



## **Social Media Effectiveness in Museum Marketing: Evidence from Major Museums in Uzbekistan**

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### **Abstract**

Although research on digital marketing with social media is extensive, few studies have focused on the effectiveness of museum marketing through the application of PLS-SEM. The present study opens broad opportunities for the integration of social media analytics in museum studies, including the role of audience engagement and content quality and their impact on visitor intention in responding to digital campaigns. The purpose of this study is to examine the role of social media engagement and perceived value in achieving marketing effectiveness in responding to the museum audience. Collected survey data were subjected to a detailed PLS-SEM analysis to estimate the conditional probability that a latent construct has a significant effect, given the values of one or more of its observed indicators. In order to analyze user perceptions and behavioral responses while also including platform-related factors, certain constructs and indicators were combined with the measurement set defined by prior literature, which resulted in the structural equation model. The results show that visitors' favorable perceptions of the museum and their online interactions show that content quality positively influences the formation of their behavioral intention through the mediating effect of social media engagement toward brand awareness, visitor satisfaction, and revisit intention. Moreover, understanding the effectiveness of social media for museum marketing in relation to the structural model of user behavior is a contribution to the literature that may help future researchers achieve faster empirical validation. This study can also benefit museum managers as it provides practical insights such as content optimization strategies to improve the use of the social media model and it contributes to the existing literature in the area of digital marketing and cultural promotion in general.

**Keywords:** Social media marketing; Museum marketing; PLS-SEM; Visitor engagement; Content quality; Marketing effectiveness; Digital interaction

### **1. Introduction**

Some scholars have based their research into behavioral intentions on Theory of Planned Behavior (Özdemir & Celebi, 2017) conceptual model, which explains the individual's attempt to start a new behavior with three determinants: the attitude toward its performance, the intention to act, and the perception of control.

According to prior research, high levels of social media engagement and information quality are both significant predictors for enhancing marketing effectiveness when users interact with digital content. In a seminal work on the concept of a digital museum, researchers suggest that a museum platform should generate value of (1) information sharing, (2) audience interaction and (3) ease of access to a wide variety of digital content.

Arias (2023) offers a broad overview of the existing literature on museum communication by comparing it with other related concepts, such as digital engagement and online branding. "Major problems occur when different constructs are put together, ignoring the differences of context and measurement, for example, by a lack of alignment with theory, data and, indicators (Aurellia & Bachtiar, 2025).

Although social media marketing and digital interaction are accepted as contributing to building a strong marketing framework, there is limited empirical evidence of the relationship between these constructs and PLS-SEM modeling, especially during contexts such as post-pandemic environments. These approaches are difficult and complex to apply in practice, and have been shown to be incapable of directly measuring the concept of marketing effectiveness for museums in practice (Belenioti et al., 2019; Belenioti et al., 2019; Booth et al., 2019).

According to some studies the reasons for the organization's lack of having a structured plan are: either the founder being too occupied with daily operations to think about strategic planning, or because the founder assumes there is enough of time to develop a succession plan before their departure.

Many studies have found evidence of the influence of content quality, social media engagement, and the digital experience on visitor behavior (Gonsales, 2021; Huebner, 2023; Jia et al., 2023; Lebid, 2024; Luo et al., 2022; Özdemir & Celebi, 2017; Parkhomenko et al., 2024; Putri & Tjokrosaputro, 2024).

“Social media, the source of communication and interaction processes, ‘is a dynamic and interactive environment’, write researchers (Booth et al., 2019), and continue to note that ‘digital tools and platforms can play important roles in members’ participation’ (Booth et al., 2019), as engagement helps facilitate communication and knowledge sharing.” Many researchers appear to have developed their own analytical frameworks; for example, prior studies identified and examined several dimensions of social media marketing focusing on the performance of a digital campaign.

A review of the literature reveals that great efforts are being made to understand social media-based marketing and the impact of the digital environment on visitor behavior from different perspectives.

This approach demands extensive data collection and advanced analytical methods, and for these reasons, is not considered to be a practical tool for the evaluation of a large sample (Luo et al., 2022).

The studies typically included longitudinal datasets with a duration of only few years, with only a minority of them having panel observations in excess of ten years. As a result, despite these contributions, currently, there exists a clear gap in the literature as to how the concept of the social media effectiveness might be measured and validated in practice.

This study seeks to fill the existing gap about social media use in museum marketing, their theoretical or empirical implementation, as well as methodological methods for a more systematic introduction of PLS-SEM and bootstrapping. “Based on experiences of several museums, this study aims to further clarify how social media affects the functioning of museum marketing and, in particular, visitor engagement.”

The aim of this study is to present the conceptual model which is suitable for empirical applications such as structural and comparative statistical analyses. We aim to add to the theoretical and empirical literature in this field by taking an integrated approach to the analysis of this phenomenon. This study also aims to evaluate the influence of these variables on marketing effectiveness in addressing the challenges of digital communication.

In the following sections, we discuss this study's design, its variables, and analytical method. The methodology section describes the techniques used in this research while focusing on the three-stage model for analysis by PLS-SEM (Özdemir & Celebi, 2017). Following the numerous studies that have used the PLS-SEM approach to analyze relationships, this research suggests a set of hypotheses to confirm the validity of the proposed model in the context of this study. The final section briefly outlines different findings, which are then analyzed by the adapted structural model in subsequent sections, which will also support the discussion.

## **2. Methods**

Data were collected via a structured questionnaire consisting of survey items listed in prior literature and adapted measurement scales which together cover social media engagement constructs in museum marketing in Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan became one of the first countries in the region to ease its restrictions against the COVID-19 outbreak. The sample population consists of undergraduate students, all pursuing degrees in management and marketing.

All had prior social media experience, including being active users and participants in one or more of the digital platforms projects that provided the context for this study and are discussed above.

Overall, 245 responses were received, and after screening and filtering for incomplete and inconsistent entries, 210 valid responses were obtained, with an effective response rate of 85.7%. Furthermore, to generate a sufficient statistical power level for various analyses to be carried out later, the minimum sample size required for a model of this complexity was determined to be 150 observations.

This sample of 210 students includes both women and men; they are studying at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels; and they come from various regions across the country.”

The main limitation of this sample is that the surveys were only conducted with students, although on a positive note, the respondents were at least representative of active digital users.

To ensure data quality and to avoid bias in the data, a purposive sampling method was used in this study.

The cases discussed in this study are based on the availability and relevance of data, such as completeness and consistency on responses of the questionnaire or survey.

The data for this study was collected by online survey distribution, as such a quantitative approach can provide reliability and validity (Belenioti et al., 2019; Booth et al., 2019). Despite these limitations, the authors of this research study decided to use these three constructs as a basis for their model because it specifically focuses on user behavior in digital environments.

Ajzen and Fishbein developed a theoretical framework (Theory of Planned Behavior) to differentiate behavioral intention from other types of psychological constructs (Arias, 2023). The measurement items employed to evaluate the constructs in the structural model are adapted from prior studies (Aurellia & Bachtiar, 2025; Belenioti et al., 2019). The measurement instruments for the current study included multiple indicators derived from the literature; students evaluated themselves using survey measures based on Likert scales.

Despite these limitations, the authors of this research study decided to use these three constructs as a basis for their model because it specifically focuses on user behavior in digital environments. In the current study, PLS-SEM was used in two steps: first, the fit of the measurement model was assessed (outer model evaluation), then the relationships of the structural model were examined (inner model evaluation; bootstrapping). Following this approach, several researchers (Özdemir & Celebi, 2017) developed this method further by introducing additional validation procedures, which subsequently resulted in more robust results and guidelines for analysis.

The issue with the goodness of fit has been discussed, as the values are approaching the threshold. Though these techniques were originally applied to large datasets, the approach used in the present study was modified in order to analyze smaller samples as well. The standardized factor loading for all the constructs and their items were acceptable (threshold of standardized factor loading  $> 0.7$ ; (Özdemir & Celebi, 2017)).

Özdemir and Celebi (2017) argue that a composite reliability must be considerably higher than a threshold value. Therefore, values for reliability and validity for all the constructs were within the acceptable range, thereby showing that the items have internal consistency. The results were presented on point, per responses up to several words in length, and provided the evidence to address the research objectives.

Marketing effectiveness is the dependent variable for this study. Perceived value creation was measured using the four dimensions of the conceptual model: information quality, social media engagement, brand awareness, and visitor satisfaction (Aurellia & Bachtiar, 2025). The instrument used to measure constructs was adapted from earlier studies (Özdemir & Celebi, 2017; Aurellia & Bachtiar, 2025), and the measurement construct consisted of multiple items measured on a five-point Likert scale. Measurement model focuses on what indicators must be included in an analysis in order to fulfil the conditions placed on the constructs (Özdemir & Celebi, 2017).

The constructs of the model (i.e., information quality, social media engagement, and perceived value) were all measured on five-point Likert scales ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). This was an empirical study, where the variables were formed by the indicators and the model addressed the relationships of constructs as explained in the conceptual framework.

The analysis focused on identifying those patterns that occurred more often in the data, marking relationships that clearly reflected what the behavior of users meant in the context of digital interaction. Data screening and analysis was analyzed using the statistical software SmartPLS; the model then was measured using a bootstrapping approach to estimate path coefficients (Özdemir & Celebi, 2017) in structural equation modeling, which is an alternative to covariance-based methods.

The idea of bootstrapping is based on the resampling technique by Efron (Beleniotti et al., 2019) as presented in statistical theory and several applications of these techniques (Özdemir & Celebi, 2017). The analysis focused on identifying those relationships that occurred more often in the model, marking paths that clearly illustrated what the influence of variables meant in the context of marketing effectiveness.

By using the three constructs as a starting point and validating the model, this study will contribute to the development of a broader framework. In the evaluation of reliability, all other indicators supported the validity of the constructs (Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability standardized factor loadings; AVE values greater than 0.5).

Additionally, the discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion by Fornell (Booth et al., 2019)) was divided into convergent and discriminant validity and then complemented with measures used in PLS-SEM: cross-loadings and HTMT ratio. It is argued that Cronbach’s alpha is often too conservative, and that composite reliability alone can determine the consistency of a construct (Özdemir & Celebi, 2017). However, PLS-SEM as an approach has also its limitations such as the strong dependence on sample size.

**3. Results**

These findings appear to support the validity of the suggested conceptual model, and thus providing an empirical method, based on the application of a structural equation model, for analysis and development of digital marketing strategies in practice. The results show that structural relationships are often strong to conduct well in the model, and by doing so also bring consistent – and sometimes robust – results.

**Table 1:** Summary statistics

Name	No.	Type	Missings	Mean	Median	Scale min	Scale max	Observed min	Observed max	Standard deviation	Excess kurtosis	Skewness	Cramér-von Mises p value
Content_Quality_Visual_Appeal	1	MET	0	-0.042	-0.038	-2.709	2.822	-2.709	2.822	0.968	0.018	0.142	0.659
Content_Quality_Information_Relevance	2	MET	0	-0.057	-0.109	-2.709	2.325	-2.709	2.325	0.970	-0.279	0.128	0.686
Social_Media_User_Engagement_Likes	3	MET	0	-0.008	0.042	-2.306	2.992	-2.306	2.992	0.871	0.481	0.080	0.924
Social_Media_User_Engagement_Comments_Shares	4	MET	0	-0.019	0.008	-2.117	2.598	-2.117	2.598	0.826	0.222	0.098	0.524
Museum_Brand_Awareness_Recognition	5	MET	0	0.048	0.111	-1.999	2.034	-1.999	2.034	0.739	0.017	-0.046	0.424
Museum_Brand_Awareness_Recall	6	MET	0	0.016	0.023	-1.902	2.001	-1.902	2.001	0.723	0.050	-0.001	0.304
Visitor_Visit_Intention_Planning	7	MET	0	-0.024	-0.078	-1.736	1.725	-1.736	1.725	0.687	-0.086	0.037	0.271
Visitor_Visit_Intention_Recommendation	8	MET	0	-0.043	-0.018	-1.439	1.831	-1.439	1.831	0.667	-0.213	0.205	0.633
Actual_Museum_Visit_Frequency	9	MET	0	-0.047	-0.065	-2.162	1.619	-2.162	1.619	0.668	0.124	0.062	0.430
Actual_Museum_Visit_Ticket_Purchase	10	MET	0	-0.041	-0.049	-2.477	1.781	-2.477	1.781	0.694	0.453	-0.037	0.552

Among the three core constructs, the role of social media engagement appears to be the most significant factor contributing to the conditional probability of marketing effectiveness. Of the respondents reported having high levels of engagement, all fall into the positive influence category of this structural model, which further points to a clear relationship between engagement and behavioral intention.

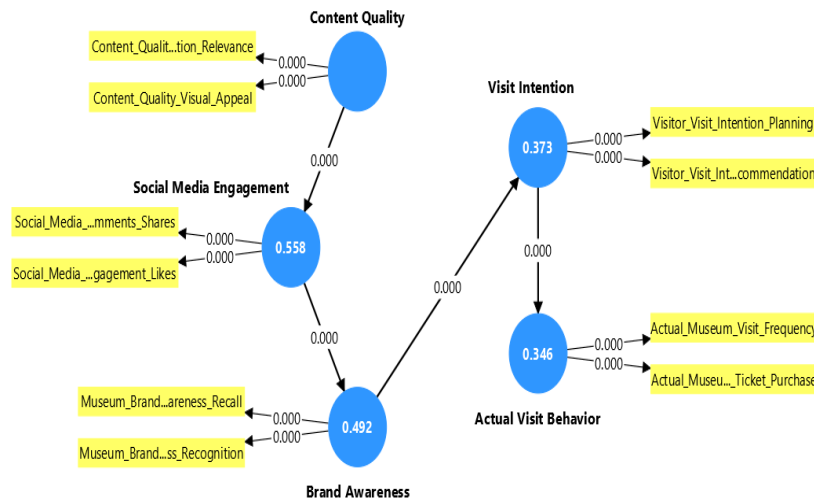


Figure 1. PLS Model

Looking at this data, most of the content quality and social media engagement of respondents fall into this category (although, many of them have reported positive indirect effects through the mediation of a structural path). Nearly half of both brand awareness (0.524) and visit intention (0.320) fall into a moderate effect range which appears to have a low probability of developing independently and hence low chance of influence within this structural framework.

Table 2: Path coefficients

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
<b>Brand Awareness -&gt; Visit Intention</b>	0.611	0.609	0.056	10.881	0.000
<b>Content Quality -&gt; Social Media Engagement</b>	0.747	0.747	0.037	19.925	0.000
<b>Social Media Engagement -&gt; Brand Awareness</b>	0.701	0.700	0.041	17.306	0.000
<b>Visit Intention -&gt; Actual Visit Behavior</b>	0.588	0.584	0.054	10.806	0.000

Table 3: Total effects

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
<b>Brand Awareness -&gt; Actual Visit Behavior</b>	0.359	0.356	0.050	7.152	0.000
<b>Brand Awareness -&gt; Visit Intention</b>	0.611	0.609	0.056	10.881	0.000
<b>Content Quality -&gt; Actual Visit Behavior</b>	0.188	0.186	0.032	5.890	0.000
<b>Content Quality -&gt; Brand Awareness</b>	0.524	0.523	0.041	12.766	0.000
<b>Content Quality -&gt; Social Media Engagement</b>	0.747	0.747	0.037	19.925	0.000

<b>Content Quality -&gt; Visit Intention</b>	0.320	0.319	0.042	7.576	0.000
<b>Social Media Engagement -&gt; Actual Visit Behavior</b>	0.252	0.250	0.040	6.219	0.000
<b>Social Media Engagement -&gt; Brand Awareness</b>	0.701	0.700	0.041	17.306	0.000
<b>Social Media Engagement -&gt; Visit Intention</b>	0.428	0.427	0.051	8.335	0.000
<b>Visit Intention -&gt; Actual Visit Behavior</b>	0.588	0.584	0.054	10.806	0.000

In the case of this model, once again, construct measurability was an important consideration, and therefore an indicator number was introduced to more effectively describe each latent variable. Furthermore, the results indicate that content quality and social media engagement knowledge creation have a strong positive effect on visitor behavioral intention in responding to the digital environment.

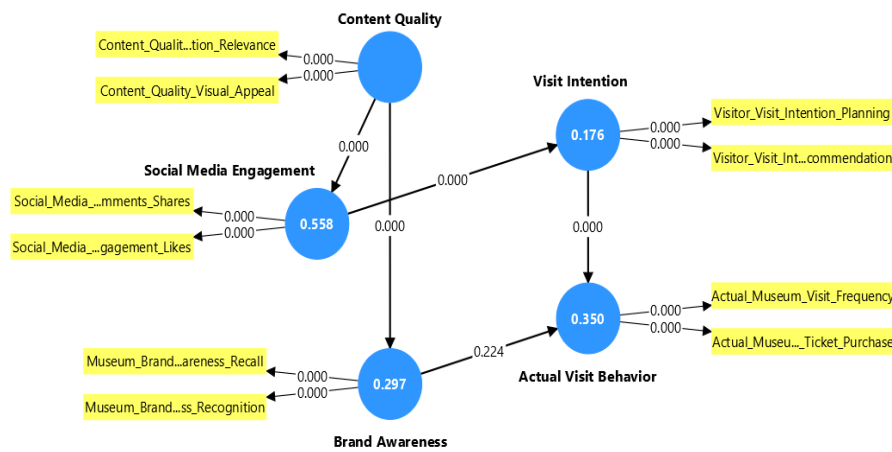


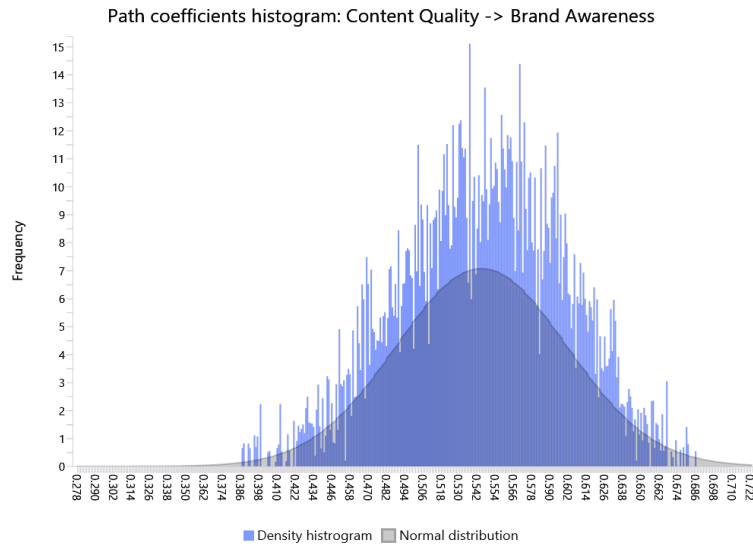
Figure 2. PLS-SEM model

The relationships in the structural model can be applied for the analysis of the constructs separately and also in combination. This line of thought results in an easier differentiation of the constructs from other types of variables.

Table 4: Path coefficients

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ((O/STDEV))	P values
<b>Brand Awareness -&gt; Actual Visit Behavior</b>	0.083	0.085	0.069	1.215	0.224
<b>Content Quality -&gt; Brand Awareness</b>	0.545	0.545	0.056	9.657	0.000
<b>Content Quality -&gt; Social Media Engagement</b>	0.747	0.747	0.037	19.924	0.000
<b>Social Media Engagement -&gt; Visit Intention</b>	0.419	0.417	0.070	5.987	0.000
<b>Visit Intention -&gt; Actual Visit Behavior</b>	0.537	0.533	0.072	7.474	0.000

To probe the indirect effect from content quality to visit intention through the engagement construct, the study analyzed the mediating effects and the possibility of partial mediation. However, there are some combinations of variables the estimation of which is not possible (Gonsales, 2021; Huebner, 2023). Regarding Model 2, which concerns the direct relationship between brand awareness and actual visit behavior, brand awareness had no significant impact on actual visit behavior (Luo et al., 2022; Özdemir & Celebi, 2017; Parkhomenko et al., 2024). For example, on the basis of the definitions as described, a direct generation of behavioral response cannot be considered a strong or consistent pathway, and in this case the influence of awareness alone will be limited.



**Figure 3.** Histogram of Normal distribution of content quality and brand awareness

In our analysis, no direct effect was found from brand awareness to actual behavior, but we found a significant indirect effect from content quality to visitors' behavior through the engagement construct, indicating that this is a mediated form of influence. Specifically, one indicator was excluded from the measurement model (low loading), one from the structural path (insignificant t-value), and one from the latent construct (cross-loading issue).

#### 4. Discussion

This paper proposes the term "social media effectiveness," which defines marketing performance in digital museum contexts. This study integrates different dimensions of social media engagement and information quality, which are classified as key constructs even though some measurement conditions are either not quite fulfilled or over-fulfilled.

This conceptual framework described above is an empirical contribution. The analysis as conducted and presented in this study is a mere approximation and depends on the measurement model and structural assumptions (Özdemir & Celebi, 2017; Arias, 2023; Belenioti et al., 2019; Booth et al., 2019). The results show that improvement of their digital content has a strong and positive effect on their engagement, the brand awareness, and their behavioral intention. The findings show that social media engagement has a significant role in achieving marketing effectiveness in responding to the museum audience.

It also demonstrates that digital platforms increase visitor interaction because they provide users with a system that allows communication and participation (engagement) through online media (platforms) (Gonsales, 2021; Huebner, 2023). The results reveal that information quality has a direct positive influence on visitor behavior in responding to the digital environment.

Therefore, this paper introduces the concept of perceived value (representing user benefits or experience) as an indicator for the evaluation or measurement of a marketing system, particularly in digital environments (Jia et al., 2023; Lebid, 2024). This example demonstrates that the success of digital marketing is not only connected to a high engagement and a reduction in uncertainty. Furthermore, they appear to face information overload problems and structural limitations preventing them from improving this system via a simple adjustment.

However, digital interaction can also be seen as a dynamic process, when considering diversity of user behavior patterns, as outcomes can be improved if strategies that aim at solving communication issues focus on digital platforms that provide different types of interaction (Luo et al., 2022; Özdemir & Celebi, 2017). This finding confirms the applicability of the structural model in its framework, thus aligning it with the results of prior studies (Parkhomenko et al., 2024).

This study showed that the integration of constructs by modeling can be used to gain insights of user behavior and responses in digital marketing, and that some dimensions of engagement may be more influential than others. According to the general definition of effectiveness, an outcome can only be considered as such if it brings about an improvement and is consequently a positive impact on the system (Putri & Tjokrosaputro, 2024; Rasyid, 2024).

If theoretical conditions are not fulfilled, the outcome is most likely to be a limitation on the specific application. Consistent with prior research (Russo et al., 2024), this study found a strong and significant relationship between engagement toward behavioral intention and satisfaction. These results are in agreement with prior findings (Sánchez-Amboage et al., 2023), confirming that social media engagement is pivotal for users to develop positive responses. Understanding the effectiveness of social media for museums and the mechanisms identified by this study can help future researchers to improve models and gain added value to face the challenges.

Knowing the current behavioral patterns, is likely beneficial for the effective management and optimization of the strategies of digital marketing. Nevertheless, even recognized models do not fully meet these three criteria when evaluated concerning their practical application, which is mainly important in real contexts. Due to several methodological, contextual, and measurement issues, outcomes in digital environments differ significantly from such outcomes in traditional settings.”

As there is yet little empirical evidence on social media effectiveness in the context of museums, this study contributes some empirical insights on user behavior to the literature on digital marketing. These findings are in line with those of prior studies that depict engagement as the ability to manage and apply digital tools, empowering a system to develop an effective structure and to improve communication and interaction processes.

This could be explained by the fact that the platform's design adds to the experience by improving the accessibility and the usability of the system. These results are consistent with a previous study (Vassou & Gounopoulos, 2022; Wilkin et al., 2024; Zollo et al., 2021), who investigated the interactive nature of digital platforms in generating user engagement by facilitating communication through online tools. The analyses of the structural relationships are only partially based on empirical data, such as the indicators for engagement and quality in the measurement of constructs, while other parts are based on assumptions (e.g. proxy indicators for behavior). The evaluation model can only be applied when analyzing already existing systems and platforms as opposed to newly developed products. Furthermore, they appear to face data limitations and sampling constraints preventing them from generalizing this model via a broader population.

Further research needs to be conducted to test the robustness of the conceptual model in different contexts. Before applying the structural relationships of the conceptual model, it is necessary to validate in different samples and research settings, to prepare consistent datasets and measurement instruments, as well as to obtain reliable data in connection with the constructs, which will allow the improvement of the model, and a more accurate and more reliable evaluation of the factors determining the effectiveness. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with the limitations of PLS-SEM approaches on small samples.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study can form a basis for further research to clarify the relationships among constructs, and as such, is the main theoretical contribution of this study. This will help to broaden the knowledge in the area of digital marketing and cultural promotion in general. Furthermore, comparisons with findings in other contexts and regions can help validate the model in the field. This framework can also provide a sort of analytical reference of constructs (as suggested by e.g. (Özdemir & Celebi, 2017), (Aurellia & Bachtiar, 2025)) for future studies and, thus, serve as a guiding framework for researchers and practitioners (e.g. museum managers, digital marketers) to focus on during the different stages of the social media marketing process, helping future researchers achieve empirical validation. Finally, like all other works that deal with digital marketing effectiveness, the limitation remains that little is known about whether or not the proposed model will actually begin the implementation in the future. Further research needs to be conducted to test the robustness of the conceptual model in different contexts. Before applying the structural relationships of the conceptual model, it is necessary to validate in different samples and research

settings, to prepare consistent datasets and measurement instruments, as well as to obtain reliable data in connection with the constructs, which will allow the improvement of the model, and a more accurate and more reliable evaluation of the factors determining the effectiveness. During this process, it will be possible to collect more empirical data and, if necessary, refine the model once again.

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