TURNING INTEREST INTO ATTENDANCE: THE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS THAT INSPIRE EVENT PARTICIPATION IN OMAN

Raja Tumati[1], Saif Ahmed Al-Harthi[2], Wafa Saleh Al Buraiki[3]
[1]Oman Tourism College, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.
 raja.tumati@otc.edu.om , ORCID: 0000-0002-2194-2924
[2]Royal Oman Police, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.
 saif.al-harthi@rop.gov.om , ORCID: 0009-0003-8828-5345
[3]Oman Tourism College, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.
 wafa.al-buraiki@otc.edu.om , ORCID: 0009-0005-5745-063X

To cite this document

ABSTRACT

Purpose - The main aim of this study was to assess the role of marketing communication channels in enhancing visitor participation in Oman's events. The study examines event companies' adoption of traditional and digital marketing communication channels, visitor expectations of these channels, and their link to increased attendance at events.

Methodology - This study used a quantitative research approach and exploratory research design. Random sampling was performed in this study. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The ethics form was completed, and after approval, data were collected from 195 respondents.

Findings - The findings of the study included the majority of respondents who attended the Muscat Nights event (n=86). A total of 56.4% of respondents obtained complete information on the events via communication channels. Friends and family are traditional channels of communication that visitors expect for event information (4.51). Visitors' expectations of digital communication platforms for events include social media influencers (4.41). On the other hand, event companies use digital communication methods to spread event information via radio and television news (4.21), while SMS to mobile phones is the most common digital communication mode used by event companies (4.53). The study revealed a strong association between traditional and digital communication channels, with traditional channels demonstrating a significant value of 0.034 and digital channels achieving a significant value of 0.032, indicating a strong link between these two channels and increased event visitor participation.

Conclusion - The study suggests that event planners and organizers should utilize both traditional and digital marketing channels to reach their target demographic, as both complement each other and increase attendance.

Keywords: Digital channels, tradiational channels, event participation, social media, communication gap.
JEL Codes: M31, D83, G14

1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing communication is critical for organizations, as their success is largely dependent on it (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). This entails strategically disseminating details concerning products, services, or brands to trigger emotional responses and inspire action (Fitriana et al., 2021), defines brand identity, drive consumer behaviour, and propel organisational objectives (Harb et al., 2019). Moreover, it is critical for building relationships with clients, emphasising capabilities, and advancing offerings in an increasingly competitive market (Porcu et al., 2019). Marketing communication increasingly influences companies' communication strategies, enhancing brand appeal, equity, and performance (Luxton et al., 2017). Rehman et al. (2022) emphasized the shift from one-way to two-way communication in marketing, highlighting the effectiveness of social media in facilitating this shift. Likewise, Afridah & Lubis (2024) stated that companies that engage in marketing communication have reported significant increases of 20 to 30% in brand awareness and sales revenue. Fitriana et al. (2021) asserted that maintaining client involvement and satisfaction requires marketing communication methods, which are

frequently less expensive than recruiting new ones. Understanding the target audience and their information sources is crucial for effective marketing, whether through digital marketing, advertising, or social media, ensuring targeted and effective advertising (Harb et al., 2019). Companies that conduct marketing campaigns with three or more channels have a 287% greater purchase rate than those with only one channel. Additionally, compared to single-channel strategies, multichannel marketing yields a 24% better return on investment (Allied Market Research, 2025).

Events are public celebrations with an annual theme that bring residents and visitors together to share their anecdotes (Getz, 2012). The global event industry, valued at USD 736.8 billion in 2021, is projected to reach USD 2517.7 billion by 2035 (Allied Market Research, 2025). Oman contributed USD 1.9 billion in total spending in 2023, implying that the event industry significantly contributes to the economy (Zawya, 2024). Events are being held more frequently in many cities and countries to improve the perception of the location, draw tourists, and offer leisure activities to locals and visitors (Garay 2017). Oman's events sector (trade shows, expos, conferences, and cultural festivals) is growing swiftly, with a focus on digitalisation through onsite technology, apps, ticketing, and hybrid events (Oman Observer, 2016). Technology is transforming event operations and attendee experience in Oman using various communications, such as mobile applications, digital displays, e-registration, and hybrid streaming (Tumati & Al Sulaimi, 2023). According to the Oman Observer (2016), the events industry is regarded as a significant source of revenue, jobs, international recognition, and foreign investment in Oman. Events are viewed as a key pillar for developing and improving the tourist industry in Oman's prospective national tourism strategy until 2040 (Oxford Business Group, 2017). The Sultanate of Oman's capital city holds the Muscat Festival, recently renamed 'Muscat Nights,' which highlights Omani customs, culture, and legacy and includes workshops, fashion displays, exhibitions, and entertainment events. Oman's Vision 2040 promotes economic diversification, with the event sector enhancing investment opportunities, business tourism, MICE, and positioning Oman as a regional hub for international events (Al-Lawati, 2024).

Numerous studies have demonstrated the significance of marketing communication channels, such as those that shape customer expectations and build brand awareness (Kotler & Keller, 2016); create brand awareness, which forms the basis of long-term brand equity in the event industry (Fill & Turnbull, 2019); improve customer retention and loyalty through continuous communication (Grönroos, 2011); increase conversation and engagement rates (Żyminkowska, 2019); improve attendee satisfaction and post-event engagement (Schmitt, 2003); boost public confidence through coordinated and credible communication (Al-Rubai'ey, 2023); influence social media communication on consumer behavior and brand performance (Rehman et al., 2022); and improve the event attendant experience (Tumati & Al Sulaimi, 2023). Despite the growing importance of marketing communication channels for event success and organisational performance, no research has been conducted in Oman. As a result, several stakeholders in Oman will find great value in the current study on the role of marketing communication channels in enhancing visitor participation in events. In addition to providing much-needed information to the expanding body of literature, the study's findings will be extremely helpful to stakeholders such as the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, event planners and organisers, students, and future researchers. The main objectives of this study are as follows; determine the current traditional and digital marketing communication channels adopted by event companies to reach their target audience, analyse visitor expectations of traditional and digital marketing communication channels to learn about events, and determine the relationship between traditional and digital marketing communication channels and enhance visitor participation in events.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing communication is a focused activity that involves communicating information about products and services to consumers or potential consumers via different channels to persuade them to buy from organisations (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). Marketing communication is the process of delivering company information to consumers, including product images for decision-making (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Marketing communication aims to inform, persuade, or remind the target audience of a company's offerings (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Fill & Turnbull (2016) stressed that the goal of marketing communication is to influence the behaviours of the target market rather than simply informing, persuading, or reminding consumers.

2.1. Traditional Communication Channels

According to Keller (2016), almost everyone globally has been exposed to one or more forms of mass media, such as radio, newspapers, television, and outdoor media. Event organizers have extensively employed traditional marketing communication techniques, such as print and broadcast media, to promote events (Jackson & Angliss, 2017). Similarly, Geraghty & Conway (2016) argue that traditional communication methods, such as print, broadcast, and outdoor advertising, are still successful in reaching a large audience for events and activities. Kumar et al. (2017) stated that traditional communication channels, such as television, radio, and print media, remain effective in reaching customers. Traditional communication channels, such as radio, television, newspapers, and outdoor advertising, have a strong beneficial influence on consumers' purchase decisions (Mustafa & Al-Abduallah, 2019). However, Danielsbacka et al. (2022) contend that these

channels are losing their efficacy as more people move to digital channels. While Murtiasih et al. (2021) discovered that marketing messages are helpful in generating awareness of events, they also proposed that participants (i.e., customers) successfully market events through word-of-mouth referrals. Moreover, Tümer et al. (2019) stated that word-of-mouth is critical for attracting visitors to events because it makes potential guests feel excited and educated while competing for their attention. Furthermore, Morra et al. (2018) detailed that some of the most popular communication methods for event promotion are word-of-mouth and recommendations from family and friends. Additionally, Liu & Draper (2022) stated that family and friends play an important role in event communication, shaping opinions, participation, and support, thereby demonstrating the interconnectedness of event advertising and execution. Rentman (2025) stated that choosing the appropriate media for event communication is critical for connecting with and involving the audience. However, Hänninen & Karjaluoto (2017) argued that personalized communication tailored to clients' requirements, interests, and preferences has a greater influence on purchasing decisions than mass communication channels.

According to Todor (2016), television is the primary source of news for consumers, and higher engagement results in better advertisement recall. Television's ability to segment and target the right show or broadcasting channel based on consumer preferences makes it a valuable communication tool. According to Mair & Weber (2019), there is a considerable positive association between purchasing behaviour and seeing information on billboards regarding products, services, events, or other activities. Mustafa & Al-Abduallah (2019) indicated that outdoor advertisements have the greatest influence on consumer purchasing choices, followed by television, radio, and newspapers. According to Todor (2016), consumers who choose to purchase items that are not durable are more likely to be persuaded by television commercials than by the radio, newspapers, and magazines. In contrast, Habib et al. (2015) asserted that radio is a mode of communication that tends to affect long-term product and service consumers, with older consumers being more inclined to be influenced by radio advertisements. Mair & Weber (2019) discovered that communication via newspaper advertisements is more efficient than any other medium, as a significant proportion of the population still reads newspapers and is exposed to these messages. Traditional communication media include not only direct contact but also culture, tradition, local wisdom, and the core of community life (Danielsbacka et al., 2022). Kumar et al. (2017) indicated that the integration of traditional and digital communication channels can significantly increase client engagement with the organization, as traditional communication channels, such as flyers, brochures, newspapers, and radio, are one-way and limit customer interaction, hindering their ability to respond effectively.

2.2. Digital Communication Channels

Fraccastoro et al. (2021) stated that new media advancements have significantly influenced media choices and tools, transforming traditional media such as print, television, and radio into interactive digital media such as websites, mobile applications, audio-visual techniques, and gaming, thereby enhancing message transmission. Putra et al. (2023) specified that digital communication methods have a huge impact on the promotion and exposure of events, as they use online platforms, interactive information, and real-time social media updates. Email, social networking sites, messaging applications, and webpages are ideal for providing extensive information and direct communication with visitors (Rehman et al., 2022). Geraghty & Conway (2016) stated that digital communication channels are creative and that technology-driven initiatives provide consumers with engaging and memorable experiences. However, Van Dijk (2020) claimed that digital communication channels face challenges such as information overload, which can make it difficult for customers to consume and comprehend large amounts of information.

Digital communication via social media, interactive exhibits during events, and personalized email marketing based on attendee preferences can have a long-term influence and persuade visitors to attend events. Communicating about events through an event website is an effective way to offer comprehensive information; however, an event website should be clean, simple to use, and easily accessible to potential guests (Simon, 2023). In addition, Fraccastoro et al. (2021) stated that effective search engine optimization increases event visibility, resulting in an indispensable tool for worldwide reach. A mobile event app can be an effective communication tool, allowing the audience to engage through polls, surveys, and group chats (Alwi et al., 2022). Rehman et al. (2022) investigated how customer needs and decisions have altered in the digital age, emphasizing the importance of more personalized and focused communication tactics, such as emails, immersive videos, and chatbots. Communication via email works well before and after events, but during the event, direct techniques such as text messaging, mobile apps, group conversations, or social media should be employed to keep attendees connected (Cvent Blog, 2025). Email marketing is an excellent way to reach a large number of people and is one of the most cost-effective communication platforms available (Simon, 2023). Social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn can be used to reach a broad audience (Dwivedi et al., 2015). Danielsbacka et al. (2022) stated that mobile marketing via smartphones employs digital platforms such as mobile applications, SMS, push alerts, and websites to provide personalized data-driven targeting through analytics, which is an important digital marketing feature.

Effective communication in marketing necessitates a thorough grasp of the target audience's wants and preferences, as well as a deliberate approach to conveying a consistent message through different platforms (Cizrelioğulları et al., 2019). Social media has transformed event communication, marketing, perception, and experience, enabling platforms such as Instagram to foster emotional anticipation, interactions, and storytelling (Jin et al., 2019). Social media is a vital instrument in the marketing and promotion of products and services, allowing brands to interact with customers in real time and generate memorable experiences (Butkouskaya et al., 2023). This promotes authentic and engaging interactions, boosting brand exposure, involvement and retention. Social media also has the capacity for viral sharing of content, which can increase the visibility of brand messages (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Social media sites such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube function as year-round promotional instruments, generating excitement and establishing an online community around festivals (Aljukhadar et al., 2020). Additionally, Al-Badi et al. (2017) noted that more than half of the respondents in Oman used social media for local travel, with recommendations from friends being the primary source of information. Others rely on their previous experiences and social media for advice. Technology platforms facilitated event participants in Oman to communicate more quickly and effectively by allowing them to post feedback, read information, and inquire about activities and events. Attendees also used technology to learn about the event's date, time, location, transportation, event activities, and how to find promo codes and discounted tickets (Tumati & Al Sulaimi, 2023).

Furthermore, Tumati et al. (2024) found that the information provided by social media influencers significantly impacted tourists' decisions to visit a destination in Oman, and credibility was also relevant. The research also shows that customers' decisions are influenced not only by influencers on social media platforms but also by the platforms. Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok are the most widely used social media platforms globally, with over four billion active users (Statista, 2025). These platforms share key features such as interactivity, user participation, and user-generated content publishing (Jin et al., 2019). Daskin & Tumati (2024) discovered that Omani Z tourists choose a tourist site because it was recommended by social media and influencers. Instagram, the third-largest global platform with over two billion active users (Statista, 2025), is a prominent visual communication channel and has become particularly influential in event marketing because of its attractiveness (Tumati et al., 2024). As a free app, users can share photos and videos, comment on content, and engage with their communities (Aljukhadar et al., 2020). Fake news, rumours, and modified materials are easily shared via social media and digital platforms, causing confusion among visitors and alarm among organizations (Lazer et al., 2018).

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework
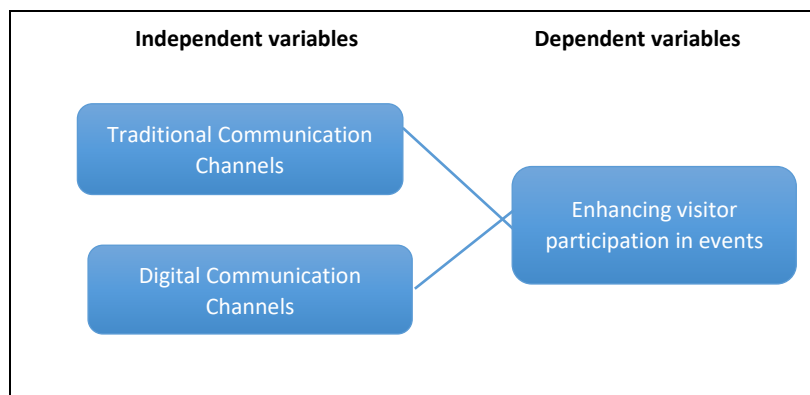
3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative research approach. Creswell & Creswell (2018) specified that quantitative studies usually use large sample sizes to detect significant statistical findings and apply these findings to a larger population. The quantitative research approach helps standardize methodologies and numerical data to eliminate bias from research, ensuring the trustworthiness and authenticity of the findings for future studies (Claxton & Barthlow, 2024). This study used an exploratory research design. Bryman (2018) stated that exploratory research is essential when there is little past research on a specific issue, as it provides the necessary awareness and knowledge for a greater understanding. Additionally, the exploratory research design enables academics to investigate unanswered issues and explain previously unknown mechanisms (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Random sampling was employed, which means that the respondents were selected randomly from Muscat and were willing to answer the questionnaires. Claxton & Barthlow (2024) stated that random sampling ensures that all possible participants are selected equally and fairly, thus reducing researcher bias. Samples were collected from 195 respondents; however, eight were removed because they were incomplete in certain sections of the questionnaire. Primary

data were collected using questionnaires. Kothari (2023) revealed that questionnaires are an effective method for gathering information, saving resources and time compared to traditional methods like focus groups or interviews. They allow for honest responses without judgement, particularly for delicate subjects (Bryman, 2018).

This study employed the questionnaire developed by Vlachakis et al. (2018); however, it was modified to fit the requirements of this study's design. The instrument consists of several parts: Part 1 is a demographic profile of respondents; Part 2 is a multi-response checklist to identify their opinions on marketing communication channels and respondent satisfaction; Part 3 is to determine the marketing communication channels used by event companies to reach their target audience; and Part 4 is to examine the marketing communication channels that are most effective in maximizing guest event attendance based on consumer perspectives. Frequency distribution, percentages, ranks, and weighted means were used to analyze the data. The frequency distribution is a statistical tool used to determine the distribution of respondents and the frequency of respondents who fit a specified profile, such as gender, age, and marital status. Both the proportion of respondents and the percentage of respondents who fit a given profile were calculated using percentages. Other relevant statistical tools, such as correlation, were used to draw conclusions from the data collected.

4. RESULTS

Table 1 presents the respondents' profiles. Of the respondents, 76.5% were male and 23.5% were female. The majority of respondents (41.2%) were in the age range of 20–30 years, followed closely by those aged between 31 and 40 years (37.3%). Furthermore, 15.5% of the individuals were in the 41–50-year age group, and the remaining 5.9% were 50 years or older. Moreover, a significant proportion of respondents (87.7%) reported being in a marital relationship, while only 12.3% reported being unmarried. Furthermore, most respondents (59.9%) were Omanis, whereas the remaining 40.1% were non-Omani nationals. Regarding the employment status of the participants, 79.1% were employed, 20.9% were unemployed, and none were employed.

Table 1: Respondents Profile (n=187)

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	143	76.5
Female	44	23.5
Age		
20-30 years	77	41.2
31-40 years	70	37.4
41-50 years	29	15.5
50 years old and above	11	5.9
Civil Status		
Single	23	12.3
Married	164	87.7
Nationality		
Omani	112	59.9
Non-Omani	75	40.1
Employment Status		
Employed	148	79.1
Unemployed	39	20.9
Retired	0	0

Table 2 shows the types of events that the respondents attended. Notably, Muscat Nights had the highest attendance rate (86%). This indicates a high level of interest in attending the event. Notably, this event is one of the most enduring events in Oman and is held annually between January and February each year. Previously known as the Muscat Festival, this event underwent a name change in 2023 to become Muscat Nights. In addition, COMEX Oman was rated as the second-most important event attended by respondents, with 78 percent. The COMEX technology exhibition in Oman fulfils the function of presents up-to-date trends and revolutionary technologies that significantly influence the daily lives, communication, occupational pursuits, and social connectivity of individuals. Over the course of 31 years, COMEX has played a vital role as a prominent sourcing and networking hub for the technology market in Oman and has consistently maintained its position as a premier platform for ICT procurement, product launches and technology demonstrations in the Gulf. In addition, the

Thailand Expo ranked third with 71%, and the Oman Dates Festival ranked fourth with 67 percent. A majority of the survey respondents, comprising 64 percent, participated in GHEDEX Oman, while 61 percent attended the Sultan Camel Race Cup event. Furthermore, 57 percent attended the Muscat International Book Fair, and 55% attended a multitude of other events, such as the IDF Oman and Oman Agro Food & Water Exhibition Conference. Finally, two events with comparatively lower attendance rates were the Muscat Market Fair (30%) and Oman Fire Safety and Security Event (24%), as reported by the survey respondents.

Table 2: The Type of Events Attended by Respondents

Types of Events	Percentage	Rank
Muscat Nights (before known as Muscat Festival)	86	1
COMEX Oman	78	2
Thailand Expo	71	3
Oman Dates Festival	67	4
GHEDEX Oman	64	5
Sultan Camel Race Cup	61	6
Muscat International Book Fair	57	7
Others (IDF Oman, Oman Agro Food & Water Exhibition Conference)	55	8
The Food and Hospitality Oman	53	9
Home and Building Expo Oman	52	10
Muscat International Jewellery Exhibition	49	11
Oman Health Exhibition	45	12
EduTrac	44	13
Muscat Market Fair	30	14
Oman Fire Safety & Security Event	24	15
Total		**15**

Figure 2 depicts whether the respondents received complete information about the events through the communication channels they used. According to 56.4% of the respondents (29.9% were fully informed and 26.5% were fairly informed), they received the required information about the vaccine. However, 43.6% of respondents (32% with limited information and 11.6% with incomplete information) reported not receiving the necessary information.

Figure 2: Did you receive the full details of the events through the communication channels?
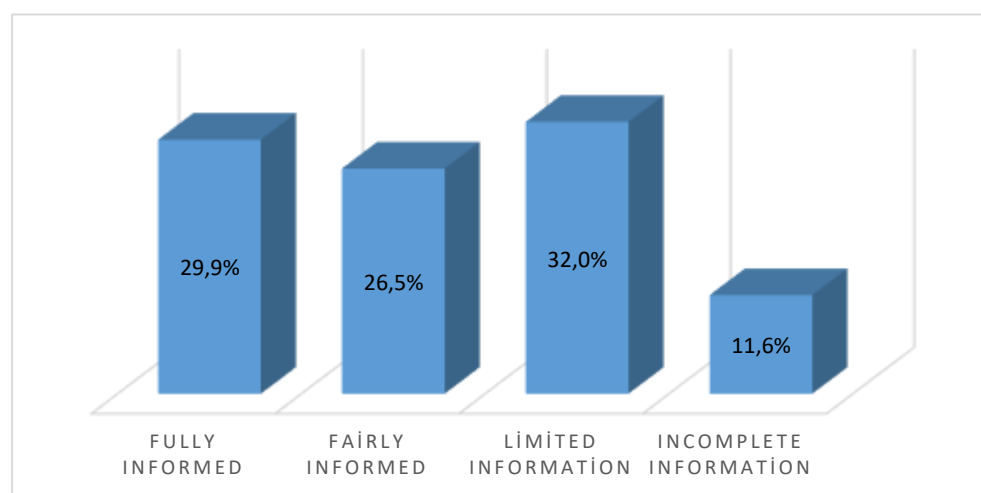

Figure 3 shows the respondents' satisfaction with the information they received about the events through various communication channels. Of the respondents, 53.1% were satisfied with the information they received about the events (28.6% were very satisfied, and 24.5% were satisfied). However, 25.1% were dissatisfied with the information they received (19% were dissatisfied, and 6.1% were very dissatisfied). Among the respondents, 21.8% were undecided.
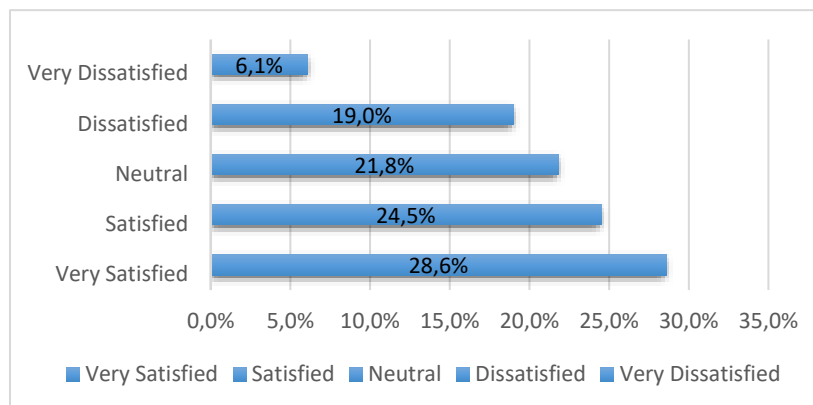
Figure 3: Satisfaction with Event-Related Information Received through Various Communication Channels

Table 3 outlines the marketing communication channels utilized by event companies to reach their target audience and the most effective channels for maximizing event attendance from the consumer perspective. Visitor expectations of traditional communication channels include friends and family, which received the highest mean score for visitor expectations of communication channels (4.51), followed closely by word-of-mouth (4.43). This means that most respondents obtained information about events through their friends, family, and word of mouth. Other communication avenues include newspapers, radio, and TV news (4.38), advertisements on radio and TV (4.22). This implies that event-related information was publicised through various media venues, including radio, television news, and radio and television commercials. On the other hand, the current practices of traditional communication channels include radio & TV news (4.21) and advertisements on radio & TV (4.15). This indicates that event companies are currently communicating with their target audience through radio and television news and advertisements. Other forms of communication included billboards and hoardings (4.01) and trade fairs, expos, and exhibitions (3.881). This means that attendees learned about events through advertisements from trade shows, expos, and exhibits, billboards, and hoardings.

Table 3: Visitor Communication Gap Analysis

Information Channels	Visitor expectation of communication channels		Current practice of communication channels by event companies		Visitor expectation Gap
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	
Traditional Channels					
Friends & family	4.51	0.839	3.44	0.928	**1.07**
Word of mouth	4.43	1.025	3.57	1.119	**0.86**
Radio &TV news	4.38	1.127	4.21	0.831	**0.17**
Ads in Radio & TV	4.22	0.936	4.15	0.918	**0.07**
Ads in trade fairs & exhibitions	4.06	0.816	3.88	1.071	**0.18**
Billboards & hoardings	3.89	0.867	4.01	0.866	-0.12
Brochures, flyers & posters	3.32	0.891	3.72	1.118	-0.40
Signage & banners	2.79	1.212	3.37	0.880	-0.58
Newspapers & magazines news	2.65	1.101	3.28	0.865	-0.63
Ads in newspapers & Magazines	2.58	0.857	3.09	0.826	-0.51
Press conferences, interviews, and discussions	2.55	0.986	3.18	0.897	-0.63
Notices, circulars, and memos	2.26	1.113	2.79	0.868	-0.53
Digital Channels					
Social media influencers	4.41	0.988	3.87	0.983	**0.54**
Instagram	4.39	1.133	3.92	1.211	**0.47**
What's App	4.22	0.968	3.63	0.922	**0.59**
X (Twitter)	4.13	0.919	3.88	1.024	**0.25**
TikTok	4.05	0.833	3.43	1.121	**0.62**

Snapchat	3.55	1.091	2.26	1.138	**1.29**
SMS to Mobile Phones	3.51	1.136	4.53	0.976	-1.02
Google Ads	3.42	0.856	3.42	0.826	0.00
LinkedIn	3.37	1.165	3.05	0.939	**0.32**
Event apps & website	3.16	1.110	2.18	0.979	**0.98**
Email Marketing	3.15	1.122	4.42	0.949	-1.27
Facebook	2.18	0.925	3.55	0.875	-1.37

Visitor expectations of digital communication channels had the highest mean score for social media influencers (4.41). This implies that most respondents expect event-related information from social media influencers. Other digital communication channels respondents expect to receive information about events from include Instagram (4.39), WhatsApp (4.22), X (Twitter) (4.13), TikTok (4.05), and Snapchat (3.55). Respondents wanted to obtain event-related information via numerous social media platforms, including Instagram, WhatsApp, X (Twitter), TikTok, and Snapchat. Similarly, contemporary practices for digital communication channels, such as SMS on mobile phones (4.53). This implies that event organisers are currently connecting with their target audience via SMS to clients' mobile phones. Other digital communication methods used were e-mail marketing (4.42) and Instagram (3.92). This suggests that organisations use email marketing and Instagram to communicate with event participants. Other digital communication platforms were X (Twitter) at 3.88, and social media influencers at 3.87. This indicates that companies employed X and social media influencers to inform respondents about events.

A visitor communication gap analysis was also conducted. Gap analysis = Visitor expectations for communication channels – the current communication channel practices of event companies. In traditional channels, friends, and family (1.07) had the most favourable visitor's expectation gap. This implies that most respondents look forward to knowing information about events through friends and family. Other options included word of mouth (0.86), advertisements in trade fairs & exhibitions (0.18), radio and TV news (0.17) and advertisements in radio and TV news (0.07). The remaining have negative values: newspapers & magazines news (-0.63), press conferences, interviews and discussions (-0.63), signage and banners (-0.58), notices, circulars, and memos (-0.53), ads in newspapers & Magazines (-0.51), brochures, flyers & posters (-0.40), and finally, billboards & hoardings (-0.12). This means that companies are currently practicing them, but respondents were not expecting them as much as they were practiced by organisations.

Snapchat had the most favourable visitor-expectation gap (1.29). This suggests that visitors anticipate receiving more event-related communications on Snap Chat. Other options included event apps and websites (0.98), TikTok (0.62), and WhatsApp (0.59). This means that guests at events seek additional information from event apps and websites, TikTok, and WhatsApp. Additionally, Social media influencers (0.54), Instagram (0.47), LinkedIn (0.32), and X (Twitter) (0.25). This implies that organisations should communicate further information through various social media influencers and platforms such as Instagram, LinkedIn, and X. In contrast, Facebook had the largest negative visitor expectation gap (-1.37). This means that few respondents looked forward to obtaining information on Facebook. Other options included e-mail marketing (-1.27), and SMS to mobile phones (-1.02). This signifies that communication about the event via e-mail marketing and SMS to mobile phones should be kept to a minimum, as people do not expect much information from these channels. Finally, the only item with a value of 0.00 was Google Advertisements. This means that the visitors' expectation of communication through Google Ads is 3.42, which is the current practice of communicating about events using Google Advertisements.

Figure 4: Overall Evaluation of the Communication Channels Used by Event Organizers
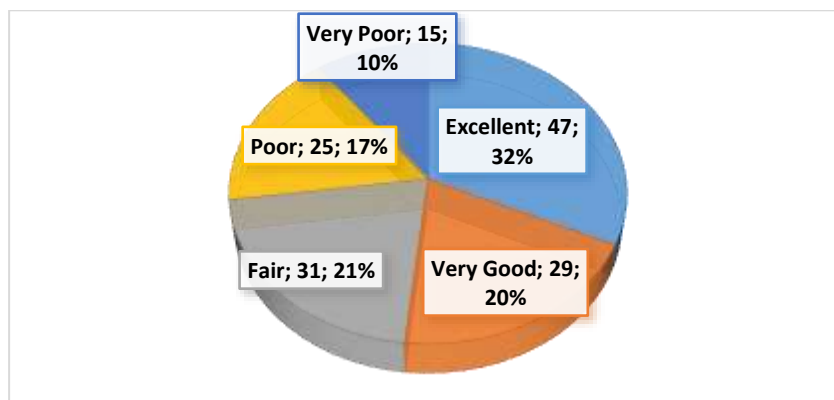
Respondents were asked to assess how well they thought the events were communicated to them in Muscat, Oman. Figure 4 demonstrates that 52% of respondents (excellent, 32%; and very good, 20%) were thoroughly satisfied with the communication channels. However, 21% of the participants considered the communication channels fair and equitable. However, the remaining 27% (17% and 10% of poor and very poor, respectively) were not satisfied with the communication methods. This suggests that, in the respondents' opinion, regardless of communication strategies, event organizers efforts to spread news of their events are ineffective.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis

		Enhancing visitor participation in events	Traditional Communication Channels	Digital Communication Channels
Enhancing visitor participation in events	Pearson Correlation	1	0.181*	0.182*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.034	0.032
	N	187	187	187
Traditional Communication Channels	Pearson Correlation	0.181*	1	0.708**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.034		0.00
	N	187	187	187
Digital Communication Channels	Pearson Correlation	0.182*	0.708**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.032	0.000	
	N	187	187	187

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows a connection of r=0.181 (p=0.034 < 0.05) between traditional communication channels and higher visitor involvement in events. This indicates that traditional communication channels have a significant value of 0.034, which is less than the 0.05 threshold value. Consequently, there is a strong association between traditional communication channels and increased visitor involvement in the events. The study found a correlation (r=0.182, p=0.032 < 0.05) between digital communication channels and increased visitor involvement in the events. This means that digital communication channels achieved a significant value of 0.032, which was less than 0.05. The results show a strong association between digital communication channels and increased visitor involvement in events.

5. DISCUSSION

Table 3 presents information on visitor expectations of traditional communication channels, such as friends and family (4.51) and word of mouth (4.43). The findings are consistent with Liu and Draper (2022), Murtiasih et al. (2021), Tümer et al. (2019), and Morra et al. (2018), who indicated that word of mouth and recommendations from family and friends are the most prevalent communication methods expected by event participants. Similarly, the current company communication channels include radio and television news (4.21) and radio and television advertisements (4.15). The findings coincide with Mustafa and Al-Abduallah (2019), Kumar et al. (2017), Todor (2016), Keller (2016), and Habib et al. (2015), who said that television and radio continue to be among the top communication channels for sending information about events, products, and services. On the other hand, event attendees expect digital communication channels such as social media influencers (4.41), Instagram (4.39), and WhatsApp (4.22). The findings are consistent with the findings of Statista (2025), Daskin & Tumati (2024), Tumati et al. (2024), Butkouskaya et al. (2023), Tumati & Al Sulaimi (2023), Aljukhadar et al. (2020), Jin et al. (2019), Al-Badi et al. (2017), and Erkan & Evans (2016), who stated that social media influencers and social media sites have the ability to directly communicate with people about events, tourism, and products and services in general. On the other hand, the digital communication platforms used by event companies include Instagram (3.92), X (Twitter) (3.88), and social media influencers (3.87). The findings concur with Statista (2025), Daskin & Tumati (2024), Tumati et al. (2024), Butkouskaya et al. (2023), Tumati & Al Sulaimi (2023), Aljukhadar et al. (2020), Jin et al. (2019), Al-Badi et al. (2017), and Erkan & Evans (2016), who stated that social media influencers and sites can engage with people directly regarding events, tourism, and products and services in general. Table 4 reveals a strong association between traditional and digital communication channels, with traditional channels demonstrating a significant value of 0.034 and digital channels achieving a significant value of 0.032, indicating a strong link between these two channels and increased event visitor participation. The findings are consistent with Cvent Blog (2025), Danielsbacka et al. (2023), Putra et al. (2023), Tumati & Al Sulaimi (2023), Rehman et al. (2022), Cizrelioğulları et al. (2019), Mustafa & Al-Abduallah (2019), Jackson & Angliss (2017) and Kumar et al. (2017) mentioned that both traditional and digital communication channels are equally crucial for informing the target audience about a company's products and services.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Marketing communication channels are essential for organisations seeking to reach a wide range of people while maximising their return on investment. Choosing the right media platforms for event communication is a critical component of marketing strategy and has shifted from conventional media to a more comprehensive approach that incorporates digital platforms. Digital platforms, such as social networking sites, search engine optimization, and email marketing, prioritize personalization and engagement; however, understanding consumer behaviour is critical for effective communication. The study found that despite the rapid advancements in digital communication and modern technologies, traditional communication remains relevant to attendees. To guarantee that attendees are well informed, Oman's event planners, organisers, and other stakeholders involved in the event sector should use both conventional and digital communication techniques. Based on the findings, Muscat Nights, formerly known as the Muscat Festival, is the most popular event in Oman. Event companies utilise traditional channels such as radio, TV, and billboards for event information, while digital channels such as mobile messages, email marketing, Instagram, and social media influencers are used. A visitor communication gap analysis revealed that traditional channels, such as friends and family, have the most favourable communication methods, followed by word of mouth, trade fair advertisements, radio and TV news, and advertisements in trade fairs and exhibitions. This implies that organisations must increase communication through these channels. For digital channels, the findings reveal that Snapchat, event apps and websites, TikTok, WhatsApp, social media influencers, Instagram, and X were the most preferred communication channels. This implies that companies should increase their communication through digital channels. The study reveals a strong association between traditional and digital communication channels and enhanced visitor participation in events.

Based on the results, the following recommendations are proposed:

- ✓ Considering audience preferences and message type, as well as connecting media for a seamless experience, can help maximize reach and engagement, resulting in a successful event communication plan.

- ✓ Digital communication channels must be balanced with traditional methods to ensure effective communication and social interaction.

- ✓ Marketing communication enables businesses to interact with their target demographics by learning about their wants and needs. This helps them craft messages that build stronger bonds and increase brand loyalty.

- ✓ Most respondents preferred social media influencers for event-related information, suggesting that organisers should hire influencers with substantial followings to effectively communicate about events.

- ✓ Event companies should utilise popular social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, X, TikTok, and Snapchat to communicate their events effectively and efficiently.

- ✓ Respondents prefer to receive information through friends and family, word of mouth, and radio and TV ads, suggesting an increase in the event information flow.

- ✓ As respondents stated that they received either limited or incomplete information about events, it is important for event companies to communicate about events fully using various communication channels.

- ✓ Currently, satisfaction with event-related information received through various communication channels is not very high; therefore, it is important to communicate event-related information in full and in advance with all details.

REFERENCES

Afridah & Lubis, M. (2024). Role of communication and employee engagement in promoting ınclusion in the workplace: a case study in the creative ındustry. Feedback International Journal of Communication, 1(1), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.62569/fijc.v1i1.8

Al-Badi, A., Tarhini, A., & Al-Sawaei, S. (2017). Utilizing social media to encourage domestic tourism in Oman. International Journal of Business and Management, 12(4), 84-95. https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v12n4p84

Aljukhadar, M., Bériault Poirier, A., & Senecal, S. (2020). Imagery makes social media captivating! Aesthetic value in a consumer-as-value-maximizer framework. Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing, 14(3), 285–303. https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-10-2018-0136

Al-Lawati, H. A. R. (2024, March 6). Why revitalizing the events sector can help drive economic growth? Oman Observer. https://www.omanobserver.om/article/1150628/opinion/business/why-revitalizing-the-events-sector-can-help-drive-economic-growth

Allied Market Research (2025, January 10). Events Industry Market to hit $2.5 trillion by 2035. Allied Market Research, https://www.alliedmarketresearch.com/, All Right Reserved 2025. https://www.alliedmarketresearch.com/press-release/events-industry-market.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Al-Rubai'ey, F., & Al-Sharafi, A. G. (2023). Ethos in COVID-19 crisis communication: evidence from Oman. Journal of Risk Research, 26(9), 931–946. https://doi.org/10.1080/13669877.2023.2230983

Bryman, A. (2016). Social Research Methods (5th ed.). London: Oxford University Press.

Butkouskaya, V., Oyner, O., & Kazakov, S. (2023). The impact of omnichannel integrated marketing communications (IMC) on product and retail service satisfaction. Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Science, 28(56), 319–334. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEFAS-09-2022-0237

Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2019). Digital Marketing: Strategy and Implementation. (7th ed.). Pearson Education.

Claxton, B. L., & Barthlow, M. (2024). A Step-by-Step Guide to Conducting Quantitative Research. (1st ed.). Kendall Hunt Publishing.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. Sage, Los Angeles.

Cizrelioğulları, M. N., Uwajeh, P. C., & Babayıgıt, M. V. (2019). The ımpact of social media on the marketing communication in the tourism and hospitality ındustry. European Journal of Managerial Research, 3(4), 45-58. https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/eujmr/issue/43811/458264

Cvent Blog (2025, April 3). The Ultimate guide to event communication. Cvent Blog. https://www.cvent.com/en/blog/events/event-communication

Daskin, M., & Tumati, R. (2024). Factors influencing Omani Gen Z tourists' destination choices. Yaşar Üniversitesi E-Dergisi, 19(73), 62-81. https://doi.org/10.19168/jyasar.1253696

Danielsbacka, M., Tammisalo, K., & Tanskanen, A, O. (2022). Digital and traditional communication with kin: displacement or reinforcement? Journal of Family Studies 29(3), 1270–1291. https://doi.org/10.1080/13229400.2022.2040575

Dwivedi, Y. K., Kapoor, K. K., Chen, H. (2015). Social media marketing and advertising. The Marketing Review, 15(3), 289–309.

Erkan, I., & Evans, C. (2016). The influence of eWOM in social media on consumers' purchase intentions: An extended approach to information adoption. Computers in Human Behaviour, 61, 47–55. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.03.003

Alwi, S. F. S., Balmer, J. M. T., Stoian, M. C., & Kitchen. P. J. (2022). Introducing integrated hybrid communication: the nexus linking marketing communication and corporate communication. Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal, 2(4), 405–432. https://doi.org/10.1108/QMR-09-2021-0123

Fill, C., & Turnbull, S. (2019). Marketing Communications. (8th ed.). Pearson.

Fill, C., & Turnbull, S. (2016). Marketing Communications: Discovery, Creation and Conversations (7th ed.). Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Fitriana, F., Kamase, J., Ramlawati, R., & Rahman, Z. (2021). The effect of ıntegrated marketing communication on ımage, satisfaction and loyalty of hotel guests in Makassar City. International Journal of Health, Economics, and Social Sciences (IJHESS), 3(2), 74-91. https://doi.org/10.56338/ijhess.v3i2.1470

Fraccastoro, S., Gabrielsson, M., & Pullins, E. B. (2021). The ıntegrated use of social media, digital, and traditional communication tools in the B2B sales process of ınternational SMEs. International Business Review, 30(4), 126-138. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2020.101776

Garay, L., & Morales Pérez, S. (2017). Understanding the creation of destination images through a festival's Twitter conversation. International Journal of Event and Festival Management, 8(1), 39–54. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEFM-04-2016-0030

Geraghty, G. & Conway, A. (2016). The Study of Traditional and Non-traditional Marketing Communications: Target Marketing in the Events Sector. Paper presented at the 12th Annual Tourism and Hospitality Research in Ireland Conference, THRIC 2016, 16th and 17th June, Limerick Institute of Technology. https://doi.org/10.21427/D7BV19

Getz, D. (2012). Event studies: discourses and future directions. Event Management, 16(2),171–187. https://doi.org/10.3727/152599512X13343565268456

Grönroos, C. (2011). Service Management and Marketing: Customer Management in Service Competition. (3rd ed.). Wiley.

Habib, A., Hossain, A., & Oma, T. (2015). Impact of advertisement on consumer choice: A case of SME and consumers. Singaporean Journal of business Economics, and Management Studies, 4(5), 1-15. https://platform.almanhal.com/Reader/Article/74113

Hänninen, N., & Karjaluoto, H. (2017). The effect of marketing communication on business relationship loyalty. Marketing Intelligence & Planning, 35(4), 458–472. https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-01-2016-0006

Harb, A. A., Fowler, D., Chang, H. J., Blum, S.C., Alakaleek, W. (2019). Social media as a marketing tool for events. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology, 10(1), 28–44. https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTT-03-2017-0027

Jackson, N., & Angliss, K. (2017). A practical guide to event promotion. Routledge eBooks, (1st edn.) (pp. 27–43). https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315690285-4

Jin, S. V., Muqaddam, A., & Ryu, E. (2019). Instafamous and social media influencer marketing. Marketing Intelligence & Planning, 37(5), 567–579. https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-09-2018-0375

Keller, K. L. (2016). Unlocking the power of integrated marketing communications: how integrated is your imc program? Journal of Advertising, 45(3), 286–301.

Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). Marketing Management (15th ed.). Pearson Education.

Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2018). Principles of Marketing (17th ed.). The University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing. https://open.lib.umn.edu/principlesmarketing/

Kothari, C. R., & Garg, G. (2023). Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques. 5th ed. New Age International (P) Ltd.

Kumar, V., Choi, J. B., & Greene, M. (2017). Synergistic effects of social media and traditional marketing on brand sales: Capturing the time-varying effects. Journal of the Academy of marketing Science, 45, 268-288. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-016-0484- 7

Lazer, D. M. J., Baum, M. A., Benkler, Y., Berinsky, A. J., Greenhill, K. M., Menczer, F.,Metzger, M. J., Nyhan, B., Pennycook, G., Rothschild, D., Schudson, M., Sloman, S. A., Sunstein, C. R., Thorson, E. A., Watts, D. J., & Zittrain, J. L. (2018). The science of fake news: Addressing fake news requires a multidisciplinary effort. Science, 359(6380),1094–1096. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aao2998

Liu, Y., & Draper, J. (2022). the influence of attending festivals with children on family quality of life, subjective well-being, and event experience. Event Management, 26(1), 25-40. doi:10.3727/152599521X16192004803593

Luxton, S., Reid, M., & Mavondo, F. (2017). IMC capability: antecedents and implications for brand performance. European Journal of Marketing, 51(3), 421-444. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-08-2015-0583

Mair, J., & Weber, K. (2019). Event and festival research: a review and research directions. International Journal of Event and Festival Management, 10(3), 209-216. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEFM-10-2019-080

Morra, M. C., Ceruti, F., Chierici, R., & DiGregorio, A. (2018). Social vs traditional media communication: Brand origin associations strike a chord. Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing, 12(1), 2–21. https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-12-2016-0116

Murtiasih, S., Hermana, B., & Febriani, W. (2021). The effect of marketing communication on brand equity with brand ımage, brand trust, and brand loyalty as the ıntervening variables. Journal of International Business Research and Marketing, 7(1), 7-16.

Mustafa, S., & Al-Abduallah, G. (2020). The evaluation of traditional communication channels and its impact on purchase decision. Management Science Letters, 10(7), 1521-1532. https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2019.12.014

Oman Observer (2016, December 29). Ithraa launches briefings on economy. Oman Observer. https://www.omanobserver.om/article/91110/Local/ithraa-launches-briefings-on-economy

Oxford Business Group. (2017). Oman seeks to diversify tourism. Oman seeks to diversify tourism - Oman 2017 - Oxford Business Group. Oxford Business Group. https://oxfordbusinessgroup.com/reports/oman/2017-report/economy/one-niche-at-a-time-the-sultanate-is-aiming-to-diversify-its-tourism-offering

Porcu, L., del Barrio-García, S., Alcántara-Pilar, J. M., & Crespo-Almendros, E. (2019). Analysing the influence of firm-wide integrated marketing communication on market performance in the hospitality industry. International Journal of Hospitality Management, 80, 13–24. https://doi.org/10.1016/ j.ijhm.2019.01.008

Putra, A. A., Susilo, D., & Putranto, T. D. (2023). Digital Marketing Communication Strategy for Hotel Episode Gading Serpong Via Instagram @ episodegadingserpong. Jurnal Ekonomi, 12(3), 346-353.

https://www.ejournal.seaninstitute.or.id/index.php/Ekonomi/article/view/2035

Rehman, S. U., Gulzar, R., & Aslam, W. (2022). Developing the integrated marketing communication (IMC) through social media (SM): the modern marketing communication approach. SAGE Open, 12(2), 65-73. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221099936

Rentman. (2025, July 15). Mastering Event Communication: A Straightforward Guide to Success. https://rentman.io/blog/event-communication

Schmitt, B. H. (2003). Customer Experience Management. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Sicilia, M., & Palazón, M. (2023). Developing customer engagement through communication consistency and channel coordination. Spanish Journal of Marketing - ESIC, 27(2), 241–260. https://doi.org/10.1108/sjme-02-2022-0022

Statista. (2025, March 26). Most used social networks 2025, by number of users. https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/

Todor, R. D. (2016). Blending traditional and digital marketing. Bulletin of the Transylvania University of Brasov. Series V: Economic Sciences, 51-56. https://webbut.unitbv.ro/index.php/SeriesV/article/ view/3611/2848

Tümer, M., Aghaei, I., Öney, E., & Eddine, Y. N. (2019). The impact of traditional and social media marketing on customers' brand trust and purchase intentions in the Turkish airline market. Journal of Research in Emerging Markets, 1(4), 55–68. https://doi.org/10.30585/jrems.v1i4.344

Tumati, R. & Daşkın, M. & Yavuz, E. (2024). Power of Social Media Influencers in Shaping Omani Tourists Decisions. Özgür Yayınları. https://doi.org/10.58830/ozgur.pub507

Tumati, R. & Al Sulaimi, R. A. (2023). The Digital Frontier: Exhibiting the transformative ımpact of technology on enhancing event attendees: experiences in Oman. International Journal of Research in Entrepreneurship & Business Studies, 4(4), 15-30. https://doi.org/10.47259/ijrebs.442

Simon, J. (2023, April 10). How an effective communication plan leads to a successful event. Stova. https://stova.io/effective-communication-plans-lead-to-successful-events/

Van Dijk, J. A. (2020). A theory of the digital divide, in The Digital Divide, Polity Press, pp. 29–52. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336775102_The_Digital_Divide

Vlachakis S., Siakas K. V., Naaranoja, M., Chatzipoulidis, A. & Kargidis T. (2018). A case study on adoption of marketing communication channels in Greek familybusinesses. Conference: ICCMI 2018, Athens, Greece. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327869420_A_case_study_on_adoption_of_marketing_communication_channels_in_Greek_family_businesses

Zawya. (2024, January 22). Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre celebrates record-breaking success with 1.5mln visitors in 2023. ACE Times. https://www.zawya.com/en/press-release/companies-news/oman-convention-and-exhibition-centre-celebrates-record-breaking-success-with-15mln-visitors-in-2023-u5179x6o?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Żyminkowska, K. (2019). Customer Engagement in Theory and Practice: A Marketing Management Perspective. Palgrave Macmillan.