**EXAMINE THE RELEVANCE AND IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON HOSPITALITY MARKETING. TAKING A SMALL BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE, CONSIDER ITS INFLUENCE ON DEVELOPING STRATEGIC ALLIANCES WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS.**

# Introduction

The concept of the essay is to critically evaluate the role and impact of SMM in small businesses of hospitality industry and the need of strategic alliance for the small businesses the usage of SM as a marketing tool. This assignment focuses on the SMM strategy adopted by small hospitality businesses and companies to grow and develop in the industry as they are aware of the benefits of social media services to the hospitality industry. The small hospitality businesses that do not have such expenditure capacity to invest in SMM (Dewnarain *et al*. 2019). This assignment also focuses on the points describing the positive impacts of introducing social media in the marketing strategy of the hospitality industry, and the challenges and difficulties faced by small hospitality businesses while implementing SM. It also states the factors affecting small hospitality businesses to meet hands with big hospitality businesses that ensure the growth of the small businesses. Hence the main aim of the essay is to analysis the impact of SM in small hospitality businesses and the need of strategic alliance for small hospitality businesses.

# Discussion

**Increase of SM use in the hospitality industry**

The SM refers to the social media which helps in communication with each other. Acoording to Torous *et al*. (2021), technology is growing day by day and the use of social media is becoming very common these days The SMM refers to social media marketing which helps the busiensses to advertise their products in SM platforms such as Instagram, facebook and more to increase the custoemr engagement worldwide. The increase of SM use in the marketing industry motivated small hospitality businesses to start using social media in their marketing strategy. As SMM platform is very huge and it helps to promote and develop the small hospitality business to achieve their desired goals. The hospitality industry is becoming customized with the help of SMM as it helps in promoting the brand profile and value, also increases website sessions and increases hotel reservations. earlier people have to visit the hotels and also they have to come to the hotels and have to register their details. Nowadays all these procedures are digitized as people now first check the reviews and ratings of the hotels and then make their decision. According to Dewnarain *et al*. (2019), the SMM strategy has created a very positive outlook for the hospitality industry as it permits customers to gather hotel experiences from personal sources. As the big hospitality businesses are engaged with social media in implementing marketing strategies, the small hospitality businesses also engage in social media for marketing strategies. It will help small hospitality businesses to reach many people worldwide and increase sales and bookings. In the past the hospitality industry could only communicate with one customer at a time.

However, after applying the SMM strategy they can communicate with various customers at a time (Bazrkar *et al*. 2021). As the SMM can sent mails and can provide services with their technologies to many customers at a time. The hospitality businesses can upload their details on social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and more. This way, the hospitality industry upgraded and developed its business to the next level of marketing. According to Sánchez-Casado *et al*. (2019), the hospitality industry uses SMM as it helps them to reach customers worldwide and help them in increasing sales. Earlier the hospitality industry had to spend a huge amount of money for their advertising through television, banners, radio and more, as after the entry of social media small hospitality businesses and companies can advertise and promote themselves on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and more. The small hospitality industry also offers exclusive discounts, rewards, promotions and various offers schemes to attract many clients (Dimitrieska and Efremova, 2021). Hence SMM use in the hospitality industry helps in increasing communication skills, increases customer satisfaction by providing them information and stock update through SM platforms about their offers, increases customer engagement and also helps to reach the products of the hospitality businesses worldwide.

**Impact of using SM in hospitality businesses**

The SMM has had both positive and negative impacts on the hospitality businesses as it increases the brand awareness, constant interaction with the customers are some of the positives (Haudi *et al*. 2022). As the SMM of the hospitality industry attracts their target audience by providing various facilities and information through SMM of the hospitality industry. The offers and facilities provided by the hospitality industry through the SMM help to grow sales and bookings which increases the business profitability. According to Ilyas *et al*. (2020), customer satisfaction is an important part of increasing brand awareness. Therefore satisfied customers' positive reviews increase the brand value or brand awareness of the hospitality industry with the help of SMM. The constant interaction with the customers of the hospitality industry through SMM helps the customers to know the offers and discounts and also helps the customers by giving answers to their queries for which the customer loyalty towards the hospitality industry increases. According to Bahadur *et al*. (2020), interacting with customers increases trust and customer loyalty towards the brand. Hence interacting with the customers of the hospitality industry through SMM has a positive impact. The promotion of the hospitality industry with the help of SMM has a huge positive impact as the hospitality industry spreads their businesses with the help of promotion through SMM, advertising and more. However, According to Katsikeas *et al*. (2020), the negative impact of SMM on the hospitality industry is negative feedback, rumours spreading, and the risk of customer private data spreading or cybersecurity concerns. The negative feedback from the customer on the website of the hospitality industry through social media has a huge negative effect on the existing customers, impression of the hospitality industry and brand value of the hospitality industry. According to Mariani and Borghi (2021), customers always check the ratings and reviews of other customers and then decide where to stay based on the reviews of the hospitality services. Therefore the negative feedback from the customers through SMM can ruin the business of the hospitality industry as reputation in business is very important. According to Juanamasta *et al*. (2019), the reputation and impression of a business are very important for its development of growth, therefore rumours can ruin the stability of the customers of the hospitality industry. Hence spreading rumours through SMM had a huge negative impact on the hospitality industry. The cybersecurity concerns or the spreading of customer data by SMM also hurt the hospitality industry. According to Sun *et al*. (2022), the spreading of customer data by SMM threatens the customer to interact with the hospitality industry Therefore customers are very sophisticated about their personal information and the spreading of their details by SMM threatens and creates trust issues for the hospitality industry. Hence the cybersecurity concern creates trust issues among customers and decreases the interaction between the marketers and the customers which decreases sales and also creates losses for the hospitality industry. Therefore the hospitality industry should focus on their cybersecurity system to maintain trustworthy relationship between the customers.

**Challenges of using SM in the hospitality business**

There are various challenges in using SMM in the hospitality business such as creating quality content, collaborating with influencers, selecting perfect SM platforms, engaging followers and more. According to Haenlein *et al*. (2020), quality content is necessary for every business to reach its target audience. Therefore to achieve the goals of reaching people worldwide, the marketers of the hospitality business need to create content quality and develop their content to a higher level to reach and attract the customer's attention. As it is hard for the hospitality business to create quality content perfectly that can attract the target audience. Hence creating quality content in SM to attract the attention of customers is a big challenge for the markets of the hospitality industry. According to Cornellia *et al*. (2022), SMM is based on the choice of SM platforms regarding the target audience. The hospitality business nowadays is dependent on advertising and SMM, therefore to interact with the target audience the marketers of hospitality businesses should choose the right SM platform where they can reach their target audience easily. Choosing the wrong platforms in SMM can create losses for marketers in the hospitality industry. Hence choosing the right platform in SMM is a big challenge for the marketers of the hospitality businesses as the right platform is the key to interacting and engaging with more customers. According to Cuevas-Molano *et al*. (2021), businesses that use SMM are dependent on customer engagement or engaging followers. The process of engaging followers to an SM platform is very lengthy and hard. Therefore to get success in SMM of hospitality businesses, the markers need to keep patients to grow the social media page and to engage followers for the growth of the SMM of hospitality businesses. Hence engaging followers in the SM platforms is a big challenge for the marketers of hospitality businesses.

**Difficulties faced by the small business while implementing SMM**

There are various difficulties faced by small businesses while implementing SMM. According to Cuevas-Molano *et al*. (2023), the major difficulties of small businesses while implementing SMM are low budget, lack of technical skilled labour, limitation on time, balancing several platforms and more. Small businesses have a certain amount of money, thus adopting SMM for small businesses is costly. According to Chatterjee and Kar (2020), SMM is cheap and anyone can create a page on social media platforms without investing however to adopt SMM appropriately. The marketers of small businesses need to invest money for creating quality content and also have to take influencer who can promote and advertises the page of small businesses for which the target audience would reach to the small businesses social media pages. According to Barrett and Rose (2022), small businesses have less work as well as less capacity to adapt well technical skilled employees. Therefore to adopt the SMM in small businesses, the marketers of the small businesses need to recruit some well-skilled professional employees who can handle the SMM. Fewer workers mean more time consumed by the workers for completing the work of the small businesses. According to Matli (2020), a lack of employees in a workplace needs more time to complete the work than others who have a huge number of employees. Therefore due to the lack of employees, the working time is limited and the limitation of time decreases the chances to adopt the SMM by the employees. Hence due to the limitation of time, small businesses faced difficulties implementing the SMM. Balancing on several platforms is also difficult for small businesses. According to Haenlein*et al*. (2020), small businesses have fewer funds and therefore hard to balance with several platforms due to budget regarding quality content and more. High-level hospitality businesses advertise their brand on various SM platforms through SMM which create difficulties for small hospitality businesses as they have fewer funds so they cannot afford the expenses of various quality content and influencer for different types of SM platforms. Hence the lack of balance between several SM platforms is also a big difficulty faced by small hospitality businesses while implementing SMM.

**Factors influencing small businesses to develop strategic alliances with big hospitality businesses**

The difficulties faced by small hospitality businesses while implementing SMM are discussed above. According to He *et al*. (2020), the strategic alliance helps small businesses to work or merge with big companies to gain profit by giving a share of their products to the big businesses. Small hospitality businesses have low budgets which creates problems for their SMM. According to Wang *et al*. (2020), strategic alliances with big hospitality businesses can help small hospitality businesses to increase their budget of the small hospitality businesses. Therefore the small businesses can use strategic alliances with big hospitality industries such as Marriot international and more which can help the small businesses to make profit.

Small hospital businesses lack technically skilled employees who can handle the SMM of the business. According to Sen and Bhattacharya (2019), strategic alliances with big hospitality of businesses can help to train the employees of small hospitality businesses. Therefore due to the lack of budget in small hospital businesses, the employees are also fewer and thus to perform SMM the small businesses need to get well-skilled employees which they cannot afford. As SMM helps small hospitality businesses for customer engagement worldwide and they cannot afford SMM due to their lack of employees. Thus using strategic alliance by the small hospitality businesses can increase their employee’s strength which can help in increasing the profitability of small business. The marketers of small hospitality businesses use strategic alliances with big hospitality businesses to gain profits. Hence lack of well-skilled employees is also a factor influencing small hospitality businesses to develop strategic alliances with big hospitality businesses. Small business has fewer workers which consume more time to work. According to Rodríguez-Antón *et al*. (2019), strategic alliances with big hospitality businesses can increase the limitation of time as the big hospitality businesses have more employees. Therefore due to the limitation of time, the employees of small hospitality businesses cannot give time to the SMM of small hospitality businesses. The strategic alliances with big hospitality businesses help the small hospitality businesses as the big hospitality businesses have huge numbers of employees and thus they will not have any time limitations which can increase the customer engagement of small hospitality businesses. Hence this is also a big factor influencing small businesses to develop strategic alliances with big hospitality customers. Small businesses cannot balance several SM platforms due to. According to Alaimo*et al*. (2020), strategic alliances with big hospitality businesses can help small hospitality businesses to balance on various social media platforms. Small businesses have lack of funds as well as lack of employees and time, therefore balancing on various social media platforms is hard for small hospitality employees. Thus strategic alliances with big hospitality businesses increase the balancing power of the small hospitality businesses in various SM platforms as it has many employees and funds who can take care of the funds as well as balance the various types of social media platforms.

**Benefits of developing strategic alliances**

Startegic alliance helps the small businesses to recob\ver their losses by merging up with other big businesses as it helps to gain profit and to be stable in the market with the help of other businesses. According to the studies conducted by Cacciolatti*et al.* (2020), strategic alliance benefits a company by providing them with expertise in specific areas where there is a lack of proficiency due to a lack of resources.

There are several benefits that can be enjoyed by a small hospitality company by developing strategic alliances with bigger businesses as well as its stakeholders. The primary stakeholders of the companies are the investors, employees, customers and suppliers (Pedrini and Ferri, 2019). Their well-being is directly related to the scale and profit of the business. Therefore, companies treat the interest of the stakeholders as a priority and often it drives them to form an alliance with the comparatively bigger market players so that the interest of the stakeholders is met. Small-scale companies in the hospitality business often lack social media marketing (SMM) hence they are not able to build recognition among the people regarding their brands due to scarce resources. However, this can be mitigated by forming a strategic alliance with a company that helps them in SMM by promoting their brands through social media, website advertisement and many other modes of advertisements through quality content. In some cases, small-scale businesses often lack infrastructure even after serving quality and variety of food (Akpan *et al*. 2022). The lack of funding is the major reason behind it, which stops them from having a place that can provide dining facilities to a large number of people. This causes them to lose revenue despite having potential customers. Through strategic alliances, small-scale businesses are able to generate sufficient funding which helps them to afford a bigger place that can serve a large number of people at a time. This results in increasing the revenue of the business. SMM also proven its worth in articulating information about the increased capacity of the restaurants (Mason *et al*. 2021). Influencers like food vloggers who have a significant number of followers are able to reach out to a large number of people through their quality content and they are supposed to receive a large number of customers when the customers are aware of their increased capacity. Another advantage that a relatively new entrant in the hospitality industry can enjoy through strategic alliance is regarding the reputation of the brand. It is particularly impossible for a small business to have an overnight reputation in the hospitality industry since building a reputation is a prolonged process (Sergeevna, 2020). Brands enjoy a reputation by catering for the trust of customers for a specific period. When they frame an alliance with a company of the same industry which has an identity among the customers, the reputation seems to get transferred to them. Here social media proves to be helpful in circulating this information. Through social media advertisements, customers who are familiar with the partner company get to know about their alliance with the new company. Thus SMM helps them to create a reputation in a short period of time.

# Conclusion

This research was concluded as the research aimed to examine the relevance and impact of social media on hospitality marketing. It also aimed to find the increasing use of SM in the hospitality industry that will benefit the small hospitality businesses after getting connected with the big hospitality businesses. It improves the overall development, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty of small hospitality businesses. It also stated the impact of using SM in hospitality businesses which includes both positive and negative impacts such as increasing brand awareness, constant interaction with customers, and promotion positive impact whereas negative feedback, rumours spreading, and the risk of customer private data spreading or cybersecurity concerns. It also concluded the challenges faced by hospitality businesses by using SM in marketing strategy such as creating quality content, collaborating with influencers, selecting perfect SM platforms, and engaging followers. It describes the difficulties faced by small businesses while implementing SMM which include low budget, lack of technical skilled labour, limitation on time, and balancing several platforms. Lastly, it further concluded with the factors which influence small hospitality businesses to create strategic alliances with big hospitality businesses to grow and develop in this changing environment.

# References

Akpan, I.J., Udoh, E.A.P. and Adebisi, B., (2022). Small business awareness and adoption of state-of-the-art technologies in emerging and developing markets, and lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship*, 34(2), pp.123-140.

Alaimo, C., Kallinikos, J. and Valderrama, E., (2020). Platforms as service ecosystems: Lessons from social media. *Journal of Information Technology, 35*(1), pp.25-48.

Bahadur, W., Khan, A.N., Ali, A. and Usman, M., (2020). Investigating the effect of employee empathy on service loyalty: The mediating role of trust in and satisfaction with a service employee. *Journal of Relationship Marketing, 19*(3), pp.229-252.

Barrett, H. and Rose, D.C., (2022). Perceptions of the fourth agricultural revolution: What’s in, what’s out, and what consequences are anticipated?.*SociologiaRuralis, 62*(2), pp.162-189.

Bazrkar, A., Hajimohammadi, M., Aramoon, E. and Aramoon, V., (2021). Effect of the social media marketing strategy on customer participation intention in light of the mediating role of customer perceived value. *Market-Tržište, 33*(1), pp.41-58.

Bouzari, P., Gyenge, B., Ebrahimi, P. and Fekete-Farkas, M., (2023). Problem Solving and Budget Allocation of SMEs: *Application of NCA Approach. Computation, 11*(3), p.48.

Cacciolatti, L., Rosli, A., Ruiz-Alba, J.L. and Chang, J., (2020). Strategic alliances and firm performance in startups with a social mission. *Journal of Business Research*, 106, pp.106-117.

Chatterjee, S. and Kar, A.K., (2020). Why do small and medium enterprises use social media marketing and what is the impact: Empirical insights from India. *International Journal of Information Management*, *53*, p.102103.

Cornellia, A.H., Hermawan, H. and Sinangjoyo, N.J., (2022). The Feasibility of Museum Social Media for Millenial: A Case Study in Sonobudoyo and Sandi Museums Yogyakarta Indonesia. *Media Wisata, 20*(2), pp.171-176.

Cuevas-Molano, E., Matosas-López, L. and Bernal-Bravo, C., (2021). Factors increasing consumer engagement of branded content in instagram. *IEEE Access, 9*, pp.143531-143548.

Dewnarain, S., Ramkissoon, H. and Mavondo, F., (2019). Social customer relationship management in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality, 1*(1), pp.1-14.

Dimitrieska, S. and Efremova, T., 2021. Loyalty programs: do companies really make consumers loyal?.*Entrepreneurship, 9*(2), pp.23-32.

Haenlein, M., Anadol, E., Farnsworth, T., Hugo, H., Hunichen, J. and Welte, D., (2020). Navigating the New Era of Influencer Marketing: How to be Successful on Instagram, TikTok, & Co. *California management review, 63*(1), pp.5-25.

Haenlein, M., Anadol, E., Farnsworth, T., Hugo, H., Hunichen, J. and Welte, D., (2020). Navigating the New Era of Influencer Marketing: How to be Successful on Instagram, TikTok, & Co. *California management review, 63*(1), pp.5-25.

Haudi, H., Handayani, W., Musnaini, M., Suyoto, Y., Prasetio, T., Pitaloka, E., Wijoyo, H., Yonata, H., Koho, I. and Cahyon, Y., (2022). The effect of social media marketing on brand trust, brand equity and brand loyalty. *International Journal of Data and Network Science, 6*(3), pp.961-972.

He, Q., Meadows, M., Angwin, D., Gomes, E. and Child, J., (2020). Strategic alliance research in the era of digital transformation: Perspectives on future research. *British Journal of Management, 31*(3), pp.589-617.

Ilyas, G.B., Rahmi, S., Tamsah, H., Munir, A.R. and Putra, A.H.P.K., (2020). Reflective model of brand awareness on repurchase intention and customer satisfaction. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business, 7*(9), pp.427-438.

Juanamasta, I.G., Wati, N.M.N., Hendrawati, E., Wahyuni, W., Pramudianti, M., Wisnujati, N.S., Setiawati, A.P., Susetyorini, S., Elan, U., Rusdiyanto, R. and Astanto, D., (2019). The role of customer service through customer relationship management (Crm) to increase customer loyalty and good image. *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research, 8*(10), pp.2004-2007.

Katsikeas, C., Leonidou, L. and Zeriti, A., (2020). Revisiting international marketing strategy in a digital era: Opportunities, challenges, and research directions. *International Marketing Review, 37*(3), pp.405-424.

Mariani, M. and Borghi, M., (2021). Customers’ evaluation of mechanical artificial intelligence in hospitality services: a study using online reviews analytics. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 33*(11), pp.3956-3976.

Mason, A.N., Narcum, J. and Mason, K., (2021). Social media marketing gains importance after Covid-19. *Cogent Business & Management*, 8(1), p.1870797.

Matli, W., (2020). The changing work landscape as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic: insights from remote workers life situations in South Africa. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 40*(9/10), pp.1237-1256.

Pedrini, M. and Ferri, L.M., (2019). Stakeholder management: a systematic literature review. *Corporate Governance: The International Journal of Business in Society*, 19(1), pp.44-59.

Rodríguez-Antón, J.M. and Alonso-Almeida, M.D.M., (2019). The circular economy strategy in hospitality: *A multicase approach. Sustainability, 11*(20), p.5665.

Sánchez-Casado, N., Artal-Tur, A. and Tomaseti-Solano, E., (2019). Social Media, Customers' Experience, and Hotel Loyalty Programs. *Tourism Analysis, 24*(1), pp.27-41.

Sen, K. and Bhattacharya, A., (2019). Attracting and managing talent, how are the top three hotel companies in India doing it?.*Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes, 11*(4), pp.404-417.

Sergeevna, K.T., (2020). ON THE CONCEPT OF USE OF BUSINESS REPUTATION OF BUSINESS ENTITIES. *European Reforms Bulletin,* p.51.

Sun, H., Samad, S., Rehman, S.U. and Usman, M., (2022). Clean and green: the relevance of hotels' website quality and environmental management initiatives for green customer loyalty. *British Food Journal, 124*(12), pp.4266-4285.

Torous, J., Bucci, S., Bell, I.H., Kessing, L.V., Faurholt‐Jepsen, M., Whelan, P., Carvalho, A.F., Keshavan, M., Linardon, J. and Firth, J., (2021). The growing field of digital psychiatry: current evidence and the future of apps, social media, chatbots, and virtual reality. *World Psychiatry, 20*(3), pp.318-335.

Wang, Y., Zhang, M., Tse, Y.K. and Chan, H.K., (2020). Unpacking the impact of social media analytics on customer satisfaction: do external stakeholder characteristics matter?.*International journal of operations & production management, 40*(5), pp.647-669.