

# Impact of Digital-marketing promotion on Religious Tourism:

## A case study of Ayodhya

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### Abstract

*Religious tourism is big business for the Tourism industry as it is expected to see massive growth in tourist traffic with the clearance of the construction of the Ram temple on disputed land. This city has already become the nation's prominent tourist destination. Destinations like Ayodhya with religious importance need to be promoted internationally research objective of this paper is to comprehensively assess the role of Digital -marketing promotion in promoting religious tourism with respect to Ayodhya. The structured questionnaire was used to collect the data from the 100 sample (Tourists) who have visited Ayodhya. Data analysis was achieved by using ANOVA and LINEAR REGRESSION to see the impact of digital marketing promotions on religious tourism in Ayodhya. The results were drawn with the help of SPSS and MS Excel*

Keywords: Digital advertisement, e-marketing, religious Tourism, Ayodhya.

### 1. Introduction

The ways in which business is done today and, in the past have experienced significant change. Digital platforms have replaced traditional ones in the marketing of services and goods. It is now very simple and effective to reach out to your customers with your services and products thanks to digital marketing. By the term "digital marketing," we can understand the use of digital channels like websites, mobiles, social media, search engines, and other similar channels to market products and services in order to reach your target

customers.(Desai, 2019) It encompasses all marketing initiatives that involve the use of an electronic device or the internet. (Bala & Verma, 2018)The concept of digital marketing and e-marketing become popular with the advent of the Internet the in the 1990s. As the internet continues to grow it is not only about selling the product but along with-it giving information about the product, space for advertising, facilitating stock trading and also sell software programs. Google, Yahoo, Amazon, Alibaba, and Youtube.com are some of the businesses that have significantly transformed the face of digital marketing. Digital marketing is often referred to as “online marketing, internet marketing. Digital marketing became more advanced in 2000 and 2010 and improvements in devices that allowed access to digital media have resulted in a significant increase in digital advertisement. Digital marketing promotions involve social media, phones, and other electronic devices to advertise a product or service. this also includes fancy billboards that are alongside highways and traffic areas (Chaffey & Chadwick, 2019) Digital marketing is transforming how companies reach to their consumers and 5ds of digital marketing (Digital device, digital platforms, digital media, digital data and digital technology) can be used along with the traditional marketing to reach the target audiences..(Jalaliyoon & Hamed Taherdoost, 2014) The online marketing firms offers 24x7 service availability to its consumers who searching , and decide the purchasing decision about the product and service.

In the present scenario, since the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, Marketing on digital platforms has been revolutionized. Additionally, the emergence of digital marketing tools has had a significant impact on the travel and tourist industry.(M. Negi & Chaurasia, 2021)The existence of the internet and the various digital marketing strategies it brought about have a significant impact on tourists buying behaviour. The travel and tourism industries' marketing strategies have changed as a result of technological advancements. These days, travel agencies use social media platforms to market their companies and display their advertisements, itinerary deals, etc. (Wicaksana & Rachman, 2018)Digital marketing empowers travel agents as well as the consumers and it is a new scientific field that is growing rapidly and considered to be the future of marketing. (Wertime & Fenwick, 2012), and is changing the way how tourists interact with travel destinations when traveling around the world. Digital marketing platforms and tools are heavily used by most industries, including the travel and tourism sectors. and it resulted in generating many leads and business opportunities for them. Digital platforms and e-marketing have been utilized by the travel and tourism industries to boost sales, reach more clients, and advertise their promotions,offers, and Tour packages. Compared to traditional marketing, tour operators, hoteliers, and

transport companies may reach more potential clients with digital marketing. via online communication, to promote their businesses, inform clients about their tourist packages, offers, and special deals, and connect with customers from around the world, travel agents and operators can engage in a variety of activities. Additionally, some travel portals allow clients to create their own packages and receive an instant quote.

### 1.1 Religious Tourism

(Shih, 2015)Modern life is full of mental and physical stress, motivating individuals to travel to recreational and religious sites for relaxation, family time, knowledge enhancement, and spiritual fulfilment. (Shinde, 2007)In present scenario, Movement of tourism travelling to religious destination falls under two phenomena: Religious and tourism. (Rinschede, 1992) But in today's fast changing world these two phenomena: religious and tourism, are increasingly overlap as tourist are traveling with the motivation for both spiritual need and recreational. Which make it difficult to differentiate between two. The resulting travel can be referred as a pilgrimage or religious tourism.

(Mamarasulovna & Tohirovich, 2021)Different authors used the term religious tourism to be synonyms with the concept of heritage tourism, cultural tourism, pilgrimage tourism and spiritual tourism. Most tourist visits the religious sites as a part of the itinerary and therefore, they are also referred a religious tourist. Religious tourism is not a modern phenomenon. People have travelled to sacred sites since the beginning of time, although typically only people from the upper social groups have been able to do so. These people used to group religion, culture, and interests to enjoy their journeys. Religious tourism is a niche industry today, with people traveling domestically and abroad to see certain religious sites because of their religious values and beliefs. Religious tourism can be defined as travel with the primary goal of experiencing religious expressions or the products that result from them, such as art, culture, customs, and architecture. Religious tourism is one of the most rapidly expanding travel segments.

When it comes to Ayodhya, Religious tourism is big business for the Tourism industry as it is expected to see massive growth in tourist traffic with the clearance of the construction of the Ram temple on disputed land. This city has already become the nation's prominent tourist destination. And Destinations like Ayodhya with religious importance need to be promoted internationally. Using digital platforms to advertise promotions, information's about attractions in Ayodhya and special occasions like virtual Diwali, virtual Ramlila, Virtual heritage walks, and different legend stories about ram and other religions also

(Sitārām,1932) as Ayodhya is also the birth place of five jain tirthankars including the first Shri Rishabh dev, Bhagwan Swaminarayan, founder of the Swaminarayan Sect of Hinduism, lived here during his childhood years. Bhagwan Swaminarayan started his seven year journey across India as Neelkanth in Ayodhya.

Ayodhya had been the birthplace of Bhahubali, Brahmi, Sundari, King Dasaratha, Acharya Padaliptasurisvarji, King Harishchandra, Shri Rama, Achalbhrata, and the ninth Gandhara of Mahavir Swami , may attracts the tourists from all over the world. The city has already seen an upsurge in tourist traffic as a result of the settlement of long-standing land disputes in Ayodhya and increased tourism development. We can refer domestic and international visit in Ayodhya since 2019 (domestic and international) As the government works diligently to develop the tourism infrastructure and promote Ayodhya, we can see from the following statistics that domestic tourist visits are consistently rising, whereas foreign tourist visits are steadily declined due to the effects of Covid- 19.

Destination	DTV	FTV	Year
Ayodhya	340967	<b>1365</b>	<b>2019</b>
	6020181	<b>2437</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>15460151</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>2021</b>
	<b>23909014</b>	<b>1465</b>	<b>2022</b>

Source: UP tourism.gov.in

<https://www.uptourism.gov.in/en/post/Year-wise-Tourist-Statistics>

Travelers from all over the world have been drawn to Ayodhya thanks to digital marketing campaigns and promotions for its events and tourism. At present, the Uttar Pradesh government and numerous private players have begun to promote Ayodhya as a religious tourist destination on digital platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and many more. They have also invited numerous travel vloggers to visit Ayodhya and to cover the city and show the religious places, local culture, food and local arts ,craft virtually through digital platforms to the people from all over the world.

## 2. Literature Review

In this dynamic context, the digital online market is an important and active role in promoting tourism at the international level (Cristea et al., 2015) They investigated the presence of the religious tourism market on digital platforms, particularly media in Northern

Moldova by analysing the different sites in the Romanian tourism market. And The success of religious tourism at destination is due to the collaborative efforts of government and non-government, religious groups who comprehended the heritage and religious significance of the destination and the communication plan implemented through classic and online media. Online media marketing helps customers to concentrate on the information that the agent wishes to express. And both tourism suppliers and tourists preferred the digital platforms because of its features such as ease of use, low cost, and the ability for tourists to write rapid evaluations, feedback, likes, and dislikes. Tourism suppliers may advertise their advertising and reach out to customers personally. (Magano & Cunha, 2020) analysed the six dimensions which are 1. the presence of *Information* about the tourism product is available on social media platform as tourism product cannot be tested in advance. 2. trend -way of developing, change 3. Customization 4. Interactivity 5. Word of mouth 6. Brand value 7. Purchase intent, influenced by the use of social networks and mobile technology. Respondents positively value the five dimensions related to the presence of tourism in social networks (information, trends, personalization, interactivity, and mouth-to-mouth). And then they show the intention to purchase the product. (Wiltshier, 2012) Digital platforms give well-furnished tourism information and features including Destination Images, check-ins, hashtags, and shared experiences. Digital marketing platforms allow tourists to communicate, to post reviews, get instant response and tourism suppliers can reach target markets. Hotels and religious centres now have websites and mobile apps to inform devotees about programmes, events, and deals. (Venugopal & Vishnu Murty, 2019) analysed the independent variable of eMarketing promotions Soliciting endorsements, Delayed and asymmetric message delivery, Bonding with guests, Managing reputation Reaching new customers, Recruiting new staff, Building a buzz and Strengthening the combination between mobile e-commerce and tourism on the Performance of Religious Tourism as dependent variable and concluded that the performance of religious tourism is affected by “Solicit endorsement”, “Strengthening attempts between e-marketing and tourists. (Gusti Ayu Oka Suryawardani & Suryawan Wiranatha, 2016) Digital Advertising is a powerful promotional tool for destination marketing and also influences tourist’s buying and travel plans. (Avhad & Anute, 2021) Travel deals and offers are made available to potential customers with the help of digital marketing, and digital platforms also help in generating more leads for the business. (Wicaksana & Rachman, 2018) discussed The key difference between digital and traditional marketing are the speed of communication, understanding of customer preferences, consumer feedback, individualized services, and the ability to monitor market trends. (Labanauskaitė et al., 2020)

E-marketing is similar to digital marketing and can be defined as interlaced process by company send e messages to his target segment by using internet and other digital platforms it can include communication tools like personalized sales, sales promotion, advertising, public relations) by connecting online items: website, e- mail, viral messages, social networks, SEO, mobile environments, blogs.(Kour & Kaur, 2018)The impact of digital marketing is always two way process .it affects customer and customer's responses also affect the organization.(Pallathadka et al., 2022) Digital marketing and promotions of tourism in India have made a major impact on the country's economy and social background.(Navruz-zoda & Navruz-zoda, 2018)Promotion through digital advertisement for destination branding can also give the fruitful results for influencing the target market to visits the destination.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Objective

The research objective of this paper aims to comprehensively assess the role of Digital - marketing promotion in promoting religious tourism with respect to Ayodhya.

#### 3.2 Hypothesis

H<sub>a</sub>: Digital marketing promotions have a positive impact on promoting religious tourism in Ayodhya

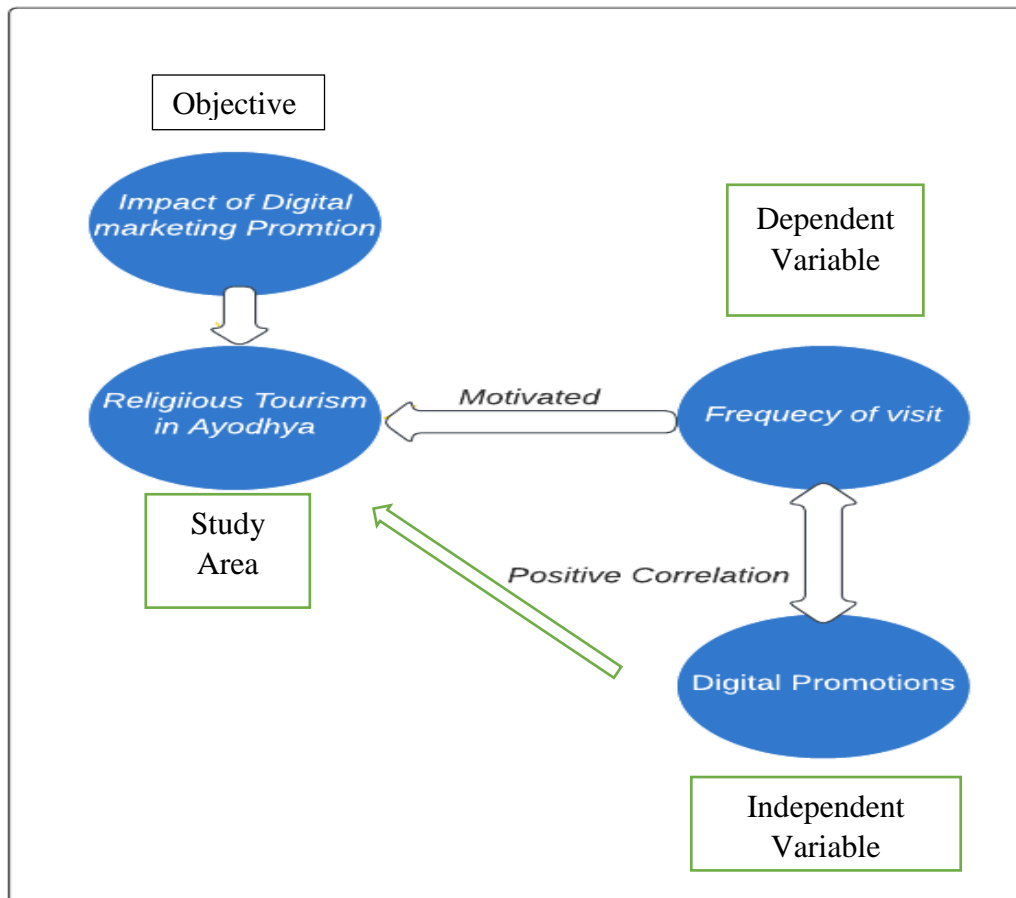
#### 3.3 Research Design

Descriptive and empirical type of research is used to conduct this study with quantitative approach. Primary data is used and collected through convenience sampling method and secondary data has been collected from various journals, articles, newspapers magazines.

The structured questionnaire was used to collect the data from the 100 sample (Tourists) who have visited Ayodhya.

Data analysis was achieved by using ANOVA and LINEARREGRESSION to see the impact of digital marketing promotions on religious tourism in Ayodhya. The results drawn with the help of SPSS and MS excel.

#### 4. Data Analysis and Results



**Source: Results based on Primary data**

#### 4.1 Demographic Details:

The demographic distribution of respondents was based on various attributes such as Gender, Nationality, Age, and Occupation. In terms of Gender, the respondents were predominantly male (74%) while females accounted for the remaining 26%. In relation to Nationality, all respondents were Indian (100%). The Age distribution showed that 6% fell within the 18-25 age group, 34% were aged between 26 and 35, 37% fell within the 36-45 range, and 23% were aged 46 and above. When it comes to Occupation, the majority identified as professionals (57%), followed by students (12%), government employees (11%), and businesspersons (11%). Smaller percentages were represented by retirees (3%) and

housewives (6%).

#### 4.2 Digital Promotions:

#### 4.3 Frequency of Visit:

- The majority of respondents (59.0%) visit Ayodhya more than 10 times.
- About 17.0% of respondents visit Ayodhya 5-7 times.
- 13.0% of respondents visit Ayodhya 3-5 times.
- A smaller portion of respondents (10.0%) visit Ayodhya 7-9 times.
- Only 1.0% of respondents visit Ayodhya 0-2 times.

#### 4.4 Preferred Advertisement:

- The most preferred advertisement platform among respondents is YouTube, with 27.0% choosing it.
- Newspaper advertisements are the second most preferred, selected by 25.0% of respondents.
- Google is preferred by 16.0% of respondents.
- A smaller percentage of respondents (15.0%) choose Facebook for advertisements.
- Instagram is preferred by 5.0% of respondents.
- TV advertisements are the least preferred, chosen by 12.0% of respondents.

#### 4.5 Motivation for Visit:

- The majority of respondents (74.0%) visit Ayodhya due to religious motivation.
- Tourism motivation is the reason for visiting Ayodhya for 16.0% of respondents.
- Some respondents (6.0%) visit due to digital marketing promotions.
- A smaller portion (4.0%) visit based on recommendations from friends.

#### 4.6 Type of Organization Promoting Ayodhya:

- Government organizations are the main promoters of Ayodhya for 39.0% of respondents.
- Private organizations promote Ayodhya for 10.0% of respondents.
- Both government and private organizations are responsible for promoting Ayodhya according to 51.0% of respondents.

#### 4.7 Importance of Maintaining Digital Promotion:



- Respondents consider the cultural aspect as the most important (27.0%) for maintaining digital promotion.
- Religious importance is noted by 38.0% of respondents.
- Economic importance is highlighted by 12.0% of respondents.
- Technology is valued by 20.0% of respondents.
- A smaller portion (3.0%) consider other factors important.

#### 4.8 Reoccurrence of Digital Advertisement Related to Ayodhya:

- A very common pattern is observed, with 55.0% of respondents often encountering digital advertisements related to Ayodhya.
- A significant portion (22.0%) sees these advertisements very often.
- Rare encounters are reported by 21.0% of respondents.
- Only 2.0% of respondents never come across such advertisements.

#### 4.9 Digital Platform Displaying the Most Ayodhya Advertisements:

- Travel videos are the most prominently displayed advertisements, seen by 42.0% of respondents.
- Facebook accounts for 18.0% of the most displayed advertisements.
- Online banners and posting blogs are equally responsible for 13.0% of the advertisements.
- Instagram and email newsletters each contribute 10.0% to the displayed advertisements.

#### 4.10 Cost-Effectiveness of Digital Advertisements for Managing Travel Expenses:

- A significant portion of respondents (38.0%) believe that digital advertisements offer a cost-saving of 41-60% in managing travel expenses.
- 28.0% of respondents consider the cost-saving to be in the range of 61-80%.
- For 16.0% of respondents, digital advertisements lead to cost savings of 81% and above.
- 11.0% of respondents estimate a cost-saving of 21-40%.
- A smaller percentage (7.0%) perceive a cost-saving of 0-20%.

The survey results provide insightful findings regarding visitors' behaviours and preferences in Ayodhya. A significant proportion of respondents visit Ayodhya frequently, with 59.0% visiting more than 10 times, while 17.0% visit 5-7 times, and 13.0% visit 3-5 times. YouTube emerges as the preferred advertisement platform at 27.0%, followed

closely by newspaper advertisements at 25.0%. The primary motivation for visiting Ayodhya is religious, accounting for 74.0% of respondents, with 16.0% driven by tourism, 6.0% influenced by digital marketing, and 4.0% visiting based on recommendations from friends. Government organizations play a pivotal role in promoting Ayodhya for 39.0%, followed by both government and private entities at 51.0%. Respondents underscore the cultural (27.0%) and religious (38.0%) aspects as the most important in maintaining digital promotion, with 55.0% frequently encountering Ayodhya-related digital advertisements. Travel videos dominate as the most displayed advertisements (42.0%), with perceptions of cost-effectiveness being significant: 38.0% believe in a cost-saving of 41-60%, 28.0% estimate 61-80%, 16.0% see 81% and above, 11.0% gauge 21-40%, and 7.0% perceive 0-20% cost-saving through digital advertisements in managing travel expenses.

### 5. IMPACT OF DIGITAL MARKETING PROMOTION ON PROMOTING RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN AYODHYA

To Test the study hypothesis:  $H_1$ : Digital marketing promotions have a positive impact on promoting religious tourism in Ayodhya

To verify the hypothesis, we conducted Linear Regression, and after confirming the test assumptions and conditions, the results were as follows:

To Test the study hypothesis:  $H_1$ : Digital marketing promotions have a positive impact on promoting religious tourism in Ayodhya

<b>Table 3.1 Correlations</b>			
		Digital Promotions	Frequency of visit
Pearson Correlation	Digital Promotions	1.000	
	Frequency of visit	.609	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Digital Promotions	.	.018
	Frequency of visit	.018	.

Table 3.1 presents the correlations between "Digital Promotions" and the "Frequency of Visit" variables. The Pearson Correlation coefficient measures the strength and direction of

the linear relationship between these variables. For the "Digital Promotions" variable, the correlation coefficient is 1.000, indicating a perfect positive correlation with itself. For the "Frequency of Visit" variable, the correlation coefficient is 0.609, indicating a moderately positive correlation with "Digital Promotions." The significance values (1-tailed) associated with these correlations are 0.018 for "Digital Promotions" and 0.018 for the "Frequency of Visit," suggesting that the correlation between "Frequency of Visit" and "Digital Promotions" is statistically significant.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.609 <sup>a</sup>	.584	.534	.56491
a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of visit				
b. Dependent Variable: Digital Promotions				

Table 3.2 provides a summary of the linear regression model used to analyze the relationship between "Digital Promotions" and the "Frequency of Visit." The model's coefficient of determination (R-squared) is 0.584, indicating that approximately 58.4% of the variance in the "Digital Promotions" can be explained by the "Frequency of Visit" variable. The adjusted R-squared, considering the number of predictors, is 0.534. The standard error of the estimate is 0.56491, indicating the average distance between the observed and predicted values of "Digital Promotions."

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.433	1	1.433	4.489	.037 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	31.274	98	.319		
	Total	32.707	99			
a. Dependent Variable: Digital Promotions						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of visit						

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) table displays the results of the regression analysis. The "Regression" row presents the sum of squares (SS), degrees of freedom (df), mean square (MS), F-statistic, and associated p-value for the model. The SS for regression is

1.433, with 1 degree of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 1.433. The F-statistic is 4.489, and the p-value is 0.037, indicating that the regression model is statistically significant at a conventional level of significance. These results provide evidence supporting the hypothesis that digital marketing promotions have a positive impact on promoting religious tourism in Ayodhya.

**Table 3.4 Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.543	.208		17.001	.000
	Frequency of visit	.103	.049	.609	2.119	.037

Table 3.4 displays the coefficients of the linear regression model. The "Unstandardized Coefficients" column presents the estimated coefficients for the constant term and the "Frequency of Visit" predictor. The standardized coefficient (Beta) for the "Frequency of Visit" is 0.609, indicating that a one-unit increase in the frequency of visits is associated with a 0.609 standard deviation increase in "Digital Promotions." The t-value for this coefficient is 2.119, and the associated p-value is 0.037, further supporting the hypothesis that digital marketing promotions positively impact the promotion of religious tourism in Ayodhya.

The findings from these tables collectively provide strong evidence to support the hypothesis (H1) that digital marketing promotions have a positive impact on promoting religious tourism in Ayodhya. The positive correlation, significant regression analysis results, and meaningful coefficients suggest that increasing the frequency of visits through digital promotions indeed contributes positively to the promotion of religious tourism in the area.

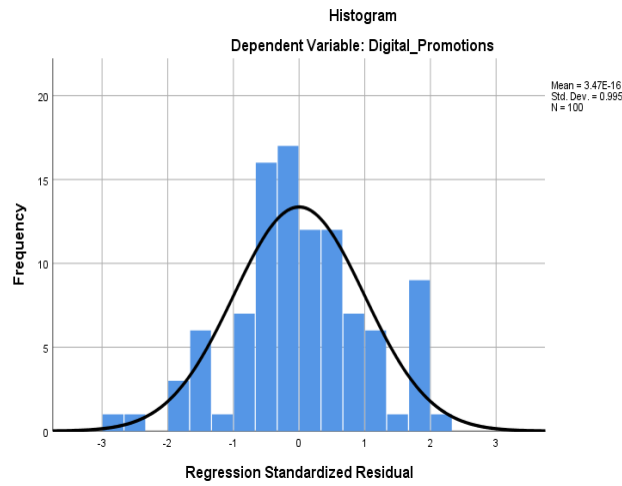


Figure 3.1

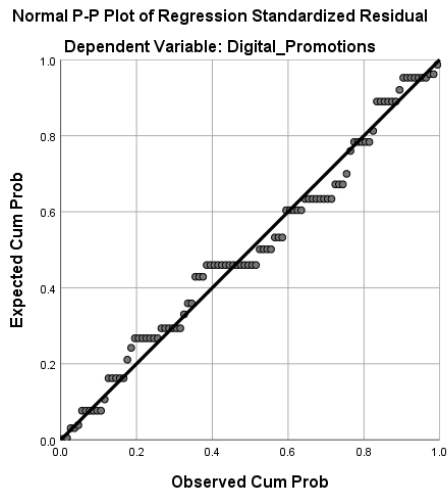


Figure 3.2

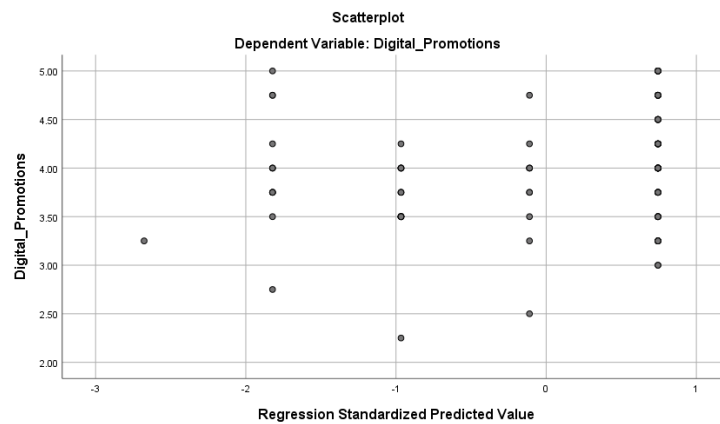


Figure 3.3

## 6. Conclusions

Digital marketing promotion is proved to be power full instruments to advertise tourism in Ayodhya on an international level as the Pearson Correlation coefficient measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the variables. For the "Digital Promotions" variable, the correlation coefficient is 1.000, indicating a perfect positive correlation with itself. For the "Frequency of Visit" variable, the correlation coefficient is 0.609, indicating a moderately positive correlation with "Digital Promotions. But still whenever tourist thinks about visiting Ayodhya, we find that their primary motivation is always religious and spiritual beliefs. Government is constantly working on to promote tourism in Ayodhya due to which constantly tourism development is going on Ayodhya but while promoting and developing tourism in destination like Ayodhya, religious and cultural aspect of tourism must keep in mind. Ayodhya and its unexplored itinerary needs to be actively promoted by private organization as well. For instance, destination management companies (DMCs) might be established specifically to push the religious tourism potential of Ayodhya as there are numbered professional tour operators who particularly working to market the Ayodhya.

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