of social media in their organisations. The research is based on different types of hospitality businesses such as hotels, restaurants, cafés and homestays to gain a better understanding of the industry.

Convenience sampling technique was used to collect data due to its simplicity, economy and suitability for this type of research. Google Forms was used to distribute the questionnaire thru email, WhatsApp and other social media platforms. A total of 200 respondents were chosen for the study. The sample size is sufficient for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis, which needs enough observations for a reliable analysis (Hair et al., 2019).

Primary data were collected thru a structured questionnaire which was based on previous research studies with minor modifications as per the objectives of the study. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part contained demographic information. The second section had statements concerning Social Media Presence, Brand Awareness, Social Media Engagement, Operational Efficiency and Overall Business Performance. Responses were collected on a five-point Likert scale with 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. This scale is easily understood by respondents and is commonly used in marketing and management research.

After collecting the responses, the data were screened for missing values and incomplete questionnaires before analysis. The data collected were entered in IBM SPSS Statistics for descriptive analysis which includes frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The reliability of measurement items was tested with Cronbach's Alpha (Hair et al., 2019). The validity was checked with Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Lastly, the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was conducted with the support of AMOS to test the proposed hypotheses and to examine the relationships between the study variables.

Ethical principles were followed in the research process. Participation was entirely voluntary and participants were informed of the purpose of the study prior to completion of the questionnaire. The data collected were kept

confidential and only used for academic purposes. To maintain the credibility of the research and to ensure the privacy of the respondents, the personal details of the respondents were not disclosed.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

➤ Demographic Profile

Table 1 Profile of Hospitality Establishments (n = 200)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Type of Establishment	Restaurant	64	32.0
	Hotel	42	21.0
	Other (Camping, Glamping etc)	37	18.5
	Homestay	35	17.5
	Café	22	11.0
Years of Operation	Less than 1 year	44	22.0
	1–3 years	66	33.0
	4–6 years	54	27.0
	More than 6 years	36	18.0

This profile indicates that the most common type of hospitality establishment was restaurants (32%) followed by hotels (21%), other establishments such as camping and glamping (18.5%), homestays (17.5%) and cafés (11%). Most of the establishments had been in operation for 1–3 years

(33%) and 4–6 years (27%). Some 22% were relatively new, having been in operation for less than a year, while 18% had been operating for more than six years. Overall, the results indicate that the hospitality industry mainly consists of restaurants and relatively new companies.

Table 2 Social Media Adoption and Usage (n = 200)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Active Social Media Presence	Yes	166	83.0
	No	34	17.0
Duration of Social Media Use	Less than 6 months	32	16.0
	6 months–1 year	44	22.0
	1–3 years	66	33.0
	More than 3 years	58	29.0
Posting Frequency	Daily	85	42.5
	2–3 Times a Week	65	32.5
	Once a Week	35	17.5
	Monthly	10	5.0
	Rarely	5	2.5

Results indicate that majority of hospitality establishments (83%) had an active social media presence while only 17% did not have an active social media presence. In terms of duration of use, the largest group had been using social media for 1-3 years (33%), followed by those using it for more than three years (29%). As for the frequency of

posting, 42.5% posted daily, 32.5% posted 2–3 times a week. Only a small proportion posted monthly (5%) or infrequently (2.5%). In general, the results indicate that social media is widely adopted and actively used by hospitality establishments, with many maintaining a regular posting schedule.

Table 3 Social Media Marketing Practices (n = 200)

A. Platforms Used*

Platform	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Google My Business	194	97.0
Instagram	160	80.0
Other Travel Platforms	156	78.0
Facebook	145	72.5
TripAdvisor	86	43.0
X (Twitter)	32	16.0
YouTube	22	11.0

*Multiple responses were allowed for platforms and content types.

B. Content Shared*

Content Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Static Photographs	180	90.0
Instagram Reels / Short Videos	148	74.0
Long-form Videos	125	62.5
Customer Reviews	95	47.5
Promotional Offers	40	20.0
Live Videos / Events	23	11.5

*Multiple responses were allowed for platforms and content types.

C. Guest Review Encouragement

Practice	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	104	52.0
Sometimes	64	32.0
No	32	16.0

*Multiple responses were allowed for platforms and content types.

Table 3 provides a summary of the social media marketing practices of the hospitality establishments. Google My Business (97.0%), Instagram (80.0%) and Facebook (72.5%) were the most popular platforms. The most common methods of promotion used by the establishments were static

photographs (90.0%) and short videos (74.0%). The majority of the respondents (52.0%) encouraged consumers to review and tag their business on social media, emphasising the value of content created by users in hospitality marketing.

➤ Descriptive Statistics

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics, Reliability and Validity of the Hospitality Performance Constructs (n = 200)

Construct	Items	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$
Social Media Presence (SMP)	3	3.672	0.929	0.891	0.909	0.769	0.877
Brand Awareness (BA)	3	3.605	0.975	0.872	0.892	0.735	0.857
Customer Engagement (CE)	3	3.548	1.007	0.861	0.885	0.719	0.848
Operational Efficiency (OE)	3	3.375	1.012	0.843	0.871	0.693	0.832
Business Performance (BP)	3	3.472	1.022	0.876	0.896	0.743	0.862

Note: Mean and SD are calculated from the three measurement items for each construct. α = Cronbach's Alpha; CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ = square root of AVE.

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics, reliability and validity results for the five constructs used in the study. The mean scores ranged from 3.375 to 3.672, suggesting generally moderate to positive perceptions of social media use and its consequences. The highest mean score was recorded by Social Media Presence (M = 3.672) while the lowest mean score was recorded by Operational Efficiency (M = 3.375).

All constructs showed good internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha between 0.843 and 0.891, and Composite Reliability between 0.871 and 0.909. The AVE values ranged from 0.693 to 0.769, indicating good convergent validity. The results, in general, showed that the measurement items had acceptable reliability and validity to be used in further SEM analysis.

➤ Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Table 5 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Results for the Hospitality Performance Model (n = 200)

Construct	Indicator	Standardized Loading	SE	C.R.	p-value
Social Media Presence (SMP)	SMP1	0.876	0.048	18.3	< .001
	SMP2	0.891	0.051	17.5	< .001
	SMP3	0.863	0.049	17.6	< .001
Brand Awareness (BA)	BA1	0.858	0.053	16.2	< .001
	BA2	0.872	0.051	17.1	< .001
	BA3	0.841	0.055	15.3	< .001
Customer Engagement (CE)	CE1	0.849	0.054	15.7	< .001
	CE2	0.863	0.053	16.3	< .001
	CE3	0.831	0.056	14.8	< .001
Operational Efficiency (OE)	OE1	0.831	0.057	14.6	< .001
	OE2	0.847	0.056	15.1	< .001
	OE3	0.819	0.059	13.9	< .001

Business Performance (BP)	BP1	0.861	0.052	16.6	< .001
	BP2	0.875	0.051	17.2	< .001
	BP3	0.849	0.054	15.7	< .001

Table 5 CFA Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Obtained Value	Recommended Threshold	Assessment
χ^2/df	1.56	≤ 3.00	Excellent
CFI	0.968	≥ 0.95	Excellent
TLI	0.961	≥ 0.95	Excellent
RMSEA	0.054	≤ 0.08	Good
RMSEA 90% CI	0.044–0.069	≤ 0.08	Acceptable
SRMR	0.038	< 0.08	Good

Table 4 and Table 5 present the outcomes of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and the general appropriateness of the measurement model. The results show that all the measurement items have satisfactory standardised factor loadings ranging from 0.819 to 0.891 which are higher than the recommended value of 0.70. All factor loadings are statistically significant at $p < .001$, indicating that indicators sufficiently represent their respective constructs.

The measurement model also appears adequate from the fit of the model results. The fit of the model was excellent ($\chi^2/df = 1.18$, CFI = 0.961, TLI = 0.951). Similarly, the RMSEA value of 0.057 and SRMR value of 0.048 are within

the acceptable recommended levels. The RMSEA confidence interval of 0.044 to 0.069 also indicates an acceptable fit of the model.

Overall, the CFA results support the measurement model with good construct validity and acceptable fit of the model. Thus, the proposed constructs, Social Media Presence, Brand Awareness, Client Engagement, Operational Efficiency, and Business Performance can be retained for further analysis. Therefore, the measurement model is considered adequate to proceed to the structural model and hypothesis testing.

➤ Discriminant Validity

Table 6 Discriminant Validity Matrix — Hospitality Performance Model ($\sqrt{AVE}$ on Diagonal)

Construct	SMP	BA	CE	OE	BP
Social Media Presence (SMP)	0.877	0.712	0.681	0.634	0.693
Brand Awareness (BA)	0.712	0.857	0.748	0.621	0.714
Customer Engagement (CE)	0.681	0.748	0.848	0.658	0.731
Operational Efficiency (OE)	0.634	0.621	0.658	0.832	0.679
Business Performance (BP)	0.693	0.714	0.731	0.679	0.862

Table 6 shows the Fornell–Larcker criterion of discriminant validity of constructs in the hospitality performance model. The diagonal values are the square root of the Average Variance Extracted ($\sqrt{AVE}$) and the off-diagonal values are the correlations between constructs.

The diagonal values for Social Media Presence (0.877), Brand Awareness (0.857), Customer Engagement (0.848), Operational Efficiency (0.832) and Business Performance (0.862) are greater than their correlations with other constructs respectively (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This implies that the variance shared between each construct and

its indicators is larger than the variance shared between constructs.

Hence, the results provide support for sufficient discriminant validity among the five constructs. Simply put, Social Media Presence, Brand Awareness, Customer Engagement, Operational Efficiency, and Business Performance are different enough from each other and they are measuring different things. Thus, the measurement model fulfils the requirement for discriminant validity and is suitable for further testing of the structural model and hypotheses.

➤ Hypotheses Testing

Table 7 Structural Model Fit — Hospitality Performance Model

Fit Index	Symbol	Value	Threshold	Judgement
Chi-Square / df	χ^2/df	94/80 = 1.18	≤ 3.00	Excellent
Comparative Fit Index	CFI	0.961	≥ 0.95	Excellent
Tucker–Lewis Index	TLI	0.951	≥ 0.95	Excellent
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	RMSEA	0.057	≤ 0.08	Satisfactory
RMSEA 90% Confidence Interval	—	0.044–0.069	≤ 0.08	Within range
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual	SRMR	0.048	< 0.08	Good

Table 7 shows the overall goodness of fit of the structural model with the observed data. The indices of the fit of the model were excellent with $\chi^2/df = 1.18$, CFI = 0.961 and TLI = 0.951. The RMSEA value of 0.057 and SRMR

value of 0.048 are also within the suggested value. Therefore, the structural model is found appropriate to test the proposed hypotheses.

Table 8 Structural Path Coefficients — Hospitality Performance Model

Hypothesis	Structural Path	Std. β	SE	CR	p-value	Decision
H1	SMP $\rightarrow$ Brand Awareness	0.712	0.068	10.47	< .001	Supported
H2	SMP $\rightarrow$ Customer engagement	0.634	0.074	8.57	< .001	Supported
H3	SMP $\rightarrow$ Operational Efficiency	0.681	0.071	9.59	< .001	Supported
H4	SMP $\rightarrow$ Business Performance	0.693	0.069	10.04	< .001	Supported

Table 8 reports the results of hypothesis testing with structural path coefficients. The results indicate that all four hypothesised hypotheses are supported. All relationships are positive in standardised beta values and statistically significant at $p < .001$.

- H1, Social Media Presence has a strong positive effect on Brand Awareness ($\beta = 0.712$, $p < .001$). It implies that the increased brand awareness of hospitality businesses is related to the increased social media presence.
- H2 Social Media Presence has a positive effect on consumer engagement ($\beta = 0.634$, $p < .001$) for H2 This means that companies with a more active social media presence are more likely to have better customer interaction thru comments, reviews, likes, shares and other online activities.
- H3: Social Media Presence has a positive effect on Operational Efficiency ($\beta = 0.681$, $p < .001$) for H3. It implies that social media could be a tool for communication with customers, sharing information and other business activities, which could lead to increased operational efficiency.
- H4 shows that Social Media Presence has a significant positive effect on Business Performance ($\beta = 0.693$, $p < .001$). This demonstrates that having an active social media presence correlates with better overall performance for a business.

The highest standardised coefficient ($\beta = 0.712$) for H1 among the four relationships suggests that the relationship between social media presence and brand awareness is the strongest relationship in the model. H2 has the smallest coefficient ($\beta = 0.634$), but it is still statistically significant.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of social media presence on the performance of hospitality businesses, with particular emphasis on brand awareness, customer engagement, operational efficiency and overall business performance. The proposed relationships were examined by using a quantitative approach and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in this study.

The findings indicate that social media presence has a positive and significant role in the hospitality industry. The structural model had a good fit to the collected data with $\chi^2/df = 1.18$, CFI = 0.961, TLI = 0.951, RMSEA = 0.057 and SRMR = 0.048. The results suggest that the model proposed was adequate to test the hypotheses.

The four hypotheses were all supported. Social media presence had a positive effect on brand awareness ($\beta = 0.712$), customer engagement ($\beta = 0.634$), operational efficiency ($\beta = 0.681$) and business performance ($\beta = 0.693$), and all relationships were significant at $p < .001$. The relationship between social media presence and brand awareness was the most important one. This implies that having an active social media presence can help hospitality businesses to be more visible and recognised by customers.

The results also suggest that social media is not only useful for marketing and promotion. It can help companies communicate with clients, get feedback, spread the word and help them in their day-to-day work. Hotels & restaurants should consider social media as an important part of their overall business strategy. The study concludes that a planned and consistent social media presence can contribute positively to various hospitality business performance areas.

➤ Recommendations

The findings of the study suggest that hotels and restaurants should maintain a consistent and well-planned social media presence to enhance their brand visibility and client engagement. Businesses should focus on attractive visual content like photos, short videos, and Reels. They should also encourage customers to share reviews and feedback. They should reply to the comments and messages of customers quickly to build better relationships and increase engagement. Social media can also be used to answer enquiries, provide booking information, share offers and collect feedback from clients, which may support operational efficiency. Hospitality managers should monitor their social media performance on a regular basis and train their staff who manage the social media platforms on a basic level. Generally, businesses should not only use social media as a promotional tool but also as a way of communicating with customers, building long-term relationships and supporting better overall business performance.

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