



ANALYSIS OF DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES TO CONSOLIDATE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM Case Study of La Manga del Mar Menor

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KEYWORDS

*Sustainable tourism
Sustainable marketing
Social media marketing
Tourist behaviour
La Manga del Mar Menor
Consumer
Tourism Promotion*

ABSTRACT

The concept of sustainable tourism represents a significant challenge for all tourist destinations. In particular, La Manga del Mar Menor is a destination with natural resources that have been affected in recent years by the pressures of mining and tourism. Although numerous studies have been conducted on this destination, none have focused on sustainable tourism marketing through an analysis of tourism promotion campaigns on television and social networks (2019-2023), before and after the pandemic. The objective of this article is to establish a synthesis between sustainable marketing and tourism destination planning.

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1. Introduction. Sustainable Tourism

The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) states that sustainable tourism is a growing segment. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of people who are environmentally conscious and want to make their travels an eco-friendly experience (UN, 2023). According to the World Bank, the population is growing at an annual rate of 0.8%, and although this is less than in previous years, there is a need to raise awareness of sustainable tourism (World Bank, 2023).

Sustainable tourism is in line with the objectives proposed by the United Nations 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is therefore a growing concept that aims to shape an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and the planet.

The UN defines it as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (UN, 2023).

There is a relationship between tourism and sustainable development based on the fact that the tourist's journey, the tourism producer and the product or service are characterised by three common dimensions: interaction, awareness and attachment (United Nations Environment Programme, 2019). "Sustainable tourism development serves current tourism needs and host regions, while protecting and promoting opportunities for the future" (Lemoine Quintero et al., 2019, p.12).

In turn, sustainable tourism involves a new ethic of both tourism and the tourist himself, as well as sensitivity in all three areas, nature, culture and the local people's way of life (Monsalve-Pelaez et al. 2023). In this context, sustainable development can be instilled in the minds and social consciousness of tourists. The preservation of natural and cultural resources and ecological balance for tourism purposes is therefore essential for future generations to benefit from the resources (Özgit & Zhandildina, 2021). Therefore, what sustainable tourism seeks to do is to produce positive impacts and try to reduce negative impacts (Monsalve-Pelaez et al., 2023).

At the same time, there is a shift from mass tourism to sustainable and controlled tourism on a smaller scale (Simancas Cruz et al., 2020). This implies even more communication with concrete and specific marketing actions in search of the quality tourist profile. This is the tourist who "respects the destination and himself". This is the person who wants sustainability, respect, working conditions... and who would be willing to pay for it (Simancas Cruz et al., 2020, p. 286).

It is therefore necessary for destinations to develop planning techniques that focus on communicating that the sustainable development of places is essential for ecotourism and can be promoted through marketing tools, thus changing tourist choices and behaviour.

Following the research of Ruiz-Trigueros and González Damián (2020), in this article we will focus on the analysis of Cause Marketing (CM) because it "aims to influence the behaviour of individuals in order to bring benefits to society by addressing causes of collective interest" (Leguía, et al, 2004, based on the article Ruiz-Trigueros & González Damián, 2020 p.405).

For this reason, cause marketing can lead to the motivation of sustainable behaviour by tourists, which will lead to a better understanding of destination choices and a deepening of sustainable practices (Ruiz-Trigueros & González Damián, 2020).

In this way, consumers are beginning to become aware of the environment and the excessive consumption of goods and services, leading to sustainable consumption, understood as an effort to reverse the negative impact of human actions on the planet's ecosystems (Castaneda et. al., 2015).

Tourism professionals, as well as marketing professionals, have a key role to play in the development and management of the SDGs in order to change the mindset of tourists. Therefore, this study is expected to be an academic contribution to the SDGs and sustainable tourism marketing with the aim of deepening their conceptualisation. In this way, social and environmental objectives are pursued, in the specific case of the area of La Manga del Mar Menor, in the Region of Murcia. This famous tourist destination has been little studied from the point of view of sustainable marketing in the area, much less the environmental problems of its waters and the image that exists in the minds of tourists. It also identifies the results and establishes future lines of research.

2. Objectives and Methodology.

The objectives of this research are the following:

- 1) To ascertain whether public institutions, through their tourism managers, incorporate sustainability variables in their tourism promotion activities.
- 2) To examine the communication strategies employed by the Public Institute of Tourism of the Region of Murcia and its commitment to sustainability.
- 3) To analyse the publications of tourism social networks in the Region of Murcia and their relationship with sustainability and environmental awareness factors.

In order to achieve the proposed objectives, the methodology employed in this study is based on a comprehensive review of the relevant literature, conducted through a variety of bibliographical sources. Furthermore, theoretical and practical models have been applied in order to enhance the rigour of the study. In order to facilitate this, it was decided to employ a qualitative research method, which would allow for the gathering of detailed information on the subject. The study will be conducted in two phases: a theoretical phase and a practical phase. The theoretical phase comprises a review of the literature on the concept of sustainable tourism, sustainable marketing and sustainable tourism marketing. The practical phase comprises a case study that integrates the three aforementioned concepts with a methodological approach, applying the context of digital tourism marketing in La Manga del Mar Menor in relation to the achievement of the SDGs.

The case study was selected based on a review of various sources pertaining to the issues of sustainability, tourism, and the challenges facing La Manga del Mar Menor. The variable introduced in the research was marketing, with the aim of aligning the four concepts. This was done in order to determine the manner in which marketing campaigns are developed in the selected destination and to what extent tourists interpret and become aware of them for the benefit of territorial sustainability through communication.

The case study commenced with the descriptive method, which was employed to elucidate the current situation of Manga del Mar Menor. According to Abreu (2014), the descriptive method is based on the direct observation of the researcher and the reading or study of information provided by other authors (p. 198). It is a method that generates initial knowledge of the reality under investigation. Iglesias-García & Fernández-Poyatos (2012) define it as a method "based on content analysis and structured observation of the object of study during a defined period" (p. 537).

Subsequently, the analytical method, defined as "a procedure that breaks down a whole into its basic elements, thus moving from the general (the composite) to the specific (the simple)" (Lopera Echavarría et al., 2010), was employed to analyse, process and organise the data through specific variables.

In order to obtain the necessary data, the websites of the institutions of the Region of Murcia that contained the theme of La Manga del Mar Menor were consulted in order to determine and establish the content variables that would later be used in the study of the social networks and promotional campaigns:

- Transparency and accountable communication.
- Personalisation and segmentation.
- Sustainable educational content and engagement.
- Tourism SDGs. The following goals were identified as being relevant to the study:

Goal 8 on economic growth and employment; Goal 11 on safe and sustainable human settlements and places; Goal 12 on sustainable production and consumption; and Goal 14 on underwater life.

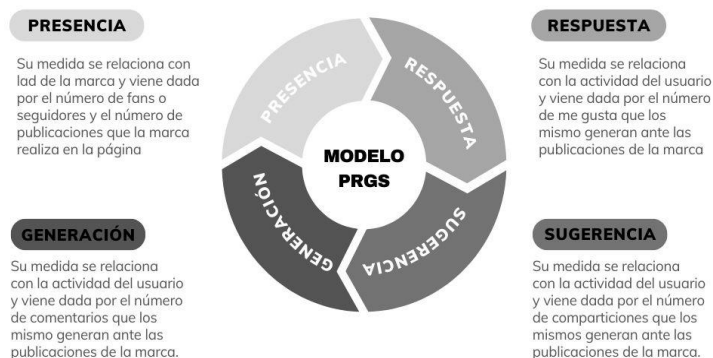
In order to ascertain the extent to which the tourism campaigns of the preceding five years, both before and after the pandemic (2019-2023), have fulfilled the sustainability variables set out in the Progress Report of the Sustainable Development Strategy 2030, the aforementioned campaigns have been subjected to analysis.

In addition, all publications on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram that referred to the destination in a promotional manner, from the profile established for the promotion of tourism in the Costa Cálida, were studied over the course of the 12-month period in 2023. The objective is to ascertain whether the

destination in question is being marketed in a sustainable manner, while simultaneously fostering environmental awareness in the tourism sector.

In order to analyse social networks, we utilise the PRGS model proposed by IAB Research and referenced in the article by Giraldo Cardona & Martínez (2017). This model assesses the activity of brands in social networks through four variables (presence, response, generation and suggestion) for the year 2023.

Figure 1. PRGS model



Source: own elaboration based on the article by Giraldo Cardona & Martínez, 2017.

Similarly, the variables established in each of the social networks to be studied are analysed in the following table. This specifies how these variables will be calculated and includes other new variables (frequency of publication and description of the contents in terms of sustainability) by the authors Feitosa et al. (2020). This is to understand how social networks contribute to the positioning of the tourist destination in a sustainable way.

Table 1. PRGS model variables analysed for social networks.

Brand	Presence	Fans	
		Post	
User	Response	I Like It	R= Likes/ No. Of Fans
	Generation	Comments	G= Comments/ No. Of Fans
	Suggestion	Shared Content	S= Share / No. Fans
Frequency Of Publication			
Description Of Contents			

Source: own elaboration based on the article by Giraldo Cardona & Martínez (2017) and Feitosa et al. (2020).

Finally, in the sections Results, Discussion and Conclusions, the implications of the topic in question for the research and practice of sustainable tourism marketing carried out by tourism institutions in La Manga del Mar Menor are analysed. This is followed by a recommendation of future lines of research in the same area.

3. Sustainable Marketing.

In order to position a product or service as sustainable, it is necessary to communicate to the future consumer the environmental problems and the benefits that can be obtained by using them correctly, as Martínez Merino (2020) asserts.

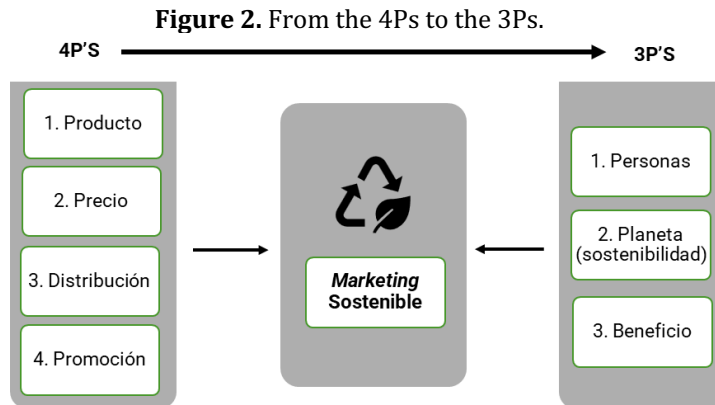
Concurrently, it is imperative to emphasise that a customer committed to ecology and concerned about the environment is the first to be interested in receiving information on the subject that is transparent, clear and truthful, in order to be aware of the impact it has on the environment (Maneiro Jurjo & Burguillo Cuesta, 2007). In this context, sustainable marketing is defined as "the process of planning, execution and control of marketing, in order to meet the needs of customers" (Giraldo-Patiño et al. 2021, p. 77). It incorporates all the terminological meanings of marketing that seek to achieve some of the objectives of sustainable development (Giraldo-Patiño et al. 2021).

In addition, as Torres Silva (2015, p. 55) asserts, it is essential to recognise that "sustainable development is the equilibrium between environmental, social and economic development

(profitability)". In this context, marketing for sustainability must adhere to five fundamental principles: i) production, ii) product, iii) distribution, iv) marketing and v) social marketing. In the contemporary era, the concept of sustainability is a prerequisite for all companies due to the influence of institutional and governmental pressure. As Giraldo-Patiño et al. (2021) posit, this requirement enables competitiveness between different markets.

Similarly, the objectives to be pursued are twofold: firstly, to promote the creation of an environmentally responsible image; and secondly, to penetrate the minds of consumers through messages in order to change their perceptions and internalise an environmentally responsible lifestyle.

In the article by Torres Silva (2015), Fuller posits that sustainable marketing in any organisation must relate all its elements, both the 4Ps (product, price, distribution and promotion) and the 3Ps (people, planet (sustainability) and profit).



Source: own elaboration Fuller (1999) based on the article by Torres Silva (2015) and the CRS Europe sustainable marketing guide.

It is of paramount importance to emphasise the role of consumer perception at this juncture, in order to ensure that consumers are adequately informed and aware that the benefits are typically long-term in nature. Furthermore, it is crucial to highlight that the promotion itself constitutes an intangible benefit that is appreciated over time. Consequently, it is of the utmost importance that the communication employed is both clear and consistent (Torres Silva, 2015).

Consequently, promotional activities in sustainable marketing must be capable of developing precise communication strategies, as illustrated in Figure 3:

Figure 3. Communication strategies



Source: own elaboration based on Giraldo-Patiño et al. (2021).

Although this particular scheme represents only one example of the numerous strategies that can be employed through sustainable marketing, it is crucial to be able to identify the most appropriate strategy at any given time.

4. Sustainable Tourism Marketing

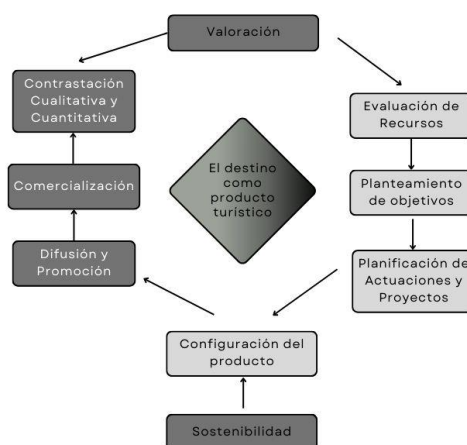
In the context of the tourism industry, as in many other sectors, organisations are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of caring for the ecosystem. This is also due to the emergence of consumer interest in ecology.

Consequently, in the tourism sector, sustainable tourism marketing strategies represent an efficacious solution for conveying the sustainability messages that we wish tourists to receive. This, in turn, will ensure the sustainability of the destination. This is *eduprosuming*, a term adopted by Martínez Sala et al. (2021), which refers to the education of tourists about sustainability through marketing and communication strategies.

In light of the evolution of tourism and the changing perceptions of tourists, it can be observed that in recent decades, the primary focus was on passive leisure. However, in the present era, tourists are highly informed and eager for distinctive experiences (Medaglia Silveira & Silveira, 2009).

As illustrated in Figure 4, Medaglia Silveira & Silveira (2009) demonstrate that the commercial function of marketing can also be based on the planning of the destination as a product. Furthermore, the sustainability variable is incorporated into the strategy development phase.

Figure 4. The destination as a tourism product.



Source: own elaboration adapted from Medaglia Silveira and Silveira (2009).

In this context, destinations must be able to utilise marketing tools to promote sustainable behaviour that leads to the protection of urban resources and to create emotional and affective links with consumers. The concept of *eduprosumers* was proposed by Martínez Sala et al. (2021) as a means of creating a new type of tourist. These individuals are defined as "tourists who have learned responsible behaviour and therefore act as ambassadors for sustainability, spreading and promoting it consciously and deliberately" (p.99). It is of the utmost importance that tourism businesses, through the implementation of sustainable marketing practices, align themselves with the tenets of the United Nations Global Compact (United Nations, 2023).

The objective is to raise awareness of sustainability and motivate tourists to be more careful when travelling. This will be achieved through the dissemination of content on social media, websites and promotional campaigns.

Consequently, marketing in tourist destinations should be developed from the perspective of the destination, with a focus on the non-commercial components of the product (public goods, socio-cultural and environmental aspects) (Kastenholz, 2005), in order to promote not only the well-being of society, but also the environment. As stated by Font et al. (2019), in order to maintain a healthy community, it is necessary to be clear about four key issues: building trust, identifying the right customers, developing appropriate categories of sustainability thinking, and modifying information so that tourists act sustainably.

In order to implement this type of marketing, it is essential to consider the needs of the customer and the local population, as well as their own interests with regard to their territory.

4.1. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Tourism Experience in Sustainable Environments.

Three decades have passed since the concept of sustainable development was defined in the Brundtland Report, "Our Common Future," as a consequence of the establishment of ambitious business strategies that chose to pollute the environment in order to save costs and be more efficient. This resulted in lifestyles and behaviours that undermine sustainability (Beaumont, 2016; Herzig & Schaltegger, 2011; Martínez Sala *et al.* 2021; Pérez Romero, 2012; Valbuena García and Monfort de Bedoya, 2020), the objective was to ensure that the needs of the current generation were met, while also ensuring that future generations could do so (Simancas Cruz *et al.* 2020).

In 2015, UN Member States proposed the development of the SDGs, which emerged as a result of global goals that aim to mobilise international action and guide the strategic planning of governments around the world towards fundamental development issues (Hernández, 2021).

These goals are presented as drivers of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability (Monsalve-Pelaez *et al.*, 2023). Furthermore, four of the seventeen SDGs are directly applicable to tourism (UNWTO, 2023):

- (i) SDG8, which aims to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.
- (ii) SDG11, which aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- (iii) SDG12, which concerns the necessity of ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns, is an essential prerequisite for sustainable development.
- (iv) SDG14, which aims to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

5. New Sustainability in Tourism: The Destination of La Manga del Mar Menor.

The area under study is the Manga del Mar Menor, a promontory situated between the Mediterranean Sea and the Mar Menor in the Region of Murcia. This destination provides a clear example of urbanisation, which commenced in the 1960s and has continued for decades. La Manga is distinctive within the Mediterranean context, as it comprises two seas separated by a narrow expanse of sand. This unique geographical feature has been significantly altered by unregulated tourist development.

According to Vera-Rebollo (2001), La Manga is the principal tourist destination in the Region of Murcia. Consequently, the interest in vertical construction in an area with limited space is understandable. The destination is characterised by a strong seasonal character in the summer months, which presents a number of challenges. These include the management of resources, noise, unsustainability, water consumption, light and environmental pollution, among others. The area, which was originally unspoilt, was originally oriented towards activities such as salt production or artisanal fishing. These activities have radically altered the landscape, and on several occasions, they have failed to comply with the Coastal Law, which prohibits the construction of buildings within 100 metres of the coast.

According to data from the regional government, the area is characterised by a high proportion of second homes, which contributes to the seasonal nature of the destination. The area is characterised by a high concentration of tourists, which has led to the saturation of the sun and beach resorts. This has resulted in the uncontrolled and old urbanisation of the area, which has increased the ecological footprint and the problems inherent to the Mar Menor, which have been much commented on in the media in recent years. Some examples of these are, Rodríguez (2023) with "Mar Menor, Mayor problem", Sánchez y Badillo (2024) "Ribera and Murcia's president reach an agreement to recover the Mar Menor", Martínez (2023) "Tourism in the Mar Menor bounces back after the "green soup" and the dead fish", Sánchez (2023) "Bad news for the Mar Menor", 2023, and finally, Montano (2024) with its publication "Algae eat the beaches of the south of the Mar Menor and "green" innovation comes (as always) to the rescue".

The following table illustrates that in 2023, the total number of travellers in the Mar Menor will be 383,887 people, representing an 8% increase over the previous year. In terms of the profile of tourists, they are between 36 and 45 years old and between 46 and 55 years old. They own their own home, rent an apartment or stay in a four- or five-star hotel. They exhibit a high level of loyalty, with 85.6% of repeat visitors and 14.4% of new visitors. The average expenditure per person per day is 57.4 euros.

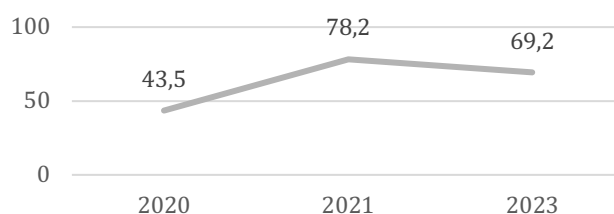
Table 2. Number of tourists and overnight stays in hotel establishments. Mar Menor. Years 2018-2023.

Total, mar Menor - La Manga	No. Travellers	% variation	Number of overnight stays	% variation
2018	371.484	3,6%	1.469.876	8,3%
2019	370.226	-0,3%	1.423.117	-3,2%
2020	117.099	-68,4%	342.893	-75,9%
2021	233.010	99,0%	701.538	104,6%
2022	353.933	51,9%	1.165.019	66,1%
2023	383.887	8,5%	1.264.654	8,6%

Source: Prepared by the authors, adapted from the Hotel Establishment Occupancy Survey -INE. Regional Statistical Centre of Murcia (CREM, 2023).

The growth of tourism in this destination has led to the examination of whether public organisations (at the regional and central levels) are implementing measures to enhance the sustainability of a tourist area, as outlined in the Progress Report of the Sustainable Development Strategy (2030). In order to ascertain the evolution of the scope of the actions over the past four years, the data collected by the CARM was analysed. In 2020, the coverage observed was 43.5%, followed by a significant increase in 2021, coinciding with the post-pandemic period, reaching 78.2%. The current level of promotional activity is slightly lower than that observed previously but remains high at 69.2%. This is a relevant figure for this study, as almost 70% of tourists would be expected to receive the sustainable content of the campaigns.

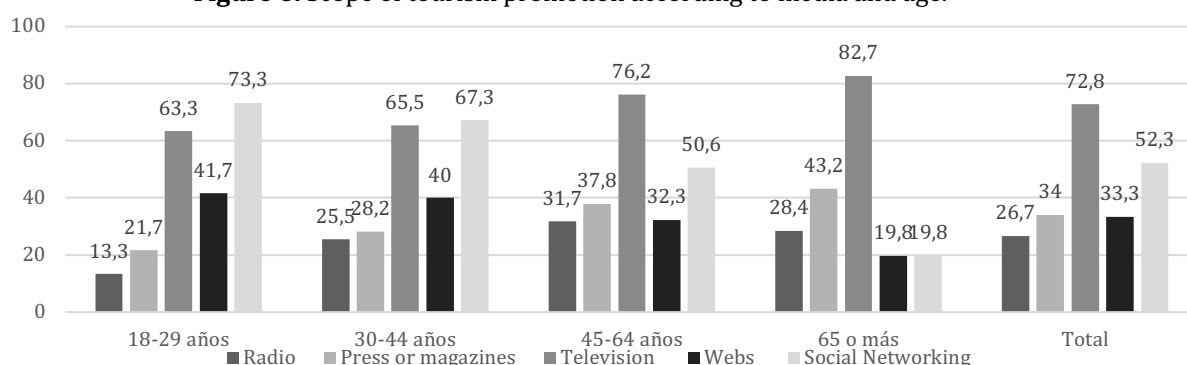
Figure 5. Number of tourists and overnight stays in hotel establishments. Mar Menor. Years 2018-2023.



Source: own elaboration based on ITREM.

In this context, the media through which tourists visiting the Region of Murcia are informed are social networks for those under 45 years of age (almost 70%) and television for those over 45 years of age (between 76% and 82%). For this reason, both media have been selected for analysis in this research, with the objective of identifying the actions undertaken in these media with regard to sustainability.

Figure 6. Scope of tourism promotion according to media and age.



Source: ITREM, 2023.

6. The Promotion of Tourism in La Manga del Mar Menor (Region of Murcia).

6.1. A Table Analysing the Presence of La Manga del Mar Menor on Social Networks

The social networks Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have been analysed in order to ascertain the extent to which they are utilised by tourists in relation to the tourist destination of La Manga del Mar Menor in the year 2023. The analysis identified the number of publications of the destination, the number of followers, the frequency of publications and a brief description of the content, based on the keywords of sustainability, conservation and the environment, as defined by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It should be noted that the public profiles of the Regional Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport of the Government of the Region of Murcia were utilised for the analysis. The presence of a multitude of personal, private, corporate, and associational profiles in the region presents a challenge to the analysis and interpretation of the data. It is also important to note that the Regional Ministry does not have a specific profile for La Manga del Mar Menor, but rather includes it in the publications of the Costa Cálida, which is the commercial name given to the Mediterranean coastline that borders the Region of Murcia.

It is pertinent to note that the most recent report by IAB Spain (2023) on the use of social networks in Spain indicates that the social network WhatsApp is the most frequently utilized. The next most popular social media platforms are Instagram, Be Real, Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter. YouTube is in eighth place. These data are pertinent to a more comprehensive understanding of the communication of tourism at a public level across the various social network profiles.

With regard to the Facebook profile of tourism in the Region of Murcia, the following data are presented for the period commencing 1 March 2024:

Profile name: Turismo Region of Murcia

Followers: 104 thousand

Likes: 99 thousand

Language: Spanish and English. Although most publications are in English

Table 3. Analysis of Facebook 2023.

Date of publication	Post	Comments	Engagement
18 January 2023	23 reasons to visit the Region in 2023	Brief commentary on the existence of two seas	30 likes 17 comments 10 shared
19 January 2023	Promotion song 2 seas and a look	Tourist promotion of the territory through a song	228 likes 15 comments 102 shared
2 March 2023	EuroVelo 8 Mediterranean Route	Bicycle route along the Mediterranean coastline	54 likes 5 comments 37 shared
6 March 2023	Sunset on the Mar Menor	Promoting the Mar Menor through the colours of its sky	740 likes 20 comments 54 shared
15 March 2023	Easter 2023	Promotion Region as a whole	383 likes 36 comments 119 shared
18 April 2023	Sporting event Paddle Surf and Sailing in the Mar Menor	Water sports activities Mar Menor	12 likes 1 comment 11 shared
25 April 2023	Spot Sensory Nature	Images of sea and	47 comments

Date of publication	Post	Comments	Engagement
		relaxation	4 comments 9 shared
1 May 2023	Mar Menor Fair	Mar Menor sports activities discount campaign	49 likes 3 comments 23 shared
26 May 2023	Summer 2023 Promotion	Advertising spot with hardly any target images	40 likes 1 comment 20 shared
30 May 2023	Costa Calida Tourism Guide	Images sea	77 likes 13 comments 17 shared
15 June 2023	Water sports Mar Menor	Sports at sea	30 likes 0 comments 15 shared
17 July 2023	10 plans in La Manga	Link to website promoting Mar Menor destination	783 likes 57 comments 110 shared
28 July 2023	Beaches Costa Cálida	Beach ideas throughout the Region	1354 likes 74 comments 480 shared
18 August 2023	Water sports	Images of sports at sea	188 likes 5 comments 10 shared
23 August 2023	Spot "You are looking for happiness".	Images of the Costa Cálida, mainly just the sea.	277 likes 4 comments 7 shared
5 October 2023	Autumn Bridges Campaign	image of the sea	136 likes 4 comments 3 shared
28 December 2023	Christmas Campaign 2023	Images of the Mar Menor	32 likes 2 comments 5 shared

Source: Own elaboration based on @turismoregiondemurcia Facebook.

La Manga del Mar Menor is part of the coastal destination (known as Costa Cálida) and its publications stand out during the summer season. These publications focus on water sports in its two seas. The promotional images show little more than the sky and the water. There are hardly any buildings in the area. This makes it difficult to identify the specific tourist area, which can lead to confusion with similar destinations. It is noticeable that when there are publications about the Mar Menor, many users tag their comments with the hashtag #SOSMARMENOR. At the same time, words such as sustainability, conservation or environment are not used in any of the publications analysed. They only refer to natural resources and mainly show images of mountains.

In relation to the Instagram profile of the Region of Murcia Tourism, some of the main data as of 1 March 2024 are the following:

Profile name: Turismo Region of Murcia

Publications: 1422 publications

Followers: 55.5 thousand

Language: Spanish and English. Although the majority of publications are in English

Table 4. Analysis of Instagram 2023.

Date of publication	Post	Comments	Engagement
18 January 2023	23 reasons to visit the Region in 2023	Images of the territorial sea	776 likes
19 January 2023	Song 2 seas and a look	Promotional song territory, images and coastline	720 likes
15 March 2023	Easter Promotion 2023	images of the sea	527 likes
24 May 2023	Yoga in nature campaign	images of the sea with a person doing yoga	120 likes
9 July 2023	Beach destinations	It shows images of beaches and the study territory.	1764 likes
17 July 2023	Beaches	Beaches in the Region	486 likes
28 July 2023	The best beaches	Showcase the most attractive beaches in the region	1296 likes
28 August 2023	Water sports in the Region	Images of the sea	249 likes
29 September 2023	Active tourism	images nautical tourism	320 likes

Source: Own elaboration based on @turismoregiondemurcia Instagram.

In the case of Instagram, the same publications stand out as on Facebook. Although in this case there is less interaction. There are few comments and the images show little that is specific to La Manga del Mar Menor. The promotions emphasise the sky and the sea, but it is difficult to identify the sea with the Costa Cálida, and even more so with the study area.

As with Facebook, when September arrives, the publications from the warm coast, and therefore from the study area, cease. It is interesting to note that the Region of Murcia, and especially its coast, is characterised by a warm climate throughout the year and by a tendency towards outdoor leisure activities.

After analysing the Facebook and Instagram social networks of "Turismo Región de Murcia", the publications in 2023 on Twitter are analysed, especially those in which the area of La Manga is promoted.

In relation to the Twitter profile (currently social network X) of Tourism in the Region of Murcia, here are some of the main data on 1 March 2024:

- Profile name: Turismo Region of Murcia
- Publications: 1422 publications
- Followers: 55.5 thousand
- Language: Spanish and English. Although the majority of publications are in English

It can be concluded that the publications on Twitter are the same as on the other social networks analysed, Facebook and Instagram. They follow the same order and the same images. As far as comments are concerned, it appears that there is less user interaction on this social network. For this reason, it was considered redundant to repeat the analysis table for this social network.

In the case of the social network YouTube, it was decided not to analyse it independently, as the videos shown are the same as those on the other social networks. Nevertheless, the main data are as follows

In relation to the YouTube profile of tourism in the Region of Murcia, these are some of the main data as of 1 March 2024:

- Profile name: Turismo Region of Murcia
- Publications: 350 videos
- Subscribers: 8.8 K
- Language: Spanish and English. Although most publications are in English.

6.2. Table of Analysis of the Promotional Campaigns of La Manga del Mar Menor (2019-2023).

The objective is to ascertain whether public administrations, through their tourism bodies, recognise sustainability as the foundation of their current and future tourism development. Although it is accurate to state that the majority of tourism development plans developed in the region include sustainability as a key objective (Strategic Tourism Plan for the Region of Murcia 22-23, Tourism Sustainability Plan for Destinations 2023, etc.), it is also accurate to state that the majority of tourism development plans developed in the region include sustainability as a key objective (Strategic Tourism Plan for the Region of Murcia 22-23, Tourism Sustainability Plan for Destinations 2023, etc.). It is also the case that the majority of tourism development plans developed in the region include sustainability as a key objective (Strategic Tourism Plan for the Region of Murcia 22-23, Tourism Sustainability Plan for Destinations 2023, etc.). It is also the case that. To date, no study has been conducted on the impact of tourism promotion campaigns in the region based on improving the image of the area through sustainable tourism marketing. For this reason, it was deemed pertinent to analyse the audiovisual content of the destination's tourism promotion through public advertising campaigns.

A considerable body of research indicates that the sustainability factor is a crucial consideration in the selection of a tourist destination (Kim et al., 2020; Lu & Nepal, 2009; Miller & Torres-Delgado, 2023). Consequently, the analysis of tourism promotion campaigns by public administrations is approached by examining the following strategic variables, which are considered to be particularly relevant constructs for the tourism management approach: (i) transparency and responsible communication, (ii) personalisation and segmentation, (iii) sustainable and committed educational content, and (v) reference to the SDGs related to tourism. These variables are of particular relevance for the approach of public tourism administrations to tourism.

Tabla 5. Análisis y resultados de las campañas 2019-23

	Nombre de la campaña	Personajes conocidos	Duración	Medios de difusión	Transparencia y comunicación responsable	Personalización y segmentación	Contenido educativo sostenible y compromiso	ODS turismo	Mensaje	Hashtag
Campaña 2019	Costa Cálida Región de Murcia te hace feliz	No	2:21 min	Televisión y el plan de medios también incluye la emisión de más de 200 cuñas de radio y prensa para las principales cabeceras de prensa, suplementos y revistas especializadas.	Naturaleza virgen, playas salvajes	NO	NO	NO	Buena asegurar la afluencia de visitantes nacionales al litoral murciano durante la temporada alta y reforzar la imagen positiva del Mar Menor	#elhasfeliz #CostaCálida
Campaña 2020	Canas de región de Murcia	No	1:23 min	Difundido en español, inglés, francés y alemán a través de redes sociales contando con alcance regional, nacional e internacional, centrándose especialmente en los principales mercados emisores	NO	NO	NO	NO	Traslada un mensaje de esperanza y muestra un destino en el que todo sigue esperando a ser disfrutado, muestra que todo lo que este destino turístico tiene para ofrecer aún sigue intacto: sus playas, naturales, sus ciudades, sus playas, sus fiestas y festivales, su oferta de deporte, salud y gastronomía, su luz y la hospitalidad, la calidez y la cercanía de los murcianos.	#CanasdeRegióndeMurcia #CostaCálida
Campaña 2020	Reencuentra te en la Región de Murcia	No	0:48 seg	Alcance regional, nacional e internacional a través de televisión, prensa, radio y vallas premium en los principales accesos a la Región por carretera.	NO	NO	NO	NO	Posicionar el destino Costa Cálida como una opción segura y preferente para las vacaciones del verano 2020. La campaña muestra las potencialidades de la costa, así como de otros tipos de turismo y destinos, como el Turismo Terrenal de Archena, el Enoturismo de Yecla, el Turismo de Ciudad de Lorca o el Rural de Cieza.	#ReencuentrateenRM #Verano2020 #CostaCálida
Campaña 2021	Te lo prometiste	Sí	0:53 seg	Spot, cuña, gráficas, prensa, publicidad exterior, banners y KRSS	NO	NO	NO	NO	La campaña busca ir más allá del clásico destino de sol y playa, con un nuevo concepto ligado a la seguridad respecto a la Covid. La campaña que hoy presentamos es un nuevo concepto de turismo que incluye el sol y la playa, pero ligado a la seguridad, a la sostenibilidad de los espacios naturales, al turismo deportivo y a la gastronomía. Conectar a Carlos con el verano en la Región	#CostaCálida #te lo prometiste
Campaña 2022	¿luegas?	Sí	0:43 min	Cadenas de televisión y radio nacionales, al que sumará inserciones en prensa, revistas especializadas, soportes de exterior, publicidad digital, menciones en directo y patrocinios de distintos programas.	NO	NO	NO	NO	Asociar la Costa Cálida con la felicidad y para promocionar playas, patrimonio, gastronomía o deporte. Responde a la petición del sector, trasladando las posibilidades de realizar turismo de naturaleza, náutico, de buceo, artístico y gastronómico en los 270 kilómetros de costa de los mares Mediterráneo y Menor.	#CarlosAlcaraz #TurismoRM #RegióndeMurcia #CostaCálida #CostaCálidaTeHaceFeliz
Campaña 2023	Región de Murcia, ven y lo entenderás	Sí	0:48 min	Cadenas de televisión y radio nacionales, junto con menciones en directo y patrocinios de distintos programas líderes de audiencia. A esto se sumarán inserciones en prensa, revistas especializadas, soportes de exterior y digitales, así como redes sociales.	NO	NO	NO	NO	Invita a los turistas a viajar a la Costa Cálida para entender qué quieren decir los mensajes que el tenista Carlos Alcaraz escribe en las cámaras de televisión después de ganar sus partidos.	#CarlosAlcarazRegióndeMurcia #RegióndeMurcia #TurismoRegióndeMurcia #CostaCálida #VALOENTENDERÁS
Campaña 2023	Míname	No	0:30 min	En medios de comunicación convencionales y digitales de la Región de Murcia	Sí	Sí	Sí	Sí: ODS 12 y ODS 14	Un lema sencillo que apela a los sentimientos y que surge como acrónimo de la frase "Mi Mar Menor", tiene por objetivo informar sobre la situación de la laguna y la importancia de su recuperación, sensibilizando a la población sobre el estado actual de la laguna costera y la importancia de recuperar, conservar y proteger de manera eficaz y sostenible su ecosistema. Además, servirá para explicar que ya está en marcha el Marco de Actuaciones Prioritarias para la Recuperación del Mar Menor (MAPRM), dotado con 484,4 millones de euros hasta 2026, una primera parte en la que las imágenes, tanto estáticas como en movimiento, superponen siluetas de personas con las imágenes del entorno, representando una relación estrecha y positiva entre los habitantes y el mar.	#míname

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

7. Analysis of the results

It is important to recognise the pivotal role that digital communication plays in the context of marketing strategies for sustainable tourism. This form of communication has the potential to raise awareness of sustainable tourism and contribute to the generation of more responsible tourism.

Similarly, as evidenced by the literature reviewed, consumers are increasingly concerned about the socio-environmental impact of the services they purchase (Torres Silva, 2015). With regard to the destination of La Manga del Mar Menor, residents are advocating for the regeneration of the lagoon in the tourism model of the Region of Murcia.

The following section presents the principal findings of the analysis conducted on social networks and through the campaigns of the previous five years. In consideration of the variables associated with each dimension, the following results were obtained:

According to ITREM (the Institute of Tourism of the Region of Murcia), social networks and television are the most effective media for promoting La Manga del Mar Menor. In this context, the social networks analysed (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) represent a general communication platform for the entire region, with no specific channels for sun and beach tourism, and even less for the destination under study. The social networks analysed exhibit similar behaviour when considered in the context of their respective profiles. The highest level of interaction can be observed on Facebook, as evidenced by the comments made by residents of the region (either as primary or secondary residents). On Facebook, the comments from users who have used the hashtag #SOSMARMENOR are particularly noteworthy. Furthermore, it is evident that the images and videos displayed on the three social networks under investigation are identical. Moreover, the images and videos are of a general nature, with little focus on the destination. In other words, they fail to offer any distinctive elements from a tourism perspective.

Social networks have become a mere conduit for tourism promotion, with minimal or no two-way communication with users. The content is identical across all networks at the same time. The images of the coast are focused on the summer season. In consideration of the rationale behind this study, it becomes evident that keywords such as sustainability, natural space, and tourism without overcrowding do not constitute a component of the promotional tourism strategy of the Region of Murcia (although they are included in its tourism plans).

Of the seven campaigns analysed, two will be carried out in 2020 and one in 2023. These are a promotional campaign and a campaign to raise awareness of the Mar Menor. Consequently, only one of the seven campaigns analysed is aligned with the SDGs (8, 12 and 14). The "Mímame" campaign, an acronym for "My Mar Menor", is an initiative designed to inform the public about the current state of the saltwater lagoon and the importance of its recovery. Its objective is to raise awareness about the necessity of effective and sustainable ecosystem recovery, conservation and protection (MITECO, 2023). The remaining campaigns seek to promote the destination through its landscapes, gastronomy, experiences and showcase nature, unspoilt and privileged places. However, they do not disseminate awareness-raising messages to tourists, encouraging them to care for and preserve the environment they are promoting. Furthermore, none of the variables established to comply with the SDGs are mentioned, and none of the campaigns develop these concepts: transparency and responsible communication, personalisation and segmentation, and sustainable educational content and commitment.

The Mímame campaign should be included in commercial actions, with the objective of implementing awareness-raising messages about responsible tourism on the beaches of the region and, more specifically, on the Mar Menor. It would be advisable to attract tourists at different times and in different locations (in different areas) in order to prevent overcrowding and the tourist phobia that is already well-known in the destinations.

Furthermore, through ITREM, it has been possible to ascertain one of the initiatives that has been implemented in recent years: a collaboration with the Mar Menor - Cabo de Palos Nautical Station with the objective of creating an attractive tourist offer throughout the year in the Mar Menor area. In order to achieve this objective, it is stated that the intention is to raise awareness and promote the sustainable use of the Mar Menor through a campaign that can benefit both public and private schools with access to a 50% discount per activity. However, there is no evidence that any actions have been taken to promote sustainable use in relation to this initiative. It can be concluded that there is a lack of training in the development of digital marketing plans for sustainable tourism in the Region of Murcia.

In order to address this issue, it is recommended that destinations participate in targeted training programmes focused on sustainability. This will enable tourism organisations to enhance the promotion of their services, with particular emphasis on destination care and environmental awareness. Consequently, the presentation of ecotourism and sustainable destinations will contribute to the sustainable development of La Manga del Mar Menor.

8. Conclusions

A documentary review was conducted, and it was determined that the marketing of tourism in La Manga del Mar Menor has not communicated sustainable behaviour, both in the campaigns of the last five years and through social networks. Consequently, it is evident that tourism organisations must incorporate educational objectives into their sustainable marketing strategies to promote the sustainable use of destinations.

It can therefore be concluded that the promotional campaigns aimed at promoting La Manga del Mar Menor do not present sustainable marketing elements in accordance with the Progress Report of the SDG 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy. Consequently, the proposed objectives of protecting the natural and environmental environment by raising awareness among tourists through different media are not achieved.

The analysis of social networks reveals that they are merely another promotional channel for tourism. The analysis conducted revealed that there is no specific sustainable tourism strategy evident in the region's tourism campaigns. With the exception of images of nature (mainly in natural parks), the remainder of the promotion is based on water sports in La Manga del Mar Menor, which is a key element of the promotional strategy. It is evident that the promotion of the destination has shifted away from showcasing the distinctive architectural features that are characteristic of the area and has instead focused on the interior of the sea, an element that could be found in any tourist centre.

It can be concluded that in terms of sustainable digital marketing strategies in La Manga del Mar Menor, the same campaigns are still being carried out as ten years ago. Furthermore, variables that contribute to achieving environmental excellence in the destination are not being included. This is evidenced by the fact that no actions are being disseminated to protect and defend the environment, and no awareness is being raised among tourists to respect the destination.

There is still a considerable distance to travel before environmental excellence can be achieved in tourist destinations. One of the ways to create this excellence is through sustainable marketing. This requires that tourism companies integrate the SDG objectives in their promotional activities. These activities should include tourism services and supply as a product and also integration as a destination that defends the interests of the inhabitants and protects the tourist use of the environment. This will raise awareness of social responsibility in society. These actions should be focused on obtaining greater benefits for the destination, with a twofold approach: firstly, good management of tourism demand in order to provide a quality experience, and secondly, respect for natural resources in order to be in line with the principles of sustainable development.

As future lines of research, it is recommended that new studies be conducted on the digital marketing strategies of tourist destinations that require sustainable development, either due to complex environmental circumstances or an influx of tourists that negatively impacts the environment. Consequently, other companies will be able to benefit from these studies and apply them to their own strategies. As Dolnicar posited, in 2023, the tourism industry must implement urgent operational changes to ensure the sustainable provision and consumption of tourism services in the future, in accordance with the UN SDGs.

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