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## Article

# Applying digital marketing strategies to promote tourist areas in Romania in the digital era

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## APPLYING DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE TOURIST AREAS IN ROMANIA IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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### Abstract

Implementing digital marketing strategies to promote national tourist destinations is essential to attract large numbers of visitors. Additionally, the use of social media and content marketing helps to strengthen a virtual community with a common interest in tourism. Digital strategies can be used to promote tourism areas, contribute to sustainable development, and strengthen online presence in the modern landscape. National tourism is an important factor for economic development and strengthening the cultural identity of the country. Although tourism is a very important economic sector in a country, we noticed that there are not many studies in the field of implementation of strategies or management plans for the promotion of national tourism. Thus, this research started precisely from the desire to identify the most appropriate solutions for the promotion of national tourism. The objective of the study was to contribute to strengthening the image of national tourism by implementing a sustainable and innovative strategy, adapted to the current market requirements and the specific needs of each region of tourism. In this research, we used the fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) software to identify the optimal solutions for the promotion of the tourism sector in Romania to make this activity a national priority. This research is necessary to optimise the overall promotion strategy of the national tourism sector. Furthermore, the online environment offers great opportunities to showcase cultural resources and heritage, and every country needs to understand the persuasive power of the Internet. Promoting tourism through the right online strategies must not remain just an option, but must become the norm.

**Keywords:** national tourism, strategy, promotion, sustainable development, online marketing, fsQCA.

**JEL Classification:** M31, Z32, Q01.

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## **Introduction**

National tourism, as a promoter of cultural identity, educates tourists about the history and traditions of their country, contributing to the preservation of these values for future generations. National tourism should not just be a source of income, as it plays a significant role in shaping and strengthening a country's image. Thus, responsible management of resources, promotion of sustainable development, and fostering an authentic experience for tourists are necessary. Furthermore, tourism allows for interactions between tourists and locals, facilitating the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and traditions, which contribute to better understanding between different communities within a country.

Tourism plays an essential role in the economic and social development of the country because it generates income, facilitates the creation of jobs, and supports cultural exchange. The significant contribution of national tourism to economic development is observed through revenues collected from tourists in areas such as accommodation, food, transport, and recreational activities. These substantial revenues can become a constant source of financial resources for the national economy if tourism becomes a priority, as it supports local businesses. In addition, national tourism stimulates the creation of new jobs, thus contributing to the reduction of unemployment and the improvement of living standards for communities involved in the tourism industry.

Promoting tourist regions is necessary to attract visitors and contribute to the sustainable development of local and regional communities. Effective communication from national authorities is needed to promote national tourist areas and make known the resources and attractions offered. Through advertising campaigns, the natural beauty, cultural heritage, and unique experiences offered by the promoted area are highlighted.

In the digital age, national tourism promotion must be integrated with sustainable development principles in order to respond to contemporary environmental challenges and stimulate economic growth. Thus, the promotion of tourist areas not only attracts visitors, but also contributes to the protection of the environment and the long-term development of local communities. The implementation of sustainable advertising campaigns, using technology and digital media, allows better resource management and attracts an environmentally conscious public, thus strengthening responsible and sustainable tourism. Sustainable development applied to the promotion of tourist areas in Romania today is an essential approach to meet contemporary environmental challenges while stimulating economic growth.

Finding solutions to the great environmental challenges of the present is driving economic growth and raising questions about the concept of "sustainable development" (White, 2013; Pater and Cristea, 2016). Sustainable development implies the adoption of innovative practices that minimise negative environmental impacts and conserve natural resources for future generations. Implementing sustainable development in tourism involves using digital technologies to offer eco-friendly experiences and educate tourists about the importance of protecting the environment. Online platforms can be used to highlight the beauty and uniqueness of Romanian tourist areas while promoting sustainable practices. The concept of sustainable development, i.e., technological development and organisational change to harmonise the needs of both present and future generations (Crals and Vereeck, 2005), underpins the latest philosophy of solving existing environmental problems that threaten

the ecosystem (Cohen and Winn, 2007). Promoting Romanian tourist areas through the prism of sustainable development in the digital age not only protects the environment, but also contributes to economic growth and creates a positive image for tourist destinations. This integrated approach ensures a balance between today's tourism needs and preserving natural resources for the future, making Romania an attractive and responsible destination.

To be able to recognise sustainable development as a business opportunity, sustainable entrepreneurs need not only opportunity recognition skills, but also interpersonal skills that enable them to interact with stakeholders, learn from them, and adapt quickly (Buyse and Verbeke, 2003; Dunphy et al., 2007). Currently, opportunity recognition skills and interpersonal skills of entrepreneurs are necessary for networking and effective use of online platforms for the promotion of sustainable tourism.

Choosing digital technologies as marketing tools can be a much more sustainable form of promotion. Moreover, the use of online platforms and modern technologies can create a close link between visitors and the places they visit while protecting the local ecosystem. National tourist areas can be promoted through digital marketing faster and more effectively, and the attention of potential visitors is much more easily attracted by authentic, attractive content, relevant messages, and evocative photos. Filieri et al. (2021) believe that suggestive photos distributed on different social networks can infuse the audience to explore the promoted destination.

Fernández-Díaz et al. (2023) state that tourists will be engaged and their attention will be attracted by using materials optimised for mobile devices, easy to find, and fast loading. Digital tools are necessary for national tourism promotion, as forms such as virtual reality or virtual tours have become increasingly used. Taking into account the usefulness of digital marketing, relevant strategies can be developed so that local tourist destinations can be transformed into attractions of great interest. Digital marketing tools are the most important external factors influencing consumers' purchase of products and services (Lee, 2008). The public and private sectors can work together to develop effective programmes to promote tourist areas.

Through partnerships between local authorities, the establishment of tourism agencies, and nongovernmental organisations, effective promotion campaigns can be carried out and relevant marketing strategies developed. Promoting national tourism also aims to focus on the sustainability of natural areas. Tourism education is necessary for both locals and tourists, as it significantly contributes to raising awareness of tourism's impact on the environment and local communities.

It is known that the effect of online information, especially the information provided on the Web, on individuals is increasing daily, and that useful information positively influences individuals' intentions (Chu and Choi, 2011). Therefore, online content provides essential cues and significantly impacts tourists' intentions to seek information and to read about others' experiences (Simonetti and Bigne, 2022). Sharing destinations, especially in digital marketing applications, positively affects behaviour intentions and tourist satisfaction (Kim and Stepchenkova, 2015).

Ecological and social practices can also be integrated to ensure the sustainable development of tourist areas, to prevent overexploitation of natural and cultural resources through their conservation. Promoting national tourism is important both to attract a large influx of tourists and to sustain the sustainable development of local communities. The integrated

approach that values natural resources and cultural heritage aims to collaborate between different stakeholders, as national tourism contributes both to the local prosperity and to long-term protection of tourist areas. In an increasingly digitally connected society, the Romanian tourism industry faces multiple challenges, but also unique opportunities that need to be leveraged. By applying a relevant strategy and conducting online marketing, Romania can be highlighted. The beauty and diversity of Romanian tourist areas can attract tourists from all over the world. The use of social media platforms allows for the identification and exploitation of numerous opportunities to promote tourist destinations in Romania. On the other hand, Erkan and Evans (2016) emphasised that social networks and digital media channels have a significant impact on people's behaviour in purchasing products or services. Similarly, Thakur (2016) considers that experiences related to the content of products and services in the eWOM environment significantly affect users.

Executing attractive marketing campaigns on social networks creates a strong online presence with the aim of attracting many people. The culture, landscapes, regional beauties, and unique experiences of Romania can be shared online as captivating stories, using various concepts such as storytelling or story scaping. Information about tourist areas in Romania posted online is easily accessible and visible in online search results if search engine optimisation is utilised. Creating high-quality content online, using relevant keywords, adapting to Internet search trends, and customer requirements are aspects that can strengthen Romania's position as a tourist destination on the global digital map.

The literature review highlighted the absence of studies that specifically investigate the application of effective digital marketing strategies to promote national tourism in Romania. Tourism is a very important economic sector, but the implementation of innovative managerial plans tailored to the specific needs of the market is insufficient, as it is necessary to promote and popularise the effects of national tourism. The present research aims to identify optimal promotion solutions that will attract a large number of visitors and support the sustainable development of the tourism sector.

This research can be framed within the theoretical context of digital marketing and sustainable tourism. To understand how strategies can help strengthen virtual communities and promote national cultural resources, the use of social networking and content marketing should be carefully analysed. At a practical level in the present study, we applied the fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) model to explore optimal solutions, providing a practical framework for implementing the identified strategies.

The importance of the paper is represented by the justification of the need to develop and implement effective digital marketing strategies tailored to the current requirements of the national tourism market. This study contributes to the existing literature due to its detailed analysis of digital marketing strategies applied in national tourism, serving as a reference for other researchers and practitioners in the field. Furthermore, the tourism sector is extremely important to the national economy, contributing to the strengthening of cultural identity and promoting sustainability.

The aim of this study is to strengthen the image of national tourism by implementing sustainable and innovative strategies, providing effective solutions to attract a large number of tourists, and involving the relevant authorities.

Contributions are observed at both theoretical and practical levels; thus, this study expands the literature by developing a theoretical model for the promotion of national tourism,

identifies optimal solutions tailored to each tourism region, and provides practical recommendations for the implementation of the proposed strategies. The structure of the article is clear and concise; the first part comprises the literature review and relevant theoretical frameworks, and the second part details the methodology used, including the application of the fsQCA software. In the last part, we also present the results obtained from the data analysis and discuss the practical implications needed to promote national tourism, concluding with directions for future research.

### **1. Theoretical background and development of research propositions**

Romania can strengthen its position in the tourism industry by leveraging digital marketing strategies to attract tourists interested in unique experiences, exceptional natural landscapes, and fascinating customs. All these elements gain additional value if they acquire an attractive digital image. Maintaining the authenticity of national culture in the digital age can be a real challenge, as the world is constantly changing and undergoing accelerated globalisation. However, content marketing is an essential digital marketing tool for the tourism industry. Through content marketing, identity and cultural values can be quickly and easily conveyed online to a wide audience, indirectly contributing to the preservation of tradition and the maintenance of national identity. Social media sites have become web-based platforms for individuals to interact, share information online, and exchange ideas (Javed, Tučková and Jibril, 2020; Islam, 2021). The information on these sites influences people's daily lives and impacts industries, including tourism (Islam, 2021).

Most travel decisions are influenced by information from social networks and digital marketing (Milon, 2014; Milon and Șlicaru, 2017; Magano and Cunha, 2020; Islam, 2021; De Amorim et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2022). Content marketing is the perfect way to explore and spread national culture, so through blogs, online documentaries, and interesting videos, authentic stories that reflect a country's cultural diversity can be presented. Furthermore, digital marketing allows tourists to interact with the destination and local communities (Armutcu, 2023). Social media applications such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Telegram, and WhatsApp Business are frequently used for digital marketing interactions to encourage consumers to research and plan their travel destinations (Toral, Martínez-Torres and Gonzalez-Rodriguez, 2018; Styliadis, 2022).

The concepts of destination and tourist behaviour have been extensively explored in the literature with regard to competitiveness (Ritchie and Crouch, 1993; Dwyer and Kim, 2003). For example, Ritchie and Crouch (1993) described destination tourism as the ability to profitably attract visitors while providing memorable and satisfying experiences, enhancing their well-being, and preserving natural capital for the destination for the next generation (Salinas Fernández, 2020).

Using content marketing, the main Romanian attractions can be presented, from unique gastronomy to crafts and artisan activities. The beauty of these activities can be captured in videos and interviews with Romanian craftsmen, thus promoting Romania's originality and authenticity. Content marketing has become an essential means to share national diversity and authenticity. Positive online content that highlights the accessibility and convenience of the destination can increase perceived behavioural control and lead to an increased likelihood of visiting the destination (Li, Ma and Wu, 2023). Effective marketing strategies aim to convey cultural heritage in an authentic way, attracting the attention of a global

audience, and contributing to the preservation of identity in the context of accelerated global changes.

Currently, social media marketing is a very important tool used in the effective promotion of national tourist areas. Furthermore, promotion of products and services through digital marketing channels continues to improve consumer awareness (Alamsyah et al., 2020), their choice regarding certain products and services (Zubair et al., 2020), and their buying behaviour (Krey et al., 2023). A strategic approach to social media marketing is needed for tourist destinations to be correctly and extensively promoted, in order to build a strong national brand, involve local and regional communities, and finally attract tourists with authentic unique experiences.

A strong digital presence of Romanian culture can be created using social media platforms. It is important to note that each platform has unique advantages and the way of communicating with the audience and promoting the tourist regions varies. Attractive visual content created by posting images and videos highlights tourist destinations, unique landscapes, and Romanian culture. Authentic content, community participation, and the use of advertising strategies give Romanian tourist areas the opportunity to connect with tourists.

Promotion of national tourism contributes to the economic and cultural development of a country. Therefore, competent authorities must be involved in developing and implementing relevant strategies to attract tourists and increase the visibility of tourist destinations. The responsibilities of competent authorities include developing strategies and implementing national tourism development plans, as directing investments and promoting tourist destinations sustainably are necessary.

In addition, these authorities play a role in establishing the strategic directions necessary to maximise the country's tourist potential. Competent tourism authorities are involved in building and promoting Romania's image both nationally and internationally, with the aim of strengthening the country's reputation as a unique tourist destination through marketing campaigns, participation in tourism fairs, and collaborations with international promotion agencies. Additionally, online platforms and applications dedicated to national tourism can be implemented to facilitate the travel planning process for domestic tourists. Digital tourist applications provide updated information, personalised itineraries, and special offers, creating a more accessible and interactive experience for potential tourists.

The online content of a tourist destination has a significant impact on user intentions (Chuan-Chuan Lin and Lu, 2000). The quality of online information about a product or service significantly influences people's purchasing intentions. Quality content increases tourists' trust in the destination, helps manage their expectations, and increases the likelihood of visiting (Park, Lee and Han, 2007).

The development of the national tourism industry is achieved through the active participation of the competent authorities. The main activities, such as the construction and modernisation of access roads, the development of accommodation facilities, and the effective promotion of lodging services, are priorities in the tourism industry to provide a quality experience to tourists. Through a well-established plan, competent authorities in the tourism industry can encourage and implement sustainable tourism practices, actions aimed at protecting the environment, conserving cultural heritage, and involving local communities in the tourism development process to ensure long-term benefits. Among the

duties of the competent authorities are the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the tourism industry.

Strategies can be based on actual data from the national tourism sector, including the annual number of tourists, economic impact, and tourist feedback. Tourists are increasingly using online communities as a form of generalised social exchange (Jin et al., 2013; Atsız, Ramkissoon and Öğretmenoğlu, 2023). There is a stable relationship between the online content of a tourist destination and tourist satisfaction (Hwang, Park and Woo, 2018). Lohmann and Kuhn (2021) emphasise that tourist satisfaction has a significant impact on the choice of tourism products or services.

It is necessary to involve the competent authorities in charge of tourism in order to promote tourism at national level. Thus, tourism promotion should be carried out according to a well-established plan aimed at strategic resource management, infrastructure development, and the promotion of cultural and natural values. National-level activities can increase the attractiveness of national tourist destinations and develop the country's economy. The tourism infrastructure can be improved through public-private partnerships to strengthen the tourism industry in a sustainable way. In addition, authorities with responsibilities in the tourism sector should focus their efforts on promoting less explored national tourist destinations.

Visitor attention can be attracted more quickly through effective campaigns that encourage the public to explore the beauty of national regions. Tourism awareness and education can be achieved through special campaigns that emphasise the authenticity and beauty of the country. Presenting information on natural resources, cultural heritage, and recreational options online can encourage tourists to explore their own country. By applying innovative strategies, effective and well-managed approaches, the interest of domestic and foreign tourists can be stimulated more quickly, with long-term benefits for both local communities and the country's overall economy.

The formulation and implementation of a general strategy play an essential role in the national tourism industry. Investments in tourism infrastructure (tourist trails, camping spaces, and sports facilities) increase the attractiveness of national destinations.

Based on an analysis of the specialised literature, the following factors have been identified as influencing the increase in the demand for national tourism among Romanians:

- authenticity of the national culture presented through content marketing (ANC);
- social media marketing to promote Romanian tourist areas (SMM);
- involvement of competent authorities in national tourism promotion (ICA);
- practice of country branding (CBP).

Based on the findings mentioned above, the research proposition can be formulated as follows:

*Research proposition:* the multiple causal configurations of antecedent conditions (ANC, SMM, ICA, CBP) have a significant influence on the increase of national tourism demand among Romanians (INC).



## 2. Research methodology

### 2.1. Data collection and variable measurement

This research entails analysing how national tourism demand can be increased among Romanians, taking into account both the strategies applied in the digital environment for the intense promotion of Romania as a tourist destination and the involvement of competent authorities in supporting Romanian tourism. Therefore, a questionnaire with 22 questions was created using Google Forms and distributed from 5 June 2023 to 7 August 2023 in groups targeting Romanian tourists. The survey was completed by 213 respondents. The questions in the questionnaire, used in the formulation of the variables, were constructed on a five-level Likert scale (Strongly Agree - Strongly Disagree).

The distribution of the respondents according to their background shows that 58.2% of the respondents come from urban areas and 42.8% from rural areas, indicating that there are no significant differences between the respondents according to their background. Regarding age groups, 19% of the respondents fall into the 21-30 year age group, 51% are in the 31-40 year age group, 23% in the 41-50 year category, and 7% are in the 51-60 year age group. Respondents between 31-40 years are observed to dominate, suggesting that this age group travels more frequently.

For each variable, referred to in the research as an antecedent condition, the survey focused on representative concepts, detailed in Table 1. Based on these key topics, the questions in the questionnaire were designed to ensure a high level of clarity and objectivity in the research conducted.

**Table no. 1. Subjects addressed in the development of variables**

Nr. crt.	Variable	The topics addressed
1.	Authenticity of national culture presented through content marketing (ANC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- presentation of national tourist destinations through blogs or vlogs aimed at influencing the decision-making process of potential tourists;</li> <li>- utilisation of information and communication technologies (websites and web applications, blogs) to promote national tourism;</li> <li>- identifying the role of culture both in creating and developing the tourism heritage, as well as in establishing and reinforcing the uniqueness and identity of people.</li> </ul>
2	Social media marketing to promote Romanian tourist destinations (SMM).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- promotion of Romanian tourist destinations through social media platforms;</li> <li>- building an online community in the field of national tourism;</li> <li>- presenting national tourist destinations in the form of a story in the online environment (digital storytelling).</li> </ul>

Nr. crt.	Variable	The topics addressed
3	Participation of competent authorities in national-level tourism promotion (ICA).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the role of the Romanian state in promoting competitive tourism and the extent of involvement in improving Romania's image as a tourist destination;</li> <li>- the manifestation of the Romanian state's interest in supporting tourism activities through specific policies;</li> <li>- the application of economic and financial mechanisms and actions for the valorisation and protection of the tourist heritage;</li> <li>- implementation of a national multi-year marketing and tourism promotion programme.</li> </ul>
4	Country branding practice (CBP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the impact of country branding on domestic tourism demand for destinations with a favourable identity or reputation;</li> <li>- the influence of increasing prosperity and living standards in Romania on the practice of domestic tourism;</li> <li>- supporting national identity through differentiation, variety, and diversity included in a marketing strategy as well as through the involvement of necessary resources;</li> <li>- the role of the country's image and reputation in increasing national tourist demand.</li> </ul>
5	Increasing national tourist demand among Romanians (INC) - outcome variable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- active participation of the Romanian state through specific authorities in supporting national tourism;</li> <li>- promotion of national cultural authenticity;</li> <li>- influence of the reputation of national destinations online among Romanian tourists;</li> <li>- synergies with influencers, bloggers, or opinion leaders as promoters of national tourism.</li> </ul>

Source: authors' processing

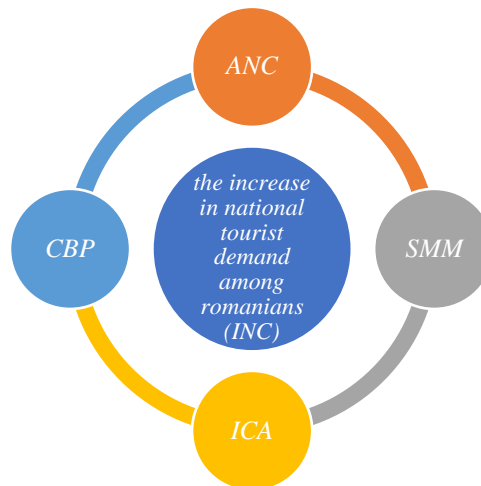
We believe that all these actions can lead to managing, improving, and promoting tourist destinations in Romania through an integrated perspective within domestic destination management, playing a crucial role in influencing Romanians' desire to engage in domestic tourism.

## 2.2. Framework of research

In the qualitative-comparative analysis process, the necessary connection between each individual causal condition and the studied phenomenon is determined, and then the data is analysed using a truth table. In the comparative-qualitative analysis with a fuzzy dataset, the term "necessary" refers to a specific causal relationship between conditions and outcomes. A condition is considered necessary when it must be present for the outcome to occur. In other words, the absence of the necessary condition would lead to the absence of the outcome.

The precedent conditions used in this research that involve the fsQCA method are: (1) authenticity of the national culture presented through content marketing (ANC), (2) social media marketing to promote Romanian tourist destinations (SMM), (3) participation of competent authorities in national tourism promotion (ICA) and

(4) country branding practice (CBP), while the target outcome is the increase in national tourist demand among Romanians (INC). Figure 1 presents the conceptual model that underlies this investigation.



**Figure no. 1. Conceptual Model**

*Source: authors' processing*

### 3. The fsQCA approach

FsQCA is an essential method for researchers who want to investigate the complex causality of phenomena, integrate qualitative and quantitative data into their research, and understand the interactions between conditions leading to specific results. It has become increasingly popular in the social sciences because of its ability to handle complex cases and contribute to a deep theoretical understanding of the phenomenon studied. FsQCA is used in social science research to analyse qualitative data and identify complex patterns of causality or configurations. Developed by Charles Ragin, fsQCA is a type of comparative qualitative analysis that allows researchers to work with both crisp (binary) datasets and fuzzy datasets (gradually varying ones).

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) is an asymmetric data analysis technique that combines the logic and empirical richness of qualitative approaches, which are rich in contextual information, with quantitative methods that deal with many cases and are more generalisable (Ragin, 1987) than symmetrical theory and tools. Asymmetry occurs when different causal pathways lead to different outcomes, and equivalence refers to different combinations of causal conditions leading to the same result. FsQCA helps identify these patterns and understand how different conditions interact to produce specific outcomes.

QCA is useful for both inductive and deductive reasoning (Park, Fiss and El Sawy, 2020; Saridakis, Angelidou and Woodside, 2020) and for theory building, theory elaboration, or theory testing, which are highly beneficial aspects in research (Greckhamer, Misangyi and Fiss, 2013; Misangyi et al., 2017). QCA studies are designed to blend techniques from both qualitative and quantitative approaches, making them inherently combined with technical applications (Teddle and Tashakkori, 2009; Ordanini, Parasuraman and Rubera, 2014),

which adopt the best attributes from both domains. The qualitative inductive reasoning of data analysed by case rather than by variable (Ragin, 2000) is combined with quantitative empirical testing, thereby determining the sufficient and necessary conditions that drive outcomes through statistical methods (Longest and Vaisey, 2008; Ordanini, Parasuraman and Rubera, 2014). In most cases, QCA is useful in quantitative studies, as it allows the researcher to gain a detailed insight into the data through quantitative analysis that also incorporates some characteristics of qualitative analysis.

FsQCA enables researchers in the social sciences to identify complex configurations of conditions that lead to specific outcomes. It is a unique combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches that allows researchers to integrate qualitative data, such as case studies or interviews, with quantitative data in the form of Boolean algebra (0 and 1). In this way, researchers can take advantage of the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative analysis. By uncovering complex causal configurations, fsQCA contributes to theory development and testing. Furthermore, it allows researchers to refine and develop theories that capture the complexity of social phenomena and test them based on empirical data.

### 3.1. Calibrating fuzzy sets

The fsQCA method is frequently used in social science research to analyse complex causal relationships, with the aim of identifying the best combination of conditions that determine the expected result. The calibration process is crucial in fsQCA, as it transforms the original data into sets of data called fuzzy sets, allowing for a more nuanced analysis of the complex causal relationships between conditions and outcomes.

In comparative qualitative analysis with fuzzy sets, the calibration process refers to the systematic assignment of membership scores for each condition or variable under study. Calibration is essential in fsQCA because the research in this software deals with fuzzy sets, which allow for a more detailed representation of reality compared to traditional binary logic (0/1). Through calibration, membership scores are assigned to cases, indicating the degree to which a case belongs to a particular condition.

This representation in fuzzy sets captures the complexity and ambiguity, essential aspects present in many real-world social phenomena. Using calibration, we assign membership scores because the fsQCA can indicate cases that fall between the two binary categories. In many real-life situations, cases may not fit perfectly into the presence or absence of a condition, but may exhibit partial membership. Therefore, the calibration allows the analysis to account for these intermediate cases.

The data calibration process is presented in Table no. 2, through the fsQCA software.

**Table no. 2. Data calibration**

```
compute: cANC = calibrate (ANC,5,3,1)
compute: cSMM = calibrate (SMM,5,3,1)
compute: cICA = calibrate (ICA,5,3,1)
compute: cCBP = calibrate (CBP,5,3,1)
compute: cINC = calibrate (INC,5,3,1)
compute: cASICI = fuzzyand (cANC,cSMM, cICA, cCBP, cINC)
```

*Source: authors' processing based on the fsQCA software*

ANC, SMM, ICA, CBP, and INC are the labels of the variables considered in this research. In fsQCA, conditions are represented by the independent variables analysed in relation to an expected outcome. The membership scores in fsQCA range from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates that the case does not belong to the condition at all, and 1 indicates that the case fully belongs to the condition.

In this research, we calibrated the data as follows: a value of 5 represents the highest membership score assigned to a case for the established conditions, indicating maximum membership. A value of 3 is an intermediate membership score and reflects that a case partially belongs to the established condition. A value of 1 represents the lowest membership score assigned to a case for the established conditions and implies that the case has a very low or minimal membership in the established condition.

Within the conceptual model, each antecedent condition was measured on a five-point scale ranging from very high to very low (Table no. 3), while the result was evaluated using a separate 5-point scale ranging from fully adapted to very unadapted (Table no. 4). Fuzzy-set QCA indicates two types of configurations that include both necessary and sufficient conditions.

Causal configurations can be explained by their presence or absence. Analysis in fsQCA requires defining both the outcome and the antecedent conditions, so both the causal conditions and the outcome must be calibrated in fuzzy sets with values ranging from 0 to 1. A value of 1 reflects complete membership, while a value of 0 suggests absence from the cluster. However, author Woodside (2021) recommends avoiding assigning a value of 0 to any of the established members, so we used 0.05 for this level.

**Table no. 3. Calibration of scales for antecedent conditions**

Scale	Value fuzzy	Membership
Full agreement / Very high	1	Total membership
Agreement / Important	0.75	Partial membership
Neutral	0.50	Neither membership nor non-membership
Disagree / Unimportant	0.25	Weak membership
Strongly disagree / Very unimportant	0.05	Non-membership

*Source: adapted from Ragin, 2014*

**Table no. 4. Calibration of the results assessment scales**

Scale	Value fuzzy	Membership
Fully adapted	1	Total membership
Partially adapted	0.75	Partial membership
Neither adapted nor unadapted	0.50	Neither membership nor non-membership
Rather unadapted	0.25	Weak membership
Very unadapted	0.05	Non-membership

*Source: adapted from Ragin, 2014*

Calibration allows researchers to analyse and interpret data that do not fit into strict binary categories, and fsQCA is applicable to a wide range of research topics. Calibration facilitates the identification of different configurations of conditions that lead to a specific outcome. The research in fsQCA establishes three anchors to calibrate fuzzy sets, with the

first anchor indicating complete membership, the second anchor defining partial membership, and the third anchor indicating a median point of 0.5.

Therefore, calibration is essential in fsQCA as it allows for a more flexible and accurate representation of data, addresses uncertainties, enhances the robustness of results, and facilitates the analysis of complex social phenomena. The calibration process enables us to uncover specific patterns and configurations that may not be known using traditional binary logical methods.

### **3.2. Fuzzy-set value distribution and truth table analysis**

In the comparative-qualitative analysis of fuzzy sets by fsQCA, the distribution of fuzzy set values refers to the type of membership scores assigned to cases in the truth table after the calibration process. As stated in the previous section, the calibration process involves transforming raw data into fuzzy sets, where each case is assigned a membership score between 0 and 1, indicating the degree of membership in a particular fuzzy set.

In fsQCA, cases are assigned membership scores to represent the extent to which they meet the conditions that define the fuzzy set. A membership score of 0 means that the case does not meet any of the conditions, while a score of 1 indicates that the case fully meets all the conditions. Scores between 0 and 1 reflect partial membership, indicating varying degrees of compliance with the fuzzy set conditions.

The distribution of fuzzy set values provides some insight into the pattern of cases that have varying degrees of relevance to the outcome under study. Cases with higher membership scores are considered more relevant to the expected outcome, whereas cases with lower scores are less relevant. The distribution helps identify cases that form clear outcome conditions, highlight situations that do not represent solutions to the expected outcome, and indicate ambiguous situations that fall near the fuzzy crowd boundary. Cases that have membership scores close to the value 0.5 are ambiguous, and those with scores close to 1 or 0 are referred to as extreme values, considered clear cases of fulfilment or non-fulfilment of the conditions defining the fuzzy set. These cases play an extremely important role in modelling the result. For analysing and interpreting the results from the fsQCA, it is necessary to analyse the fuzzy-set distribution. From the distribution of fuzzy-set values, we can identify the relevant cases and ambiguous cases necessary to understand the causal configurations and their relation to the outcome of interest.

By analysing the truth table, we can examine the data entered into the software to identify patterns and relationships between the variables under study. The truth table contains the combinations of the input conditions (the variables set in the conceptual model) and their outcomes. Each row in the truth table represents a specific combination of conditions and outcomes. When the truth table is analysed, the patterns and relationships between the initially set conditions and the expected outcome are determined. Truth table analysis facilitates the identification of specific combinations of conditions that determine the expected outcome.

The resulting combinations represent the causal configurations that lead to the occurrence or absence of the outcome and provide valuable information on the complexity of causality in the phenomenon under study. The truth table shows the number of conditions and their different combinations, giving an idea of the complexity involved in explaining the

outcome. By analysing the truth table, we can see how different factors interact and contribute together to the outcome, providing a deeper understanding of causality than traditional methods. We then use the information in the truth table to develop solution formulas that describe the different causal pathways and their relevance to the outcome of interest.

The truth table is used to calculate all possible combinations that can occur in the model under analysis. When calculating the possible configurations, the frequency, i.e. the number of observations for each configuration, is shown.

Table 5 shows the different configurations of the cases obtained from data processing. Truth table analysis is important both for identifying causal patterns of sufficiency and for making the combinations of conditions that are necessary for the outcome. We observe that eight configurations are distinguished in the research sample.

**Table no. 5. Analysis of the truth table for increasing domestic tourism demand among Romanians**

cANC	cSMM	cICA	cCBP	number	cINC	raw consist.	PRI. consist	SYM consist.
0	1	0	1	1	1	0.989656	0.935201	0.935201
0	1	1	1	2	1	0.985808	0.940585	0.940585
1	0	0	0	1	1	0.985328	0.817427	0.817427
0	0	1	1	2	1	0.979009	0.846482	0.846482
1	1	1	0	2	1	0.978024	0.839638	0.839639
1	0	1	1	5	1	0.972491	0.855468	0.855468
0	0	0	0	3	1	0.964458	0.632142	0.653136
1	1	1	1	158	1	0.946473	0.921275	0.976241

*Source: own processing based on fsQCA software*

In fsQCA, consistency is an important concept that assesses the reliability and quality of the data. Consistency is used to assess the degree to which the data from the truth table contribute to the research proposition in fsQCA. Raw consistency refers to the overall consistency of the truth table and indicates the extent to which the empirical data support the identified causal configurations. Raw consistency values range from 0.946473 to 0.989656 indicating that the predicted model results are consistent with the observed results to a large extent. A higher value of raw consistency suggests a higher degree of agreement between cases with the same combination of conditions.

PRI consistency is used to assess the consistency of the model in terms of the relationship between observed outcomes and predicted outcomes based on causal configurations derived from the data set. The consistency ratio, also known as the PRI, is a measure that indicates how well the predicted model results match the actual observed results. The PRI consistency values range from 0.632142 to 0.940585, showing a relatively high level of alignment of the predicted model results with the observed results, considering the distribution of the data.

SYM consistency refers to situations where the outcome variable is symmetric (both high and low values are significant). Symmetry in fsQCA means that the solutions for the expected outcome are reflected in two complementary sets of conditions. The high consistency of the symmetry suggests that the truth table demonstrates a balanced representation of the different causal paths leading to the outcome. SYM consistency assesses the symmetry between predicted outcomes and observed outcomes. The SYM consistency values range from 0.653136 to 0.976241, indicating a high level of symmetry between the predicted model outcomes and the observed outcomes.

For the present research, the high values of raw consistency,, PRI consistency and SYM consistency indicate high model fit and high accuracy in explaining the observed results. Thus, the three consistency values show broadly similar trends. The PRI consistency and SYM consistency values are lower than the raw consistency, which is to be expected, since they are more stringent measures and consider the distribution and symmetry of the data points.

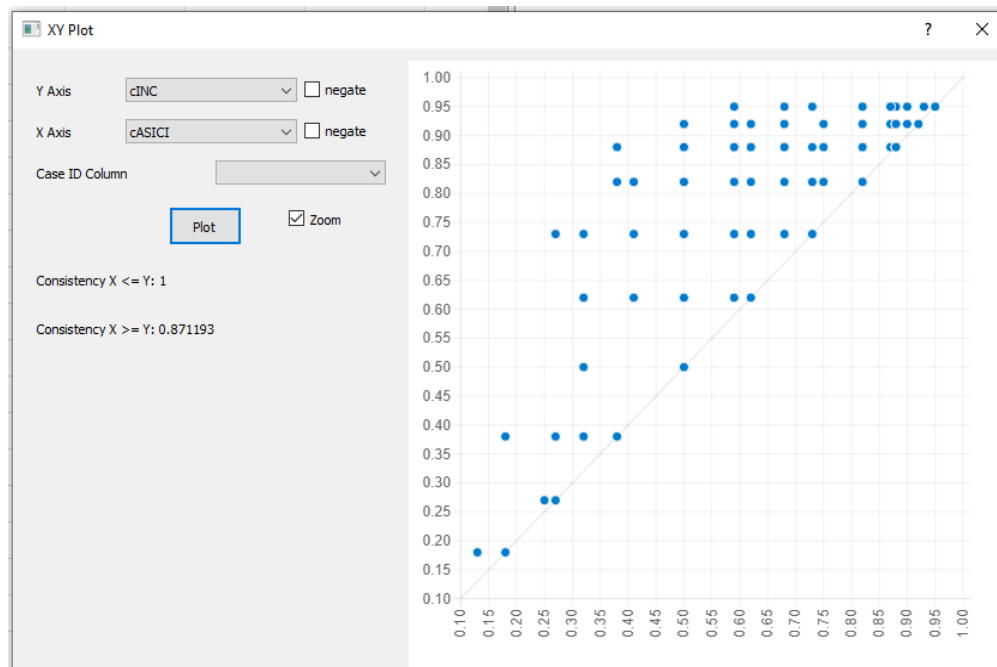
Thus, truth table analysis allows researchers to identify complex causal configurations and draw conclusions about the relationships between conditions and the resulting variable of interest. The truth table analysis in fsQCA involves examining combinations of conditions, calculating truth table indices, identifying causal configurations, and drawing meaningful conclusions about complex causal relationships between conditions and the outcome variable.

### **3.3. XoY plan**

The XoY plan establishes whether a particular condition is necessary to achieve the intended result, while specifying the level of consistency for the condition under consideration. The consistency score reflects the degree to which a combination of causality leads to an outcome. The coverage score indicates the number of outcome cases that are reflected by a specific causal condition. The consistency score indicates that a combination of the four antecedent conditions is sufficient to achieve a high degree of national tourism demand among Romanians: authenticity of national culture presented through content marketing, social media marketing to promote Romanian tourist areas, involvement of competent authorities in national tourism promotion, and country branding.

The more cases in the oY plane, the more important X will be for Y. In the case of the demand for domestic tourism, most cases are in the oY plane. Of the 213 cases, 202 are in the oY plane and 11 cases are diagonally located (Figure 2). Also, most of the cases present a membership of more than 0.8. Thus, it can be stated that the four antecedent conditions: authenticity of the national culture presented through content marketing, social media marketing for the promotion of Romanian tourist areas, involvement of competent authorities in national tourism promotion and the practice of country branding (ANC, SMM, ICA, CBP) present a significant influence on the increase of national tourism demand among Romanians (INC).





**Figure no. 2. Distribution of cases in the graph of the XY plan to increase the demand for national tourism among Romanians**

*Source: own processing after fsQCA software*

The XoY plane, also known as the calibration diagram, is a graphical tool used in the comparative-qualitative analysis of fuzzy sets to visualise the degree of membership of cases in a fuzzy set. It is particularly useful for understanding how well fuzzy sets fit empirical data because it helps to assess the overall quality of the calibration process.

The XoY diagram shows the degree of membership of each case in the fuzzy set. The X-axis typically represents the cases, the respondents' answers, and the Y-axis represents the membership scores ranging from 0 to 1. Each case is represented by a point on the diagram, and its position on the Y-axis indicates its degree of membership in the fuzzy set.

Cases relevant to the expected outcome should have higher membership scores because they indicate a stronger association with the conditions that define the fuzzy set. Cases that are less relevant have lower membership scores. The XoY diagram may reveal cases that fall near the fuzzy set boundary, with membership scores close to 0.5. These cases are considered ambiguous because they do not belong to the fuzzy crowd.

Identifying ambiguous cases is essential as they can affect the results and interpretation of the analysis. The XoY plot allows us to check the sensitivity of the calibration process to changes in the membership score thresholds. The XoY plot is a valuable tool in fsQCA, as it provides a visual representation of the membership scores of the fuzzy set, helping to interpret and validate the calibration process.

With reference to previous existing research in the literature on the promotion of domestic tourism digital marketing, this study addresses some important gaps. There are studies in the literature that analyse the use of digital marketing in tourism promotion, but most of them focus on international tourism or foreign markets. Additionally, the amount of specific research on the effectiveness of digital strategies in national tourism promotion, particularly in the context of a particular country or region, is limited.

In contrast to existing studies in the literature, where most of the time the methodology is based on traditional methods of analysis that do not fully capture the complexity of relationships between different digital marketing strategies and the results obtained in tourism promotion, the present study takes an innovative approach. Therefore, it involves the use of the fsQCA (Fuzzy-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis) software, which allows for a more nuanced and complex analysis of the data collected through the questionnaire. Using the fsQCA model provides a new perspective on how different combinations of digital marketing strategies contribute to the success of tourism promotion campaigns.

The present study differs by addressing the local specificity of national tourism. Although most existing studies address digital marketing at a general level, the present study explores how local particularities influence the effectiveness of digital strategies. The present research contributes to a deeper understanding of how digital marketing strategies can be tailored to meet the specific needs of national tourism. Therefore, this study fills research gaps in the existing literature by providing a detailed and specific analysis of promoting national tourism through digital marketing. In addition, it uses an advanced methodology that has not been fully exploited in previous research and contributes to the literature, offering new insights and solutions for the development of national tourism.

#### **4. Results and discussions**

In fsQCA the Quine-McCluskey algorithm refers to a specific method used to simplify logical expressions or Boolean functions. It is commonly used to analyse data in the form of truth tables, especially in cases where there are multiple conditions (variables) and outcomes. Quine-McCluskey is an algorithm used to find the parsimonious solution (simplest) logical expression that reflects the relationships between conditions and results in a truth table.

The Quine-McCluskey algorithm determines complex solutions that reflect valuable information about combinations of antecedent conditions that influence the outcome. The combinations of antecedent conditions are presented in Table 6 and represent efficient solutions to increase the demand for national tourism among Romanians.

**Table no. 6. Complex solutions offered by the Quine-McCluskey algorithm to increase the demand for national tourism among Romanians**

	raw coverage	unique coverage	consistency
cICA*cCBP	0.91952	0.0425371	0.919982
~cANC*cSMM*cCBP	0.29109	0.00560021	0.983628
cANC*cSMM*cICA	0.878618	0.00629234	0.936360
solution coverage: 0.936383			
solution consistency: 0.907102			

Source: own processing based on fsQCA software

The first solution (**cICA\*cCBP**) provided by the Quine-McCluskey algorithm gives a consistency of 0.919982 and suggests the combination of the participation of competent authorities in national tourism promotion and country branding. Competent authorities (government bodies, tourism boards, and local administrations) play a significant role in promoting and supporting tourism. By being actively involved in tourism promotion, they can implement various measures to attract domestic and international visitors. The competent authorities can design and execute targeted marketing campaigns that introduce potential tourists to Romania's unique attractions, culture, and experiences. Country branding involves creating a positive image and a favourable reputation for the country in the minds of potential tourists. Effective country branding can ensure national tourism: increased visibility and credibility, attracting diverse tourist segments, and word-of-mouth marketing.

The second solution (**~cANC\*cSMM\*cCBP**) with a consistency of 0.983628 represents the combination of the authenticity of the national culture presented through content marketing, social media marketing to promote Romanian tourist areas, and the practice of country branding. The "~" sign reflects the low effect of the ANC antecedent condition in this solution. Even if there is a low level of authenticity of national culture presented through content marketing, it can be said that social media marketing for the promotion of Romanian tourist areas and the practice of country branding can compensate for the low level of authenticity of national culture. Content marketing can highlight the authentic aspects of Romania's culture, traditions, history, and local experiences. Content marketing can be achieved through blogs, articles, videos and stories that showcase: cultural heritage, culinary delights, natural beauty, etc.

The third solution (**cANC\*cSMM\*cICA**) refers to the combination of the authenticity of the national culture presented through content marketing, social media marketing for the promotion of Romanian tourist areas, and the involvement of the competent authorities in tourism promotion at national level. A consistency of 0.936360 was obtained for the third solution. Authenticity is attractive to modern travellers looking for unique and meaningful experiences. The active involvement of competent authorities is necessary for the successful promotion of national tourism. Content marketing enables compelling or interesting stories about Romania's history, traditions, and local communities to be told. This integrated approach can attract a diverse range of travellers, boost tourism marketing,

and ultimately lead to an increase in national tourism, benefiting the economy and communities.

The fsQCA software allows researchers to test the conditions necessary to achieve a particular outcome (Table 7). Therefore, we tested five causal combinations other than those resulting from the Quine-McCluskey algorithm at the sample level.

**Table no. 7. Conditions required to achieve the result**

Conditions tested	Consistency	Coverage
cSMM+cICA+cCBP	0.986471	0.862844
cCBP+cSMM+cANC	0.985276	0.859622
cICA+cANC+cSMM	0.982004	0.857331
cCBP+cSMM	0.981878	0.874860
cSMM+cANC	0.971621	0.872916

*Source: own processing based on fsQCA software*

The combination **cSMM+cICA+cCBP** has the highest consistency (0.986471) and is represented by the combination of three causal conditions: social media marketing for the promotion of Romanian tourist areas, the involvement of competent authorities in tourism promotion at national level, and the practice of country branding. Social media has become an essential tool for marketing and promoting destinations around the world. By using platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, Romanian tourist areas can reach a wide audience both locally and internationally.

Collaboration between government, competent authorities, and the private sector is essential in promoting national tourism. These authorities can facilitate investment in infrastructure, support the development of tourism services, and ensure the quality and safety of tourism offers. A well-founded country brand can differentiate Romania from other destinations and make it more attractive to tourists seeking new and authentic experiences. Consistent branding across various marketing channels, including social media, websites, brochures, and advertisements, can help to strengthen Romania's positive image as a tourist destination.

The second combination consists of three variables **cCBP+cSMM+cANC** and has a consistency of 0.985276. It involves the combination of practising country branding, social media marketing to promote Romanian tourist areas, and the authenticity of the national culture presented through content marketing. A well-executed country branding strategy can foster a sense of pride and national identity among Romanians. By showcasing Romania's unique cultural heritage, natural beauty, and diverse attractions, country branding can create a positive image of the country as a tourist destination for both domestic and international tourists. When Romanians perceive their own country as an interesting and attractive place to visit, they are more likely to explore different regions and practice domestic tourism. Social media marketing plays a key role in interacting with the local population.

By promoting Romanian tourist areas through social media platforms, Romanians can easily discover lesser-known destinations and interesting events in the country. By showcasing local traditions, festivals, culinary delights, crafts and folklore, content marketing can evoke a sense of pride in Romania's cultural heritage. This emotional connection can inspire Romanians to support local businesses, visit historical sites, attend cultural events, and rediscover their country's treasures.

The third condition tested **cICA+cANC+cSMM** is formed by the participation of competent authorities in tourism promotion at national level, the authenticity of national culture presented through content marketing and social media marketing to promote Romanian tourist areas. The consistency value of this condition is 0.982004. The involvement of the authorities contributes to streamlining bureaucratic processes, making it easier for the population to explore different regions of Romania. By demonstrating a commitment to promote domestic tourism, the government and the relevant authorities can inspire confidence and interest among Romanians to explore their own country. Content marketing can present the authentic aspects of Romanian culture. Furthermore, the promotion of traditions and cultural heritage can create a sense of pride and emotional connection among the target audience. The focus on authenticity and unique and interesting experiences differentiates Romania from other tourist destinations. Social media is an effective tool for promotion and interaction with both domestic and foreign audiences. Through social media, the different Romanian tourist areas can be easily promoted and information about interesting destinations, events, and different attractions can be presented. Through engaging content, attractive images, and other users' reviews, Romanians are inspired to explore their own country for leisure and vacation purposes.

The **cCBP+cSMM** condition shows a consistency of 0.981878, being the combination of the practice of country branding and the authenticity of the national culture presented through content marketing. The perception of an interesting destination can be moulded into the minds of potential tourists by carrying out a well-executed country branding strategy. The branding strategy should include both promoting specific national attractions and conveying the unique identity and experiences that the country offers. For a country brand to be effective and relevant, it emphasises the strengths of tourist destinations and creates competitive advantages.

Building the country brand promotes the country's cultural heritage, natural beauty, hospitality, and overall experience. The purpose of developing the country brand is to make travellers associate a tourist destination with certain attributes in their minds. Modern tourists want to explore destinations where sustainability is emphasised and enjoy immersive experiences that allow them to connect with local traditions, history, and way of life.

Through content marketing, using stories, videos, blogs, and social media posts, a destination can share engaging and authentic experiences with potential visitors. Therefore, a comprehensive and holistic approach is essential to success in increasing domestic tourism demand. The combination of strong brand identity and authentic cultural experiences can resonate with tourists and motivate them to choose that destination over others.

The last condition tested **cSMM+cANC** obtained a consistency of 0.971621 and represents the combination of social media marketing to promote Romanian tourist areas and the authenticity of the national culture presented through content marketing. Social media and

content marketing make information about Romanian tourist areas easily accessible to a global audience. Explaining the authenticity of national culture presented through content marketing involves presenting the unique and authentic aspects of culture that make.

Romania, a distinctive and compelling travel destination. Using content marketing can highlight traditional cultural practices that have been preserved over generations. An authentic portrayal of the national culture improves the general perception of Romania as a destination for travel. The authenticity of the national culture helps to build trust and credibility among potential tourists, making them more confident in their decision to visit the country. Presenting the authenticity of the national culture through content marketing can not only attract tourists interested in unique cultural experiences, but also promote a sense of closeness and cultivate appreciation for Romania's rich cultural heritage among the public.

### **Conclusions**

National tourism is considered a promoter of a country's cultural identity and heritage. At present, highly effective digital marketing strategies are needed to promote tourist destinations. Only through innovative approaches and adaptation to technological changes can competitive advantages be created at the national level in the field of tourism. Integrating digital marketing into the promotion of tourist destinations can open new opportunities to discover and appreciate the cultural and natural wealth of different tourist destinations. Digital marketing strategies applied in the tourism sector strengthen the online presence with the effect of attracting a diverse audience and creating an online community that supports the practice of national tourism.

National tourism is an essential element in the transmission of cultural heritage and the promotion of a sense of pride and belonging, as it contributes to the sustainable development of the country by attracting investments in infrastructure, promoting environmental protection, and practising responsible tourism. These are important aspects that are part of the overall strategy that should ensure that the benefits of tourism are sustainable and do not compromise local resources.

The tourism sector needs sustainable development because the environment must be protected, the country's resources harnessed, and local communities supported to stimulate intercultural dialogue. The digital marketing strategy must attract tourists and cultivate a community that is engaged and proud of the cultural and natural riches of the country. The promotion of national tourism must adapt to the demands of the public that spends more and more time on the Internet, so the potential of the online environment must be exploited. National tourism promotion strategies emphasise the importance of conserving natural resources and the sustainable exploration of tourist regions, thus contributing to the development of the sector. National tourism includes cultural heritage and natural resources that must be exposed in the most attractive online environment. By promoting national tourist destinations, both the importance of environmental conservation and the practice of responsible tourism should be emphasised.

Tourism is an important sector at the national level because it has direct implications on the economic development of a country. Moreover, for the consolidation of national identity, there is a need to promote natural resources and cultural heritage. Promotion of national

tourism must be part of every country's mission, and citizens must be encouraged to explore and appreciate the beauty and diversity of their own country.

Tourism demand can be increased through a coordinated and innovative approach at the national level. The factors that influence the development of the tourism sector are: intensive and as interesting as possible promotion of tourist destinations with an emphasis on their diversity, tourist education, infrastructure development, and facilitating access to information. Furthermore, authorities can create a favourable environment to stimulate domestic tourism and strengthen national identity. Promotional efforts in the online environment contribute to the sustainable development of tourism and the benefits brought to local communities. Collaboration between the competent authorities and operators in the tourism industry facilitates the creation of attractive and advantageous packages for national tourists. National tour packages may include discounts, special amenities, and customised experiences to meet the needs of different market segments.

In the digital age, content marketing has become increasingly important, so creating and sharing relevant content attracts visitors' attention. Articles posted on social networks, blogs, infographics, or tourist guides are essential tools used in the digital strategy of national promotion. An effective digital strategy not only promotes national tourism, but also fosters the creation of a special bond between the public and tourist destinations. Using digital technologies and innovative strategies, an engaged online community can be built, thus contributing to the sustainable development of national tourism and strengthening national cultural identity in a constantly changing digital environment.

The aim of this paper is to explore and propose effective solutions to promote national tourism through digital marketing strategies. The essential elements of this research include both the analysis of the existing literature with the aim of identifying gaps in the current promotion programmes and strategies applied in national tourism and the application of an innovative model, fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) to evaluate and test different factors with direct influence on the growth of demand for national tourism. The fsQCA model is very useful to evaluate different marketing solutions and to formulate optimal recommendations to implement sustainable and innovative strategies. Another novel element in the present research is the combination of methods, theories, and perspectives from marketing and tourism to address a complex problem, the growth of national tourism, thus being an interdisciplinary research.

This document provides a comprehensive assessment of digital marketing strategies and their impact on national tourism. At the theoretical level, this paper makes significant contributions due to the broadening for the framework of understanding digital marketing applied to national tourism. On a practical level, through the use of the fsQCA model, the document provides concrete recommendations to improve promotional strategies to increase demand for national tourism based on rigorous data and analysis. Moreover, this paper can be considered as a practical guide to guide authorities, marketers and tourism operators towards more effective and personalised digital marketing strategies to help increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of national tourism destinations.

Another element of originality in the present study is the application of the fsQCA model in a specific context of national tourism promotion, an area in which the use of this model is relatively new. Furthermore, the novelty of this research lies in the integration of digital marketing strategies focused on sustainable development and their adaptation to the

specific needs of each tourism region, allowing for a customised approach in the promotion of tourism destinations.

Limitations of the research include difficulties in generalising the results to an international level and the insufficiency of available data for a complete and detailed evaluation of all digital marketing strategies applied in national tourism. However, the identified limitations provide opportunities for future research, such as extending the analysis to a regional or international level, as well as further studying the specific impact of different digital marketing strategies on different market segments.

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