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A STUDY ON IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PROMOTING TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

Social media is now acknowledged to have a significant part in sustaining and promoting the reputation of tourism locations. Unquestionably, the dynamic online environment plays an important role in promoting tourism on a worldwide scale. In order to use this knowledge to market Indian tourist attractions, it is therefore essential to understand how social media functions. The study analyses how netizens use social media for travel planning and exploring new destinations. It also discusses the benefits and difficulties associated with social media use by the tourism industry and other stakeholders. The study's theoretical social media and tourism analysis is based on secondary data sources. For the research survey method of qualitative and quantitative analysis were used. It helped to conveniently gather primary information about the extent of social media usage, tourists, and tourism establishments at tourism destinations. We analysed the impact of social media on tourism promotion with the help of a questionnaire. The study shows that more tourists are using social media for searching, identifying, making plans, making reservations, and sharing their experiences with various goods and services. In addition to highlighting social media's critical role in the marketing and growth of tourism, the study also points out some drawbacks of using it to advertise a particular location. In addition to analysing the tourism industry in India, this research looks at social media discourse and how it contributes to the marketing strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Digital media's emergence and the internet's growth have changed how people interact with one another and conduct business. As alternatives to traditional media in promoting tourism, trip planning, and decision-making, social media are now widely used for communication, sharing, and expressing personal viewpoints. They also allow information to be updated instantly (De Souza., & Costa, D. F. 2017). Social media was seen to have started displacing conventional information sources as early as 2006 (Jepsen, 2006). Later, it was established that social media might influence people's purchasing behaviour, at least as demonstrated by input-processing-response models (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). In 2019, the travel and tourism sector directly contributed around INR 3.1 trillion (USD 41.7 billion) to India's GDP, or about 2.8% of the country's overall GDP, according to figures from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). Included in this is the revenue produced by hotels, tour operators, airlines, and other means of passenger transportation.When the indirect effects of travel and tourism on the Indian economy are also considered, such as the economic activity produced by the industry's supply chain and induced effects, the total contribution of these sectors to India's GDP was roughly INR 16.91

trillion (USD 227 billion), or about 9.3% of India's GDP in 2019. India becomes an important destination when the discussion is about how significant social media is to the travel industry. Incredible India, the first marketing campaign of its sort, was created in 2002 and was a huge success. Establishing India as a top-tier travel destination and resulting in a sparkling 16% rise in number of visitors in the first year. The tourism industry in India is only getting started, and state governments are working hard to establish themselves as desirable destinations for both domestic and foreign visitors.All businesses can use social media as a marketing tool because of its rapid expansion (Gohil, 2015). Due to its long-standing reliance on social media, the tourism sector is well-positioned to benefit from these platforms. A great deal of information dissemination, destination's reputation, consumer opinion, and good word-of-mouth marketing has been done on social media. As shown in the "Incredible India" and "Bharat Darshan" campaigns, incorporating social media into the marketing strategy of Indian tourism has frequently produced remarkable, quantifiable results in rising visitation numbers as well as increased visitor satisfaction. The result is that social media is increasingly significant in numerous states nationwide since it is a cheap and effective instrument for marketing their own state's tourism.Travellers frequently use social media to find, arrange, share, and annotate their travel tales and experiences through online communities, blogs, media-sharing sites, microblogs, social bookmarking sites, and other

tools in a cooperative manner. These platforms include Blogger, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Wikitravel, and others. The growth of information and communication technologies (ICT) has altered how destinations can communicate with their target demographics. Additionally, as Web 2.0 evolved, several social media platforms offered destinations an efficient tool for creating, managing, and distributing their offerings to tourists worldwide (Buhalis & Law 2008). Recently, the development of mobile devices has made it possible for tourists to share their experiences as they happen. These new technological advancements served as the cornerstone of a novel commercial activity known as mobile tourism (Latorre-Martinez, 2014).

The capability of social media to reach a broad audience swiftly and cheaply is one of its most important advantages. Millions of people all over the world may quickly examine amazing pictures and interesting material about travel firms, tourist boards, and influencers' favourite places. Social media also enables personalised interactions and contact with prospective customers, which may improve engagement and loyalty. For instance, tourist organisations and travel companies may utilise social media to answer queries and comments, make tailored suggestions, and even provide followers-only specials.

Compared to review sites, travel blogs, social networking sites, and content communities, official tourist bureau websites are seen as more reputable when user-generated content is placed there (Yoo, Lee, Gretzel, and Fesenmaier, 2009). Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009 investigated the impact of customer reviews on lodging selection and discovered that exposure to both positive and unfavourable customer reviews improves hotel consideration. Social media's role in travel planning and found that it's mainly used before trips, with very little use occurring during and after (Cox, Burgess, Sellitto, and Buultjens 2009). Social media's importance and usage in visitor decision-making, as well as in tourism operations and management, have been thoroughly researched in tourism and hospitality research as one of the "mega trends" that has had a considerable influence on the tourist system.The goal of the present study is to look at social media's potential as a tool for promoting travel. The study intends to assess social media usage levels and roles in the process of the whole trip planning process, destination branding, and tourism marketing in order to better describe the effect of social media on tourism promotion. Additionally, it aims to gauge how much influence social media is thought to have over travellers' choices of destination and lodging, as well as how much they trust user-generated content in comparison to other traditional sources of information related to travel.

Objectives

1. To study the uses and functionsof social media in tourism promotion.
2. To explore the effects of social media on travel planning.
3. To study the trustworthiness of user-generated content on social media.
4. To examine the role of social media in discovering and promoting new tourist destinations.
5. To analyse the interconnection between tourism marketing and cultural promotion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Online marketing publicity has changed traditional word-of-mouth (WOM) and PR roles. The manner tourism business function has changed because of ICT technology and internet use. Since the internet has developed into a potent tool for tourism promotion in every nation, territory, state, and destination, a new age in tourism promotion has begun in the twenty-first century. According to Lovelock and Wright (2001), 1990 is regarded in the history of promotion as a decade of transmission to a new phase known as Digital Promotion. Social media refers to Web 2.0-based websites that provide a forum for extensive social interaction, community

development, and the pursuit of collaborative initiatives. The largest change in how tourist firms use traditional marketing strategies is social media (Bruns & Bahnisch, 2009). According to a 2009 Nielson Report, two-thirds of all online users worldwide browse social media websites. Countries and local destinations face competition just like consumer goods do, therefore they must set themselves apart from rivals (Dinnie, 2008). Social media marketing has been the most well-known type of online marketing for the past five years. Between 2011 and 2015, email and website marketing both experienced astounding growth of 38%. Consumer engagement in internet videos and webcasts has grown significantly. 69% of Indian marketers favour social media marketing (Octane Survey, 2015). In the first scenario, social media is most likely to have a direct impact on the growth of destination visitors. In the latter case, social media might contribute to building up the reputation of popular tourist destinations, but it is less likely to boost the number of visitors directly. Tourism is a sector that uses a lot of information (Cox *et al*. 2009). Businesses rely on interactions with visitors in several ways to market their products and build customer relationships (Poon, 1993). Social networking has grown into one of the most beneficial platforms for travellers looking to share their travel experiences and get information (Cox *et al*. 2009; Gretzel 2006; Yoo & Gretzel 2008).

Travellers may now share their trip experiences thanks to the expansion of social media websites.It is recognised that information provided on social media platforms is an important information source that might help travellers plan their trips or even influence their future travel plans. Participation in social media has significantly altered how individuals plan and use their trips (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Hudson & Thal, 2013). Because tourist products are immersive, potential customers may look to others' experiences while making decisions (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008). To share travel experiences before, during, and after trips, social media platforms are used. Final decisions about vacation plans will be heavily influenced by social media, especially in reputation-related areas (Fotis, Buhalis, & Rossides, 2012). Social media would, on the one hand, decrease uncertainty and increase transaction utility while, on the other, consumers would have a sense of connection inside online travel networks through storytelling (Gretzel, Fesenmaier, & O'Leary, 2006; Wang, Yu, & Fesenmaier, 2002). Users' ability to learn new information and produce original content to share with others depends on social media (Drews & Schemer, 2010). Simms. (2012) found that visitors were more likely to access user-generated content when they were visiting a location for the first time and when they were travelling abroad. Social media use was less prevalent among solo travellers. Munar and Jacobsen (2013). Analyse technological word-of-mouth through electronic means and the aspects that seriously affect the virtual diffusion of travelogues. In some ways, suggestions from friends, family, or even "like-minded people" are akin to user-generated content (UGC) (Bray, Schetzina, & Steinbrick, 2006; Fernback & Thompson, 1995; Wang *et al*., 2002; Yoo, Lee, Gretzel, & Fesenmaier, 2009).
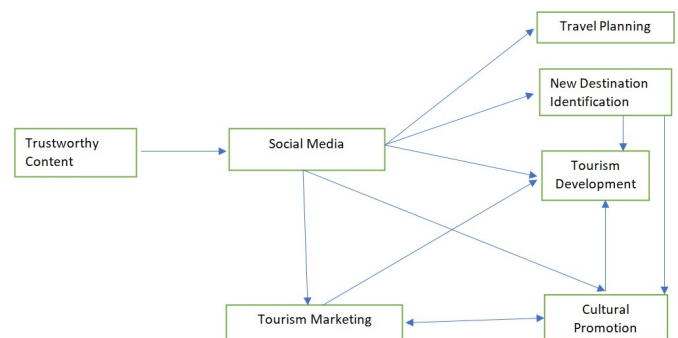
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METHODOLOGY

This study was exploratory and descriptive. Both primary and secondary type of data was used in this study. Primary data was

gathered through a self-structured questionnaire, and secondary data was obtained from the research journal, government websites, web sources, newspaper reports etc. For data analysis correlation and regression methods were used to meet the objective of the study.

Data Analysis

Reliability of Data: As per the doctrine of statistics, a Reliability value of more than 0.70 is a good fit for the social sciences (Nunnally, 1967). Furthermore, the reliability table indicates that the Cronbach's Alpha (α) was 0.859, which is greater than the standard value. So, the tools have excellent reliability of items.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha(α)	N of Items
.859	17

Descriptive Analysis: The sample size of the study was 438; out of which 162 were females, and 276 were male. This figure indicates that male respondents are more expressive and curious than female respondents towards social media's influence on tourism.
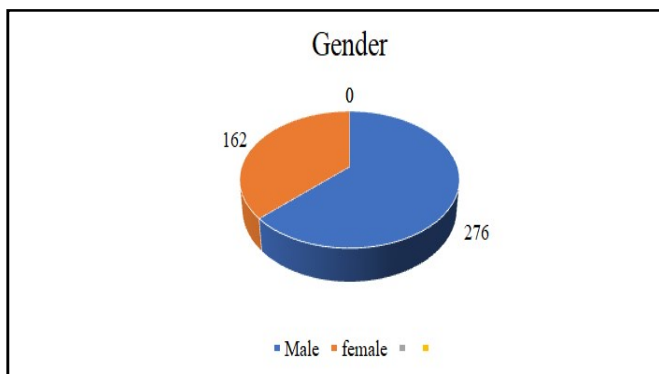

Age: In this study, the sample comprised young internet users, ages ranging from 16 to 40 years. More than 50% of the data came from people in the 26 to 30 age range, and close to 30% came from people in the 20 to 25 age range, indicating that social media played an important role in the majority of the decisions made by young internet users.
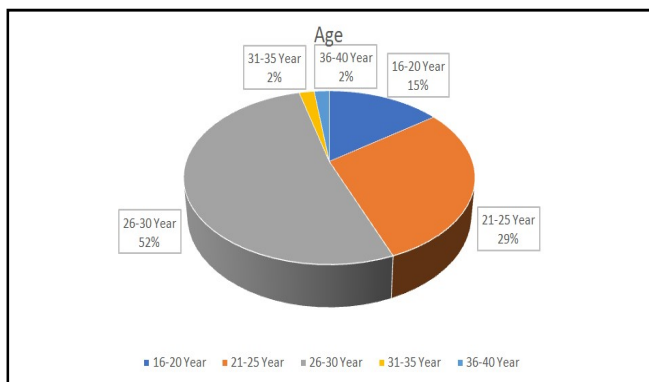

Educational Qualification: Most of the respondents to this survey were students, and around 80% were graduates or post-graduates; social media impacted their decisions.

	Frequency	Per cent
High School	8	1.8
Higher Secondary	24	5.5
Under Graduate	88	20.1
Post Graduate	262	59.8
Other	56	12.8
Total	438	100.0
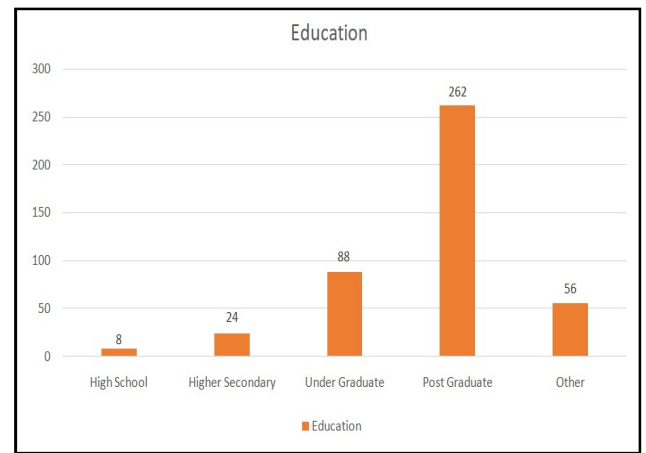
Co-relation Analysis: The correlation method has been used to fulfil the assumption of the regression. The researcher tried to find out the relationship between the variables of the study and their impact on each other. Correlation value (r) between 0 to 0.25 small 0.25 to.75 medium .60 to 1 high degree of association. The correlation table reflectsthe relation between the variables of the study in which social media was meditatingas an important variable it hasa medium to high degree positive correlation with other variables of the study like cultural promotion (0.434), tourism development(0.287), new destination development(0.200), and travel planning(0.369) and it also has medium effect correlation with trustworthy content of social media(.288). In the same way, tourism marketing has alsoa medium degree of correlation with cultural promotion development (0.500) anda positive relationship with new destination promotion (0.375) and tourism development(0.287). In the same way, culture promotion has a medium effect correlation with new destination promotion (0.613) and travel planning (0.466). New destination promotion hasa medium degree of correlation with tourism development (0.555) and social media (0.369). In this way, other variables also have a mediumand small degree of correlation with each other.

Regression Analysis: The table shows the results of the hypothesis analysis which was based on linear regression analysis in which standardised beta coefficient and p-value and R^2 show the degree of variance and the Durbin Watson test was used to check the multicollinearity which obtained value in all above models was between 1 and 3 which is acceptable as per the doctrine of statistics. In this way, model fit was tested based on the f-value and p-value in the 0.5 significance level, results indicate that all the modelswere fit in this study. As per data of this research, social media has an important (8.3%) of influenced by individual content, and social media have played a crucial(13.6%) impact on personal travel planning, 4% impact on the development of new destinations, and (18.9%) impact on cultural promotion, and a (12.8%) impact on tourist marketing. Numerous factors, including social media, had an (8.2%) impact on tourism development. Cultural promotionimpact tourism development by (29.8%) which is crucial, and tourism marketing by (15%) and new tourist destination by (30.7%). In the same way, Tourism marketing impacts Culture promotion by (25%) new destination promotion leads to cultural promotion by 37.6%.
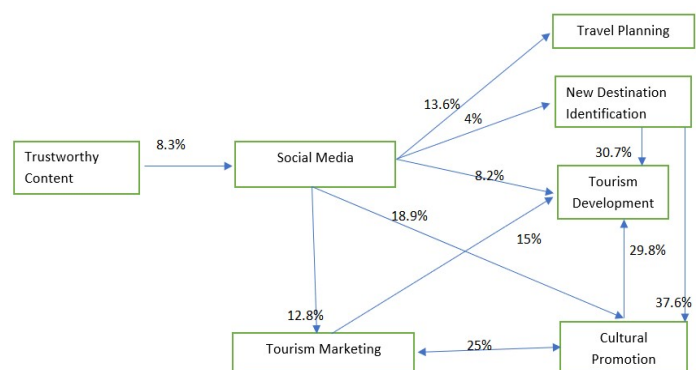
Correlations

	Socialmedia impact	Travel planning	Tourism marketing	Newdestination promotion	Culturalpromotion	Tourismdevelopment	Trustworthiness
Socialmediaimpact	1	.369[**]	.358[**]	.200[**]	.434[**]	.287[**]	.288[**]
Travelplanning		1	.328[**]	.269[**]	.466[**]	.464[**]	.231[**]
Tourism marketing			1	.375[**]	.500[**]	.387[**]	.388[**]
Newdestinationpromotion				1	.613[**]	.555[**]	.387[**]
Culturalpromotion					1	.546[**]	.607[**]
Tourismdevelopment						1	.513[**]
Trustworthiness							1

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

Hypothesis	Regression weight	Beta coefficient	R^2	F value	T value	P value	Durbin Watson
H1	C → SM	.288	.083	39.545		.000	1.883
H2	SM → TP	.369	.136	68.742		.000	1.942
H3	SM → NDI	.200	.040	18.125		.000	2.266
H4	SM → TD	.287	.082	39.172		.000	1.798
H5	SM → CP	.434	.189	101.349		.000	1.964
H6	SM → TM	.358	.128	64.197		.000	1.874
H7	NDI → TD	.555	.307	193.591		.034	2.026
H8	NDI → CP	.613	.376	262.320		.000	1.774
H9	CP → TD	.546	.298	185.041		.000	2.117
H10	CP → TM	.500	.250	144.993		.000	1.735
H11	TM → TD	.387	.150	76.930		.000	1.719

RESULT AND INTERPRETATION

In this study, the researcher tried to examine the role of social media in tourism development and promotion of culture, marketing of tourism, new destination promotion etc. Now in modern days, social media is an important and influential source if information that is responsible for the stimulation and perception of individuals, but at the same time social media is free and individuals' content sources there may be the chance of biased. To serve the objective of the study researcher obtained the data from 438 respondentin which 162 female and 276 was male, basically, respondent was between the 15 to 40 age groupand belongs from different area of residence and they are also had different educational background, in this way,the researcher tried maintaining validity homogeneity of data.The researcher found that trustworthy content on social media related to tourism hasa medium effect correlation with social media and social media by impacted by 8.3% of users' trustworthy content. In travel planning and decision of individuals impacted by social media 13.6%. Social media promote culture also in the marketing of tourism andnew destinations, social media is also responsible for tourism development, and culture was also promoted with the development of tourism.

CONCLUSION

This study, try to find out social media's impact on individual travel decision and how social media impact differentvariables like culturalpromotion, development of new destinations, and tourism development. The researcher also tried to find out the correlation between a different related variable and how they impact each other like social media content how impact travel decision, how social media promote a particular culture and culturalpromotion impact tourismetc. To fulfil the study's objectives, the researcher gathered data from 438 respondents, of whom more than 50% were men, more than 80% were graduates, and the majority were in the 20 to 30 age range. The necessary data were gathered online, and after reliability was tested using Cronbach alpha, the value obtained was sufficient for further analysis. Correlation and regression analysis was then performed to test the hypothesis, and the results show that social media is incredibly important in influencing people's travel choices and is useful for promoting culture, tourism, new destinations, etc. This study shows that social media play's vital role in tourism, so regulating authorities and other officials related to tourism may use social media in a very meaningful way. In the union budget of 2023-24 finance minister Nirmala Sita Raman allocate 2400 crore for tourism in which 1412 crore was for Swadesh darshan and the development of 50 new tourist destinations. This budget shows how the government is interested in tourism projects and what is the potential and role of tourisminthe development of the country, so social media can play an important role accomplishment of the government's objectives.

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