

Analysis of the digital marketing of accommodation establishments in the canton of San Miguel de los Bancos - Ecuador

Análisis del marketing digital de los establecimientos de alojamiento del cantón San Miguel de los Banco -Ecuador

Danny Israel Sinchi Alba¹, Ronald Leonardo Soto Aguirre² & Bertha Cecilia Jaramillo Moreno^{3*}.

¹ Licenciado en Turismo, Carrera de Turismo, Universidad Central del Ecuador, Quito, Ecuador.

² Master of Science in International Hospitality Management, Carrera de Turismo, Universidad Central del Ecuador, Quito, Ecuador.

³ Doctora en Ciencias Económicas, Empresariales y Jurídicas, Carrera de Turismo, Universidad Central del Ecuador, Quito, Ecuador.

* Corresponding author: bcjaramillo@uce.edu.ec

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the digital marketing strategies employed by accommodation establishments in the canton of San Miguel de los Bancos, Ecuador, particularly within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The research highlights the crucial role of digital tools and e-commerce in enhancing the visibility and competitiveness of tourism businesses. It emphasises the necessity of effective Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and Social Media Optimisation (SMO) to improve online presence and attract potential customers. The findings reveal significant shortcomings in the current digital marketing practices of local accommodations, including low website traffic, poor image optimisation, and inadequate backlink strategies, which hinder their ability to engage with users and enhance their market reach. The study underscores the importance of adopting robust digital marketing frameworks to navigate the evolving landscape of the tourism industry and to leverage the increasing reliance of consumers on digital platforms. Ultimately, this research contributes to understanding how digital transformation can facilitate recovery and growth within the post-pandemic tourism sector.

Keywords: E-Commerce, accommodation, SEO, SMO.

RESUMEN

Este estudio examina las estrategias de marketing digital empleadas por establecimientos de alojamiento en el cantón de San Miguel de los Bancos, Ecuador, particularmente en el contexto de la pandemia de COVID-19. La investigación destaca el papel crítico de las herramientas digitales y el comercio electrónico en la mejora de la visibilidad y la competitividad de las empresas turísticas. Enfatiza la necesidad de una efectiva Optimización para Motores de Búsqueda (SEO) y Optimización para Redes Sociales (SMO) para mejorar la presencia en línea y atraer clientes potenciales. Los hallazgos revelan deficiencias significativas en las prácticas actuales de marketing digital de los alojamientos locales, incluyendo bajo tráfico, pobre optimización de imágenes y estrategias de backlinks inadecuadas, las cuales dificultan su habilidad para interactuar con usuarios y mejorar su alcance de mercado. El estudio subraya la importancia de adoptar marcos de trabajo robustos de marketing digital para navegar el panorama en evolución de la industria del turismo y para aprovechar la creciente dependencia de las plataformas digitales por parte de los consumidores. Finalmente, esta investigación contribuye a la comprensión de cómo la transformación digital puede facilitar la recuperación y el crecimiento en el sector turístico post-pandemia.

Palabras clave: Comercio electrónico, alojamiento, SEO, SMO.

INTRODUCTION

The reactivation of tourism after the COVID-19 pandemic has become a global priority due to the significant economic losses. The World Tourism Organisation estimated that global losses in the tourism sector exceeded \$4 trillion between 2020 and 2021 (Organización Mundial del Turismo, 2021a). In Ecuador, the contribution of tourism to the Gross Domestic Product fell to 1.2% in en 2020 (Ministerio de Turismo, 2020). However, during this same period, e-commerce grew by 400%, reaching \$3.2 billion in 2021 (El Universo, 2022). Due to this boom, various productive sectors have accelerated their transition to electronic means, and tourism has been no exception. E-tourism was already consolidating itself as an essential tool for the promotion of tourism companies, as tourists increasingly turn to the internet as their main source of information (Toscano et al., 2021).

In Ecuador, internet usage has grown significantly, reaching 60.4% coverage in 2022 (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos, 2022). Around 73.3% of users access the internet primarily for social media, highlighting the importance of optimising these channels for business promotion. The study conducted by Del Alcázar (2022) on Ecuador's digital media indicates that 91% of visits to the most popular websites came from direct searches, reinforcing the need to implement effective SEO strategies. Facebook remains the most widely used social network in the country, with a significant number of young and adult users, emphasising the need for accommodation establishments to develop digital marketing strategies that leverage these platforms (Del Alcázar, 2022; IMS Insights Lab, 2022).

This increased use of digital media to obtain information has made digital marketing a key tool for promoting the offerings of various tourism establishments, especially those located in areas of high value for tourism. One such area is the San Miguel de los Bancos canton, which is part of the Chocó Andino Biosphere Reserve and is a prominent tourist destination, mainly due to its biodiversity and adventure activities (Quito Informa, 2020).

Accommodation establishments in this area use digital platforms such as websites and social networks to attract customers. However, these platforms show deficiencies in terms of visibility, with issues in search engine positioning and limited interaction on social networks. Digital marketing has proven to be very useful for improving competitiveness; however, its proper implementation requires the use of digital analytics tools. The use of SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) tools for websites and SMO (Social Media Optimisation) tools for social networks allows businesses to optimise their visibility and reach in the digital environment (Digital Marketing Institute, 2021; Widiastuti et al., 2022).

E-tourism and the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) have shown their effectiveness in improving the competitiveness of tourism establishments. Fiallos Moncayo (2019) highlights that tourism SMEs that do not adopt new technologies for promotion are considerably less known. Furthermore, digital marketing, in addition to being more affordable compared to other traditional media, delivers better results. By optimising digital media, websites become more recognised and achieve better positioning on the web (Parvez et al., 2018).

The use of SEO is particularly relevant as it allows the identification and correction of website flaws that affect search engine positioning. Studies in Greece and Indonesia highlight the importance of optimising websites through SEO, which improves visibility and increases user traffic, although the results are not immediate (Konidaris & Koustoumpardi, 2018; Setiawan et al., 2020). In the context of Ecuador, a study conducted in Tulcan on accommodation establishments highlights that the competitiveness of hotels can be diminished by not having websites or business profiles on Facebook, as traditional advertising or "offline marketing" no longer delivers the same results as in previous years (Enríquez Herrera & Revelo Valenzuela, 2020).

Consequently, the main objective of this study is to analyse the digital marketing of accommodation establishments in the San Miguel de los Bancos canton using web analytics tools. Specifically, it aims to identify the main shortcomings of these establishments' websites using SEO tools and

determine the primary deficiencies in their Facebook fan pages using SMO tools.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Marketing is essential for positioning products and services. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2013), it is defined as a social process that creates and exchanges value, while the American Marketing Association (2017) emphasises its focus on generating valuable offerings. In tourism, marketing must address the traveller's temporal needs and adapt to market conditions to ensure profitability (Sofronov, 2019).

With technological advancements, marketing has evolved into the digital environment, defined as the promotion of products and services through technologies such as the internet, mobile devices, blogs, and social networks (Desai, 2019). In the hospitality sector, proper management of these channels improves communication with customers and performance (De Pelsmacker et al., 2018). Creating a positive web experience is crucial for attracting customers, and effective social media management strengthens brand identity (Anguera-Torrell & Langer, 2019; Rojas-Flores et al., 2021).

In this same vein, e-commerce has revolutionised commercial transactions by facilitating online buying and selling, which increases the satisfaction of the digital consumer (Jílková & Králová, 2021). In the tourism sector, this modality optimises advertising campaigns and increases visibility (Jain et al., 2021). The so-called e-tourism involves the adoption of digital technologies to enhance supply and demand processes, enabling faster and more autonomous decisions by travellers (Leguizamón, 2020; Pan, 2016). The transition towards Web 3.0, which incorporates artificial intelligence and semantic web, allows tourism companies to offer more personalised and relevant information for travellers (Matade & Rajeev, 2017; Minić et al., 2014). The adoption of these technologies has proven to be crucial for maintaining a competitive advantage (Albaom et al., 2022).

Digital tools are vital for improving the productivity and visibility of tourism businesses (Organización Mundial del Turismo, 2021b), as they facilitate effective communication and increase

competitiveness in the sector. Digital analytics enable strategic decision-making based on data, optimising online visibility and enhancing the customer experience (Bello, 2021; Phillips, 2014). SEO and SMO tools are essential for expanding reach and better meeting customer demands. Effective management of accommodation social media is highly relevant, as nowadays most customers are reached exclusively through these channels (Sakas et al., 2022).

In this regard, it is worth mentioning that SEO tools help optimise websites to improve their positioning on search engines (Shahzad et al., 2020). One of the most notable is WooRank, for its comprehensive evaluation of a site's performance and visibility, analysing key parameters and providing a score that identifies areas for improvement (WooRank, 2023). As for SMO tools, these are essential for enhancing social media presence, evaluating the performance and engagement of posts, which helps optimise digital strategies (Kayumovich, 2020). Fanpage Karma is an effective tool for analysing Facebook pages, providing data on the effectiveness of strategies (Fanpage Karma, 2023).

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This research was conducted in the canton of San Miguel de los Bancos, in the province of Pichincha, Ecuador. This territory borders the cantons of Puerto Quito and Pedro Vicente Maldonado to the north, the Metropolitan District of Quito to the south and east, and the province of Santo Domingo to the west. It is characterised by lush vegetation typical of a humid forest. It has an area of approximately 839 km² and an estimated population of 29,969 inhabitants as of 2020. Its economy is supported by livestock farming and the availability of water resources (Gobierno Autónomo Descentralizado Municipal de San Miguel de los Bancos, 2015).

This research was descriptive and cross-sectional because it was applied only once. Due to the lack of intervention in the sample, it was also observational. A mixed approach was employed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were collected using SEO tools (WooRank) and SMO tools (Fanpage Karma) to analyse key metrics, while the qualitative analysis

focused on interpreting these data to identify shortcomings and patterns regarding the use of digital media by the canton's accommodation establishments.

Regarding the population for this study, the accommodation establishments registered in the 2022 National Consolidated Register of Tourist Establishments by the Ministry of Tourism were selected. Of these, only those with a functional website were included, and subsequently, the existence of a Facebook fan page for each of these establishments was manually verified, resulting in a final sample of 30 establishments.

SEO and SMO data collection

For the data collection process, two specialised tools, WooRank and Fanpage Karma, were used, selected for their ability to provide detailed and comparable metrics on the digital presence of accommodation establishments in the canton of San Miguel de los Bancos.

Websites of cantonal accommodation – WooRank SEO Tool

The WooRank SEO tool was used to evaluate the performance and visibility of the websites of the 30 selected establishments. Data collection was carried out in April 2023, and to organise and structure the information obtained, an indicator table was designed, divided into 12 key categories, which included a total of 28 evaluation parameters, as shown in Table 1. The results obtained were recorded in an indicator table and categorised with labels such as correct, to improve, error, or no information, with an overall score out of 100 provided by WooRank.

This information was summarised in a general table to facilitate the comparison of results among all establishments, highlighting common areas of deficiency with colour codes. However, to enhance practicality and clarity in reading, the results section presents a synthesised version that includes only 6 of the 28 evaluated parameters, as well as the 6 best and worst-performing establishments. Additionally, graphs were created to visually represent the ratings of each parameter, facilitating data interpretation.

Table 1. Categories and parameters evaluated with the SEO Woorank tool

Collecting information with Woorank	On page	Content	Title tag
			Meta description
			Headings
			Alt attribute
			In-page links
			Language
		Indexation	URL resolve
			Broken links
		Mobile	Mobile friendliness
			Tap targets
			Font size legibility
			Mobile viewport
	Off page	Structured data	Open Graph Protocol
			Twitter Card
		Security	SSL secure
		Performance	Asset minification and compression
			Asset cacheability
			Image optimisation
		Accessibility	Contrast
		Technologies	Analytics
			Encoding
		Branding	Favicon
			Custom 404 page
	Off page	Backlinks	Backlinks score
			Backlinks counter
		Traffic	Traffic estimations
		Social profiles	Discovered profiles
			Social media engagement

Facebook Fanpages of cantonal accommodations – SMO Tool Fanpage Karma

Data collection from the Facebook Fanpages was conducted using the Fanpage Karma tool, evaluating their performance over a six-month period, from October 2022 to April 2023. This tool allowed for the analysis of follower count, interaction, reach, and engagement in posts. The information was consolidated into a general table, considering the parameters outlined in Table 2. Based on this data, supporting graphs were created to visualise the performance of each establishment in terms of engagement, reach, and other metrics. This made it possible to identify which Fanpages maintained good interaction and which displayed deficiencies in their management.

Table 2. Parameters evaluated with the SMO Fanpage Karma SMO tool

Collecting information with Fanpage Karma	Total number of fans
	Growth of followers
	Total reactions, comments and shares
	Number of posts
	Interaction rate of posts
	Average number of daily posts
	Engagement
	Page performance index

Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data were thoroughly processed and analysed, offering a comprehensive overview of digital marketing practices in the canton. In the SEO analysis of websites, recurring optimisation patterns and areas for improvement

were identified, including aspects of content, performance, and security, among others. For the fanpages, their ability to generate engagement and retain an active audience was evaluated.

Using supporting graphs, the optimisation levels of websites were compared to those of fanpages, identifying deficiencies in both digital media for several cantonal accommodations. This analysis not only revealed the main weaknesses but also highlighted strengths that no longer require adjustments or improvements. Finally, the findings were compared with similar studies, providing a context for the achievements and shortcomings in the digital marketing strategies of the accommodations. The data obtained from WooRank and Fanpage Karma suggest the need to implement improvements in the digital visibility of these businesses, enhancing their competitiveness in the tourism sector.

RESULTS

SEO analysis of cantonal websites with WooRank

This section presents the results of the analysis of the websites of accommodation establishments in the canton of San Miguel de los Bancos, using the WooRank SEO tool. This analysis allowed for the identification of both strengths and weaknesses in the websites, evaluating their optimisation and the errors that affect their visibility in search engines.

Table 3 displays the results for 6 out of the 30 establishments analysed, highlighting those with

the three highest and three lowest scores according to the WooRank evaluation. The six parameters shown in the table are those identified as most relevant and frequently mentioned in SEO analyses, based on the consulted bibliography. Figure 1, created using the data obtained, highlights a significant disparity between the highest and lowest-scoring accommodation websites. This indicates that some websites present considerable deficiencies and, consequently, lack good online visibility. Of the 30 websites analysed, only 6 achieved a score above 70 out of 100, which is considered favourable according to WooRank's standards.

In Figure 2, it is evident that among these 6 websites, the highest-rated one was the "Las Terrazas de Dana" establishment, with a correct evaluation in 22 of the assessed parameters, representing 79%. However, "Las Terrazas de Dana" also presents deficiencies that could be easily addressed, such as the distribution of navigation buttons on touchscreens and the implementation of lighter images in webp format for faster loading.

In contrast to this, Figure 3 shows that the website with the lowest score corresponds to the "La Casa de Cecilia" establishment. This website exhibits 18 criteria (64%) marked as "error," representing the highest number of deficiencies found. The main weaknesses were centred on the lack of descriptive texts, poor optimisation of utilised resources, and a limited presence of backlinks, all of which negatively impact its online ranking.

Table 3. Summary of the analysis of the websites of the accommodation establishments in the canton of San Miguel de los Bancos- Ecuador

Establishment	Score	Meta description	Mobile friendliness	SSL secure	Image optimization	Traffic estimations	Social media engagement
Highest Rated							
Las Terrazas de Dana	77	Correct	Correct	Correct	Correct	To improve	Correct
Hostería El Abrazo del Árbol	74	Correct	Correct	Correct	Correct	To improve	Correct
Mindo Garden	72	Correct	Correct	Correct	Correct	Correct	To improve
Lowest Rated							
La Casa de Cecilia	34	Error	Correct	Correct	Error	Error	Error
Casa de Vista Alta	38	To improve	Correct	Correct	Error	Error	To improve
Hostería Los Tucanes de Mindo Real	48	Error	Correct	Correct	Error	Error	Correct

Figure 1. Score out of 100 for accommodation establishments in the canton of San Miguel de los Bancos-Ecuador

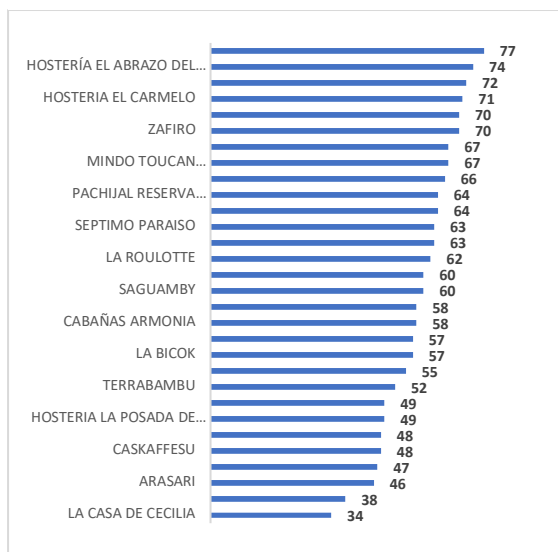


Figure 2. Percentage of criteria evaluated as 'correct' of the accommodation establishments in San Miguel de los Bancos canton

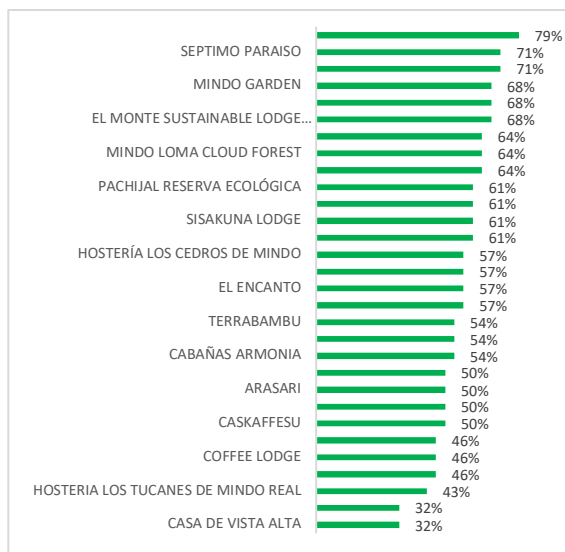


Figure 3. Percentage of criteria assessed as "error" for the accommodation establishments in the San Miguel de los Bancos canton

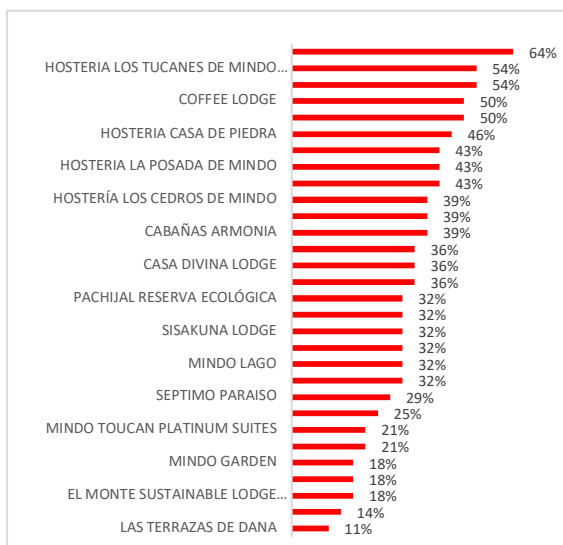
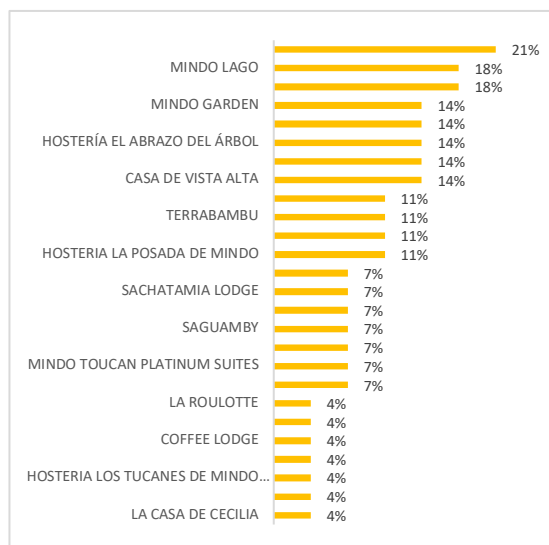


Figure 4. Percentage of criteria assessed as "to improve" for the accommodation establishments in the San Miguel de los Bancos canton



About the criteria evaluated as "to improve", Figure 4 does not show a significantly high trend. However, it is evident that the "Nido de Vida" establishment has the highest number of parameters that, in one way or another, are contributing to the visibility of the website in search engines. With the implementation of improvements, this establishment could achieve a higher score and, therefore, greater visibility among potential visitors.

Overall, the websites received positive ratings in several parameters, as shown in Figure 5. Firstly, the "In-page links" parameter demonstrates an appropriate use of internal and external links, facilitating search engine comprehension. "Mobile friendliness" and "Font size legibility" also received positive evaluations, ensuring the adaptability of the websites to mobile devices and the readability of the content. Similarly, "Encoding" was unanimously rated positively, allowing the proper display of special characters. Other well-rated parameters included "SSL security" (97%), "Headings" (93%), followed by "Favicon" (87%), "Custom 404 page" (83%), "Broken links" (83%), "Language" (80%), and "Mobile viewport" (80%).

However, some parameters require improvement; 40% of the websites need to increase "Social media engagement" on social media, which could help generate trust among users. Another aspect to improve is the "Open Graph protocol", with failures in 33% of the sites, necessary for their correct presentation on Facebook, and "Title tag", where similarly, a third of the sites need to adjust the length of the titles, as they are either too short or too long.

Regarding the parameters with negative ratings, three trends were identified. The "Traffic estimations" parameter received a negative rating of 97%, indicating a lack of internet user presence on most websites. The "Backlinks score" parameter showed an 83% error rate, suggesting that the sites use low-impact backlinks. Lastly, "Image optimization" had deficiencies in 87% of the analysed cases. Optimising the images used is essential since, besides being the most visually appealing part for visitors, it can cause longer loading times or design adaptation issues on different device screens.

Figure 5. SEO parameter analysis of accommodation establishments in the San Miguel de los Bancos canton



SMO analysis of Facebook fan pages in the canton using Fanpage Karma

This section presents the results obtained from the analysis of the Facebook fan pages of accommodation establishments in the San Miguel de los Bancos canton, using the SMO tool Fanpage Karma. This analysis enabled the identification of the main shortcomings and assessed whether their management is effective in achieving good online visibility as seen in Table 4.

The Fanpage Karma tool revealed that the Facebook page with the highest number of followers is that of “Mindo Lago”, with approximately 43,000 followers, whereas the page with the fewest followers is “Hostería Los Cedros de Mindo”, with fewer than fifty fans. This disparity highlights a significant gap in the reach of establishments through their fan pages, as illustrated in Figure 6.

Table 4. Facebook fan page metrics of accommodation establishments in the San Miguel de los Bancos canton from 1 October 2022 to 1 April 2023

Establishment name	Number of total fans	Total number of reactions, comments and shares	Number of posts	Interaction rate of posts	Average number of daily posts	Engagement
Casa de Vista Alta	3.9 K	310	17	0,24%	0,1	0,00%
Nido de Vida	441	230	8	0%	0,05	0%
Cabañas Armonía	3.5 K	98	11	0%	0,07	0%
Mindo Toucan Platinum Suites	4.7 K	0	0	0%	0	0%
La Casa de Cecilia	2.1 K	777	37	1,20%	0,2	0,0071
Zafiro	221	69	6	9,40%	0,04	0,12%
Caskaffesu	565	0	0	0%	0	0%
La Bicok	1.7 K	0	0	0%	0	0%
Hosteria los tucanes de mindo real	8 K	80	9	0%	0,06	0%
El Monte Sustainable Lodge Mindo Cloud Forest	764	27	1	3,6%	0,0061	0,02%
Hosteria La Posada de Mindo	5.3 K	93	6	0%	0,04	0%
Mindo Loma Cloud Forest	1.9 K	173	5	0%	0,03	0%
El Encanto	1.2 K	0	0	0%	0	0%
Mindo Lago	43 K	0	0	0%	0	0%
Arasari	11 K	284	20	0%	0,1	0%
Hosteria el Carmelo	18 K	300	29	0,06%	0,2	0,01%
Septimo Paraíso	3.4 K	17	6	0%	0,04	0%
Coffee Lodge	2.2 K	19	6	0%	0,04	0%
Saguamby	7.8 K	68	3	0%	0,02	0%
Hostería el Abrazo del Árbol	3.7 K	87	11	0%	0,07	0%
Hosteria Casa de Piedra	7.7 K	577	192	0,07%	1,2	0,01%
Sisakuna Lodge	16 K	5.8 K	104	0,38%	0,6	0,24%
Casa Divina Lodge	4.4 K	747	69	0,29%	0,4	0,01%
La Roulotte	17 K	685	33	0,09%	0,2	0,01%
Mindo Garden	3.2 K	27	39	0,03%	0,2	0,00%
Terrabambu	5.3 K	0	0	0%	0	0%
Hosteria los Cedros de Mindo	43	0	0	0%	0	0%
Las Terrazas de Dana	2.8 K	346	25	0,51%	0,2	0,08%
Sachatamia Lodge	9.3 K	124	14	0%	0,09	0%
Pachijal Reserva Ecológica	515	0	0	0%	0	0%

Regarding the interaction generated by the establishments' posts, it was observed that "Sisakuna Lodge" has the highest number of reactions (5.8 thousand), yet a low interaction rate of just 0.38%. In contrast, the establishment with the highest interaction rate is "Zafiro", with 9.40%, although it has generated only 69 interactions in total. Considering this, one might assume that "Zafiro" is performing well due to its high interaction rate; however, over the six months during which data was collected, it averaged only 0.04 daily posts, which is far below the recommended minimum of 1 to 2 daily posts (Macready & Cohen, 2023).

Among all the establishments, only "Hostería Casa de Piedra" meets the recommended minimum, with an average of 1.2 daily posts. Nevertheless, its interaction rate is below 1%. Almost unanimously, 96.97% of the pages evaluated fail to meet the minimum number of daily posts, reflecting inadequate social media management due to the lack of consistency in publishing content.

Regarding the level of engagement, it was found that all establishments scored below 1%, indicating that they have failed to capture the interest or active interaction of users on their pages. Additionally, in some cases, the Fanpage Karma tool could not calculate metrics such as follower growth and page performance due to the lack of available information online.

Figur 6. Number of Facebook followers of accommodation establishments in the San Miguel de los Bancos canton

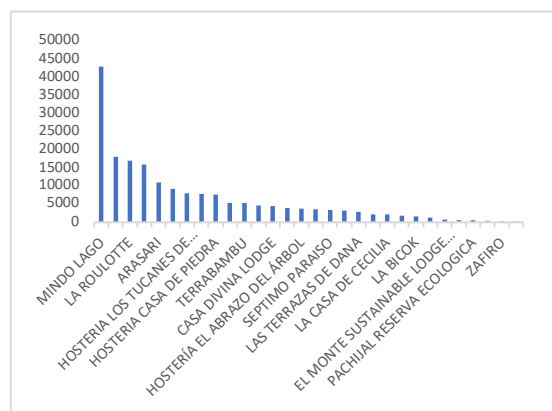


Figure 7. Engagement of Facebook pages of accommodation establishments in the San Miguel de los Bancos canton



DISCUSSION

Analysis of cantonal websites using the SEO tool Woorank

The results highlight the importance of SEO optimisation for improving the online visibility of establishments. The significant disparity in scores emphasises the critical need for optimisation across several websites. According to Law (2018), hotels should consider not only technical optimisation but also the provision of high-quality, relevant information on their websites to sustain visitors' interest. This is an essential aspect for attracting and retaining users who visit these sites.

In agreement with the research by Setiawan et al. (2020) on the Palembang Tourism Polytechnic website, it is evident that websites with simplicity, efficiency, and speed achieve better rankings. However, in the case of "La Casa de Cecilia", which had the highest number of identified errors, these characteristics are absent, negatively affecting its visibility and promotion on search engines.

In terms of technical parameters, the websites of accommodations in San Miguel de los Bancos show strong performance in "on-page links" and "mobile optimisation", contributing to a positive user experience. Nonetheless, the lack of backlinks and poor image optimisation—parameters where most websites underperformed—restrict their rankings. Muniyasamy et al. (2023) suggest that a substantial number of backlinks can enhance search engine

rankings and emphasise that websites should provide quality content to retain visitors.

On the other hand, poor performance in parameters such as the "Open Graph protocol" and "title tags" restricts the ability of the establishments to attract traffic from social media. In this regard, Carrera & Vega (2017) highlight that interactions and reviews on social media generate trust among other travellers, a crucial aspect for capturing the attention of potential customers in the tourism sector.

Altin et al. (2023) support these findings, indicating that the implementation of well-structured SEO strategies in the tourism sector not only improves the visibility of establishments but also enhances their credibility among users. This trust is fundamental to generating a consistent flow of visits to websites, increasing the likelihood of securing guests.

Comparing this with international studies, such as Vyas (2019) on tourist sites in India, it is evident that private websites in the tourism sector tend to handle keywords more effectively and better understand user expectations compared to government-run sites. This is a relevant consideration for the accommodations in the canton, which need to improve their SEO strategies by understanding the interests of potential customers.

In this context, Enríquez Herrera & Revelo Valenzuela (2020) emphasise that digital marketing and the implementation of SEO tools are essential for improving the visibility of accommodations on the internet. Aspects such as the use of high-quality images, relevant informational content, appropriate keywords, and robust backlinks can significantly enhance the SEO scores of these establishments, allowing them to reach a broader audience and, consequently, attract more visitors.

Table 5. Main shortcomings identified in the accommodation websites in the canton of San Miguel de los Bancos

Main shortcomings of cantonal accommodation websites		
Parameters assessed	Percentage of cantonal establishments with shortcomings	Impact for the website
Traffic estimation	97%	Low visitor traffic to a website is reflected in low visibility and therefore few people know about the site. There are also fewer interactions with users, which limits the number of comments, reviews and feedback that can be provided for improvement.
Low backlink score	83%	This significantly influences low search engine rankings, as well as significantly decreasing organic traffic from users coming to the website.
Image optimisation	87%	Having poor quality or very heavy images makes loading times slower, and this causes users to leave the site early and look for other options. It also harms the positioning of search engines, as search engines will classify it as a poorly optimised and slow site.

Analysis of the canton’s Facebook fan pages using the SMO tool Fanpage Karma

The results obtained present a scenario where most accommodations in San Miguel de los Bancos exhibit notable deficiencies in the management of their fan pages, primarily due to the lack of updates and consistency in posting. As Lopez & González (2013), point out, the tourism sector has adapted to new technologies and relies heavily on social media to differentiate itself in a competitive environment. In this context, the number of followers and the reach of a fan page can provide a competitive advantage, as a large social media

community brings greater visibility and attracts potential customers.

Although some establishments, such as "Zafiro", boast a relatively high interaction rate (9.40%), the low average of daily posts prevents this interaction from translating into sustained audience growth. This aligns with the recommendations of Macready & Cohen (2023) who suggest a posting frequency of 1 to 2 posts per day to maintain user interest and build a solid follower base. The lack of consistency in posting indicates poor social media management, as also highlighted by Robalino et al. (2021), who state that the effective promotion of

tourist destinations on social media depends on consistent content creation and publishing.

The low engagement rate across all establishments was below 1%, suggesting that they have not succeeded in creating a meaningful connection with their audience. This aligns with the findings of Perez-Vega et al. (2018), who highlight that social media pages of tourism brands attract more consumers when they exhibit a human-like or anthropomorphic approach, fostering closeness and identification with their customers. The lack of an emotional connection may be preventing users from engaging actively and consistently with the accommodations in San Miguel de los Bancos.

The accommodations in the canton display shortcomings in managing their Facebook pages, particularly regarding posting frequency and the creation of engaging content that drives interaction. This situation not only limits their reach and visibility but also affects users’ perception of the relevance of these brands. As noted by Altin et al. (2023), the proper implementation of social media strategies can enhance the visibility and credibility of tourism establishments, which is crucial for building trust and loyalty among their followers. The accommodations in the canton should focus their efforts on creating valuable content that emotionally resonates with their audience and posting with the recommended frequency to optimise their social media outcomes.

Table 6. Main shortcomings identified in the Facebook fan pages of the accommodations in San Miguel de los Bancos

Main shortcomings of the fanpages of the cantonal accommodations		
Criteria evaluated	Overall average	Impact on Facebook fanpages
Rate of interaction generated by publications	0,51%	Few reactions and interaction on posts are reflected in an organic reach of new users, meaning that fewer people will see the content published on the page.
Average number of daily posts	0,15	Not publishing content regularly is reflected in lower visibility on social networks, in addition to a slow growth of the community and generating a perception of inactivity in the fans who already followed the page.
Engagement	0,04%	This has repercussions on the perception of the brand to customers, as no one feels identified and, therefore, a certain distance is perceived, which translates into a low level of sales.

CONCLUSIONS

Most of the websites of accommodation establishments in San Miguel de los Bancos face significant SEO optimisation issues, limiting their visibility in search engines and reducing their ability to attract customers in an increasingly competitive digital environment. While certain parameters such as mobile optimisation and internal linking show positive results, the main shortcomings are concentrated on three critical areas that require urgent attention: poor image optimisation, which negatively affects loading times and user experience; low-quality backlinks, which weaken the online positioning of the websites; and limited visitor traffic, reflecting an ineffective digital presence.

Similarly, the Facebook pages of the accommodations in the canton are also failing to achieve good visibility or make a significant impact on their audience. The most noticeable issues are

the low interaction rates on posts, which reflect public disinterest; the lack of consistency in daily postings, with most establishments posting less than once a day; and the almost non-existent engagement, which has hindered the establishment of emotional or loyal connections with users. These challenges limit the ability of accommodations to build an active community on social media, thereby missing the opportunity to leverage Facebook as a strategic tool for promotion and client acquisition.

It is essential for establishments to implement more effective strategies to strengthen their digital presence. These could include creating content calendars to ensure regular posting or developing more engaging and relevant material. Additionally, using high-quality images, videos showcasing experiences, and posts that encourage interaction can make a significant difference. Humanising the brand by sharing stories behind the business or customer testimonials can also foster a greater

sense of connection and belonging among the audience. Ultimately, improving the management of both websites and fan pages will be crucial for canton accommodations to adapt to the demands of modern tourism and become more competitive.

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