

Social Media Preferences and Choices when Making Travel Decisions

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ABSTRACT

Social media has proven to be an essential communication tool that spreads and has multiple effects. Social media has played an essential role in our daily lives, and it is critical to every business in some manner. Data shared on social media aids in the exchange of information and the delivery of more relevant and accurate information. In this paper, a conceptual framework is proposed for understanding "how social media plays a critical role in structuring consumer preferences and choices when making travel decisions." The research methods rely on secondary data from trustworthy sources and personal observations. The research study will look at how social media has affected consumer purchasing behavior and what other factors have an impact on the travel and tourism sector. The aim of the study is to get a deeper understanding of the significance of social media and its effects on the travel and tourist industry.

KEYWORDS: *Social Media; Consumer; Travel and Tourism; Decision Making*

INTRODUCTION

Social media has had a profound effect on the tourism industry. Customers rely on social networking sites for trip research, recommendations, and reviews of lodging, catering, and transportation establishments (Hamid et al., 2021). Trip Advisor, in particular, has had a huge effect on the industry. It attracts 50 million unique users every month, many of whom are on the lookout for trustworthy recommendations and tips from fellow travelers. The internet community trusts this kind of user-generated content more and thinks it is more real (Khan et al., 2021). Social media is a big part of the industry, with more than 800 million active users posting updates and sharing photos on Facebook and more than 200 million reviews and comments on TripAdvisor (Karim, 2019). People are surfing the internet like crazy, using anything from social sharing sites like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to user-generated review sites like Trip Advisor (Solanky & Gupta, 2021). They look to their online peers for vacation inspiration and approval. It might have used social media to plan your schedule and create the best memories by looking at other travelers' images, check-ins, ratings,

and more. All of this shows that social media enjoys a high degree of individual participation and is setting the path for the next generation of travel and tourism marketing (Hysa et al., 2021). People don't have to wait to physically participate to understand the reality of a place they intend to visit.

Every aspect of our lives has been influenced by social media, including how we consume information in every business. In the present day, social media has received much interest as a method of communication, a fundamental and dramatic channel of connection (Uysal et al., 2022). Social media is a platform that promotes trade and pleasure. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, and Messenger are some of the websites that have influenced every industry. Electronic word of mouth today has a loud voice and a vast reach thanks to the Internet's ability to reach billions of people across the world. Users of social networking sites can exchange information about products and services (Adeola et al., 2020). The user's connections will be able to see the message if it is repeated, resulting in the news

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reaching more people and attracting more traffic to the product. Consumers can communicate their needs, wants, and ideas by using social networking sites to create virtual communities, for example, WhatsApp groups or Messenger groups for sharing information (Naeem, 2019). Social media connects these customers with businesses that share their interests, needs, and values. According to a Mediakix survey from 2019, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, blogs, and Twitter are the top five social media sites for influencer marketing (Zacek, 2020). According to Statista, 313 million Indians use Facebook, 265 million use YouTube, 100 million use Instagram, and 34 million use Twitter as of 2019. As a result, it is evident that YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram are the social media platforms that Indians use the most frequently (Saima, & Khan, 2020). The use of social media by travel and tourism businesses is becoming essential rather than just a supplemental means of communication. Due to the rapid rise of influencers on many platforms, social media has changed substantially in recent years and is still used effectively by tourism businesses for promotion (Yetimoğlu & Uğurlu, 2020). From a service viewpoint, social media is now increasingly being incorporated into an organization's strategic operation. In the pre-trip, during-trip, and post-trip periods, people like discussing pleasant travel experiences (Jung et al., 2015; Dixit, 2020). Social media plays a vital role in decision-making and data collection to understand client demands in the tourism sector. Additionally, those providing information on social media websites are the passengers in their decision-making (Azeez, 2021). As a result, the tourism industry examines the comments and reviews of online communities like TripAdvisor, Trivago, etc., to better understand the interests of consumers.

Literature review

Social media in tourism

Using social media for daily communication has become routine (Luo et al., 2015). With nearly four out of five Internet users having a Facebook account, it is the most popular Social Media platform globally (GlobalWebIndex, 2014). The statistics serve as proof of the aggressive use of social media. (Kaplan et al., 2010) assert that growing experience and intensity in using virtual social networks show behavior that is more like real-world behavior. For example, people can give advice and talk to others through social media (Anderson, Knight, Pookulangara, & Josiam, 2014). The advent of online and associated technologies, particularly in major social media applications, has long been recognized as having an impact on client decision-making in business organizations (Buhalis et al., 1998). It's especially

true for tourism services and product planning and uses (Buhalis et al., 2008). MySpace came out in 2003, and Facebook in 2004. Soon after, other social networking sites came out, and the term "social media" became common. Social media are online communities where individuals may make and share their own content using various mobile apps and gadgets. In addition, social media facilitates instantaneous, global communication among its users. (Kaplan et al., 2010), (Fischer et al., 2011), (Kim et al., 2010) are only a few of the resources available for people to interact with one another, produce content, and distribute it to others. Blogs, microblogs (Twitter, etc.), social networks (Facebook, etc.), wikis, media sharing sites (Youtube, etc.), social marking and labeling (Reddit, etc.), online communities (forums, etc.), podcasting, and virtual worlds are all identified as social media platforms in this research (Second Life, etc). (Second Life, etc.). On the basis of (Tussyadiah et al., 2011), social media sites that are web-based are used to exchange user-generated material. Websites like social networking sites, video sharing platforms, photo archives, message boards (like those on Lonely Planet Thorn Tree), and video archives are examples of social media (e.g., Facebook). These social media sites accommodate numerous communication styles, from one-on-one to group discussions (Fotis et al., 2011). Gender, age, and location all play a role in how often people use social media (Albarq, 2014; Cox et al., 2009; Dionysopoulou et al., 2013). With so much social media content—also known as electronic word-of-mouth, or e-WOM—distributed across so many websites, there are opportunities for more individualized information distribution. Social media has made it easier for more people to take part because it is easy to use and has a large audience.

The advent of digital social media, user-generated content, and interactivity, according to Moscardo (2020), are three significant driving forces in Asian locations that are promoting a paradigm change in tourism futures. In response to the worldwide pandemic of the previous year, Jamal and Budke (2020) emphasized this tendency. The growing usage of social media and the Internet, in general, is changing how people go about their daily lives and make decisions. Nowadays, a lot of individuals acquire their information from many websites, including social networking sites like blogs. Social media platforms are frequently used by both consumers and businesses to spread information, engage with a worldwide audience, and exercise influence. Social media is a regular information source for the tourism sector. Some people think that

social media usage and skills have "spilled over" into the travel and tourism sector (Tamsang et al., 2020).

Travel 2.0

The term "Travel 2.0" describes the way that technological advancements, especially those in the field of information and communication technology, have altered the travel and tourism sector. Philip Wolf explains that this term comes from a Web 2.0 tool used in the travel industry (Miguéns et al., 2008.). The core tenet of the Travel 2.0 concept is that the tourism industry is, and will continue to face, "new consumers," i.e. customers with higher agency and information literacy, and that it affords easy access to a wide range of experiences that other customers have had. According to O'Connor (2010), Due to peer-to-peer data sharing, the advent of social media has contributed to the broad acceptance of push marketing. The tourism industry has undergone an archetype shift as an outcome of this. "Web 2.0" characterizes a platform continually complimented by many people on the Internet as participatory and collaborative, rather than individual people no longer generating and posting material (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

Consumer Behavior

The consumer is commonly referred to as a tourist in the tourism industry. Taylor (2001) defines a tourist as someone who requires tourist products and services to satisfy his or her diverse needs, desires, and expectations. The term "consumer behavior" refers to the study of where, when, why, and what goods and services consumers purchase (Kotler and Keller, 2011). The term "consumer behavior" refers to more than simply what people buy; it also includes their thoughts, feelings, and actions in relation to those purchases (Kardes et al., 2010). Consumer behavior also includes non-purchasing relativities including those that occur before and after a purchase (Karalar, 2006). There are several models of consumer behavior presented in the literature. However, the Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (EKB) model has emerged as a popular method for studying customer behavior (Hawkins and Mothersbaugh, 2010). "Consumer actions that precede, decide, and follow the decision-making process for the acquisition of need-satisfying things, ideas, or services" are one way to define consumer choice (Du Plessis et al., 1991). The economic model (consumers follow the principle of maximum utility and spend the minimum amount for maximum gains), the psychological model (based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where individuals are motivated by their strongest needs), the Pavlovian learning model (behavior caused by practice, learning, and

experience), and the sociological model (behavior caused by practice learning, and experience) are the simplest consumer models (buying influenced by society or social norms).

Decision-Making Process of Tourists

According to Milano et al. (2011), there are three stages in developing tourist clients' trip experiences on social media platforms: pre-travel, during-travel, and post-travel. Clients may employ social media during these stages to implore questions regarding destinations they wish to go to and read previous customers' comments. As a result, social media has grown into an important way for tourists to talk to each other and get advice. (Ayeh et al., 2013) Several online communities, like Igo, virtual tourists, autonomous travelers, Ugo, Trip Advisor, WAYN, and others, have entirely stimulated discourse about travel and tourism. As many visitors and tourists join cutting-edge social networking sites to hunt for vacation and travel information, social media influences consumer behavior. There has been a lot of argument and discussion about the all-encompassing definition of social media as it has expanded and merged with the growth of new media (Lee 2013). Social media can act as "a set of applications that run on the Internet Web 2.0 and enable the exchange of information between users" (ColomoPalacios et al., 2013). Community projects, wikis, and blogs that let you interact with them are part of Web 2.0. They let you build user networks and share ideas, information, and knowledge (Constantinides, 2014). According to a TripAdvisor survey from 2015, 42 percent of travelers worldwide plan or book their trips on their smartphones. A new branch of digital marketing known as "Social Media Influencer Marketing" has evolved as social media fame has grown. "Social media" and "Web 2.0" have been used interchangeably. However, these two words are similar but not identical, and researchers' dispute how they should be used (Fotis 2015). Most customer engagement lets people connect by sharing information, experiences, opinions, and ideas about products and services (Dwitya & Briandana, 2017).

Additionally, the widespread use of travelers' information-seeking and decision-making processes has been significantly impacted by smartphones and mobile Internet access, and the mobile Internet is essential for the entire travel experience. Modern technology's on-demand information availability has raised the chance that travelers will postpone making many decisions they would have made prior to departure until the on-site portion of their trip. The large volume of information published on social media platforms makes trip preparation more

effective and influences the choices made when making travel arrangements (Rahman *et al.*, 2021).

Pre-trip

The decision to travel is frequently made quickly after potential travelers start gathering information and reviews in various formats. According to a study, social media platforms generally do play a big role in travel planning (Hua *et al.*, 2017). Because they are significant sources of pertinent information and because they give access to other travelers' publicly available online experiences, social media platforms are therefore becoming more and more significant for trip preparation. The more attention potential e-tourists pay to commercial content that best meets their demands, the more inclined they are to travel. Travel enthusiasts may often find inspiration from the suggestions of family and friends who have read reviews of the place or thing they are interested in, generally found on websites and blogs devoted to the theme. A consumer only chooses the good or service that best suits his or her needs after carefully assessing all of the available possibilities. Following this decision, all subsequent preparations for the actual purchase or reservation are made.

During-Trip

During this stage, tourists often enjoy their vacation as well as any associated activities like eating, sleeping, and viewing tourist attractions, as well as purchasing travel-related goods. Additionally, it's a time when travelers start looking for information on other places to visit and ways to get around a particular area (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In fact, at this point, visitors start looking for more things to do and sites to visit (Kaur, 2017). When a traveler reaches his or her destination, together with the events that are witnessed while sensing something novel, that is when the main travel experience happens.

Post-trip

Social media use in connection with vacation travel is not limited to the time frame in which those events or activities occur. According to research, after their visits, over half of the tourists used social media sites for travel-related activities. The first reason is that social media sites allow post-consumption reviews. Second, social media platforms encourage self-expression activities, and third, those platforms enable post-trip interaction among trip participants (Khan and Jan 2015). It was imagined a short time ago that people would utilize a variety of social networking sites to discuss and share details about their journeys and activities. Today's consumers still heavily rely on other travelers' experiences as they make travel decisions, demonstrating the power of

this (Manap & Adzharudin, 2013). The post-trip phase is also utilized to determine how satisfied travelers were with their travels. Travelers who want to share their experiences can do this by using 2.0 websites to express their views and opinions about a certain place or service that they used.

Objectives of the study

1. To study social media's influence on the travel industry.
2. To study Social Media's influence on Consumers.
3. To study the effects of using social media for promoting the tourism industry.
4. To study the Government of India's initiatives in the travel industry.

Research Methodology

The research methods rely on secondary data from trustworthy sources and personal observations. Books, published government studies, journal articles, and newspaper articles provide a wealth of secondary data. Online sources and social websites were investigated in-depth to comprehend the significance of social media in the travel industry and its influence. I carefully examined the publications to comprehend their results and recommendations, as well as the references listed in the articles. The research started with understanding social media's influence on the tourism industry and its consumers. After that, find out about the government's initiatives in the tourism industry. A relationship was discovered through an earlier study, which aided our analysis and decision-making.

Influence of Social Media in the Travel Industry

People's pre-trip holiday research is a clear indicator of the influence of social media on tourism. Travelers are now urged to post about their experiences on social media before, during, and after their trip. Social media has thereby changed how people decide. People are more likely to trust a tourism agency when they read and hear from tourists. With the increased accessibility of social media, visitors will be able to influence other travelers with their thoughts and experiences. Knowing how to use social media is second nature in today's age; most of us spend a substantial amount of time on sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and other similar sites. Internet usage has progressed to a deeper level. It is no longer simply for emailing or searching for a specific item. It is also for staying updated and communicating with others through chats, video sharing, chatting, image sharing, status updates, etc. The travel and tourism industry now relies heavily on social media; in April 2022, Booking.com was ranked first as the most frequented travel and tourism website. The average time users spend on the website is 8 minutes, and they

view 8.45 pages on average every visit. Tripadvisor.com and Airbnb.com are 2nd and 3rd on the list, and Expedia.com and Uber.com are 4th and 5th (<https://www.similarweb.com/top-websites/category/travel-and-tourism>). Social media has helped the tourism industry and agencies because it gives people a lot of information about trips, prices, and services that look good and are well done.

Furthermore, these companies gain from their clients by providing sufficient information about tourist locations via social media, since they view their clients as vital players in marketing tourism. Social media sites have helped the travel business evolve. India had 448.0 million active users on social media in January 2021. India saw a +78 million (+21%) increase in social media users between 2020 and 2021. Social media users in India made up 32.3% of the country's population as of January 2021. (www.datareportal.com).

Influence of Social Media on Consumers

Social media has gained popularity as a means of communication. Tourists and organizations use social media to communicate with one another all over the world. Consumers consume a lot of information since they have many "connections" on social networks. This data becomes a source of influence over consumers' purchase decisions. Social media's reach and influence are growing. Here's data to prove it: 54 percent of social browsers utilize social media to do product and service research (Global Web Index, 2018).

Social media plays a significant role when travelers make travel decisions. The information and comments available online influence the preparation stage of a traveler's journey, leading to further changes in decisions. According to a Google survey, 84 percent of leisure travelers plan their trips on the Internet (Torres, 2010). Due to the increased popularity of websites that feature user-generated information from travelers, several academics have focused on the prominent role of using social media for research during the trip-planning process (Cox *et al.*, 2011; Tussyadiah, Park, and Fesenmaier, 2011; Yoo and Gretzel, 2010; Huang *et al.*, 2010). According to Global Web Index 2020, 54% of social media customers use the platform to investigate products, and 71% are much more likely to buy services and products after listening to them on social media. The consumer journey has become both shorter and more complex. Thanks to social media, users can now more efficiently do product and service research. For example, when a buyer searches for a product or service on Instagram, they can quickly search for hashtags to read other reviews or decide

whether to purchase. Tourists spend more time investigating and consulting more review sites as a result of this.

29 % of social media customers are much more likely to make a purchase on an identical day than those who make use of social media. When they discover services or products they want, they click on the hyperlink and purchase them right away: there's no time to wait. Additionally, the same poll found that users who aren't active on social media are four times more likely to spend more money on goods (Deloitte Report 2020).

Social Media V/s Traditional Media

According to Statista, 90% of online users worldwide have social media profiles. Most of this large crowd can be effectively used to spread your message with the right strategy. This is especially true for businesses that provide online services. The influence of relationships with the target audience is much deeper and more complex thanks to the Internet and the continually growing number of social media platforms. Social media and traditional media primarily differ in that social media encourages two-way vocal conversation, whereas traditional media solely encourages one-way communication. The transformation to social websites and websites has been accelerated by the use of social media, which has replaced traditional methods. Social media and conventional media differ due to user-generated content and user participation. Information can be shared easily and to a large audience through social media. Traditional media, one-way communication, and social media allow people to participate and share their thoughts and experiences regarding a specific event or location. Social media facilitates the formation of communities of like-minded people who are free to communicate their perspectives, which can be beneficial to other visitors. The rise in internet users has had an enormous influence on businesses.

Social Media

The term "social media" describes websites and applications that let users generate and share content while also interacting with one another on social networks. Compared to digital media, social media offers several unique features. This includes communication, information exchange, and teamwork. Social media is used by many people to connect with friends and family, while others use it to have conversations and communicate with members of other communities. Typically, we think of websites like Facebook and Twitter when we hear the word "social media." However, the term "social media" can be used to describe a variety of different platforms, such as blogging and publishing tools like Tumblr

and WordPress, media-sharing apps like Snapchat, Instagram, and YouTube, community discussion boards like Quora and Reddit, and bookmarking and content curating tools like Flipboard and YouTube.

Traditional Media

Before the development of digital media, all mass communication channels were considered traditional. As a result, conventional media also include newspapers, magazines, books, radio, and television. The audience uses traditional media to get messages, but the media does not directly receive public feedback; there is just one-way contact. If you're using traditional media to market or advertise your products or services, the sales strategies you can use include television, radio, banners, print, direct mail, door-to-door sales, billboards, etc. Many different firms have used these methods for many years with great success. Even now, effective sales can be produced by marketing techniques like print and television advertising. After the advent of digital media, the usage of traditional media for marketing slightly dropped.

Effect of Social Media to Promote Tourism Industry

Evaluating social media's contribution to the growth and promotion of the travel and tourism industry is challenging. It has contributed massively to the promotion of global selection and has made a significant contribution to the preservation of our natural and cultural heritage. The Ministry of Tourism has developed a number of programs to market famous destination points for travelers in India. The slogan "Incredible India" (Times News Network) was approved by the government in 2005. Incredible India was created by the Indian government in order to preserve India's diversity and rich cultural heritage. It's a worldwide tourism marketing campaign, but it's a very engaging message that people remember when they go on vacation to exotic locations. It safeguards the environment and mitigates the harmful social consequences of tourism. It provides more economic advantages to people and increases the well-being of host communities. Through more meaningful interactions, it creates more delightful experiences for travelers.

Government of India's initiatives in the travel industry

In India, the tourism and hospitality industries have grown to rank among the most significant of the nation's growth drivers. The travel industry in India has a lot of potential thanks to the country's rich social and historical heritage, natural diversity, geology, and homegrown quality. In India, like in other countries, the travel sector is a vital component

of international trade. Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, the forex market traded at a CAGR of 7% from 2016 to 2019 but decreased in 2020. As per the World Travel and Tourism Council, India was placed 10th out of 185 nations in terms of the contribution made by the travel and tourism sector to the global GDP in 2019. Tourism and travel industries contributed \$6.8% of GDP (\$143 billion) in 2019.

It will assist in reviving the travel industry in India. The Ministry of Tourism signed a MoU and the Indian Railways Catering Tourism Corporation in November 2021 to help grow the tourism and hospitality industries.

The government has also signed a memorandum of understanding with Ease My Trip, Cleartrip, Yatra.com, Make My Trip, and Goibibo. The government of India scheduled a meeting in November 2021 to promote domestic film tourism and identify a local place as a favored filming location. This approach attempts to boost tourism and create jobs in the country. Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to open Kushinagar International Airport in Uttar Pradesh in October 2021 so that more people will visit.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused havoc in the tourism industry. In September 2021, India's Ministry of Tourism announced intentions to open its borders to foreign visitors, and an Orthodox protocol is currently being discussed. According to prior pledges, the first 500,000 international tourists would be offered a free visa.

In September 2021, the government officially launched the NIDHI 2.0 (National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry) program. The software maintains a database of companies in the hospitality sector, including lodging facilities, tour operators, and travel agents. NIDHI 2.0 encourages all hotels to register on the platform, promoting tourism industry digitalization. The ministry prepared a "National Strategy and Roadmap for Health and Wellness Tourism" plan in July 2021, which comprised papers from numerous federal ministries, state and municipal governments, and corporate partners. We requested detailed recommendations and feedback.

In May 2021, Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of State for Tourism and Culture, attended the G20 Tourism Ministers' Meeting and provided policy guidance to work with the Member States to protect tourism and employment and support sustainability and resilience. We have taken the initiative to develop and formulate a recovery plan for travel and tourism. The government plans to use the lighthouses of India to

promote tourism in India. Identified seventy-one lighthouses for development as a tourist attraction.

The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) operates several tourist trains in Bharat Darshan to take people on various pilgrimages. On November 4, 2020, Minister of Tourism and Culture Prahalad Singh Patel opened the "Tourism Promotion Center," which will be built as part of the "Development of Guruvayur, Kerala" project under PRASHAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive).

Under the PRASHAD program, the Indian government has set aside Rs 207.55 (the US \$ 29.7 million) in the 2020–21 budget for tourism route development. On November 28, 2020, the Ministry of Tourism, Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series "12 Months of Adventure Trip" will show India as a place for adventure tourism.

The SAATHI (System for Assessment, Awareness, and Training for the Hospitality Industry) project was initiated in October 2020 by the Ministry of Tourism in association with the Indian Quality Council. (QCI). The COVID-19 criteria and standard operating procedures are effectively executed through the use of this program, which guarantees the safe running of hotels, restaurants, and other types of companies.

In October 2018, the "Statue of Unity" honoring Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was dedicated. At 182 meters, it surpasses any other statue in height. It helps to promote tourism and put the area on the map. The 2020–21 Indian federal budget includes \$ 171.7 million for the construction of tourism routes under Swadesh Darshan in eight states in the country's northeast.

In October of 2021, the Government of Tripura entered into a public-private partnership with Infovalley Educational & Research Pvt. Ltd. In addition to that, the State Institute of Hotel Administration is under our supervision (SIHM). Young people will be given more opportunities thanks to the State Initiative for Hospitality Management (SIHM), which is part of the government's plan to improve state hotels and hospitality management. In July 2021, as part of the Vythiry of Wayanad, the state government of Kerala plans to hold a vaccination campaign for everyone who works in the tourism and hospitality industries.

The Tirvulluval monument in Kanyakumari would receive new lighting as part of an integrated, massive tourism venture that the Tamil Nadu State Government planned to construct in July 2021. It also makes new tourist laws, adds more hotels, resorts, and conference centers, and strengthens the

contributions of both the public and private sectors to the tourism industry.

India has long regarded the Middle East as one of its primary target markets. Therefore, it was only right that India showcased its wide range of tourism-related opportunities and products at the Arabian Travel Market in Dubai in 2022. The Tourism Ministry also launched the "NamasteIndia" campaign to encourage visitors from other nations to visit India during this significant anniversary. At the event, a number of Indian state governments promoted their popular tourist sites. India advertised itself as a place where travelers could do a lot of different things, like spirituality, culture, adventure, meditation, fitness, and a lot more.

The tourism ministry has done a great job of marketing various tourist attractions and goods. The potential for MICE, film tourism, eco-tourism, health tourism, luxurious tourism, wildlife tourism, and adventure tourism has received particular attention. The country's tourism and hospitality sectors are anticipated to generate 50.9 billion dollars by 2028, while the Indian travel industry is anticipated to grow to 125 billion dollars by FY27, from a projected 75 billion dollars in FY20.

Results and Discussions

The advent of social media and the spread of the Internet has contributed to the connectedness of travelers through various social media platforms through forums, ratings, reviews, and comments on social networking networks. Because of the spread of various sorts of social media, tourists can make better decisions and choices. Tourists favor a personal approach to ads and social media information from friends and family. The information shared on social media is really useful when planning a vacation. The government has taken several initiatives to boost the tourism industry, creating positive results. The information shared through social media affects the decision-making processes of potential customers. Social media is also a creative platform for the promotion of the travel industry.

Conclusion

This study provides recommendations to tourism companies and agents to keep innovating, particularly with regard to the use of digital media. These recommendations include a promotional strategy utilizing user-generated content and an understanding of what content consumers like, to be more active and innovative in choosing and deciding on a journey rather than simply using online advertisements. Because social media exists, users are compelled to compete with one another in order to gain influence over others. The investigation extended to our

understanding of how social media influences traveler decision-making and lowers risk since the traveler feels confident in the destination because of their research during the stages of trip decision-making. In comparison to people who gathered information from other sources, social media users said decision-making was more accessible and they liked the process. Social media is clearly being utilized to influence tourists' small-scale decisions when visiting destinations that use it. Social media does not always influence where visitors go, and they are most likely to matter when they are making complex judgments about a new destination. The effort of social media is on promoting or showing how it is easy to make decisions and organize a trip because there is a general mistrust of places that promote themselves. It makes it easier for recent visitors to post on social media to spread the word about their experiences (Bigne *et al.*, 2019; McCreary *et al.*, 2019; Villamediana *et al.*, 2019), and most importantly, to share the steps they took to plan their trips. In addition, there is plenty of scope as more campaigns, government initiatives, and marketing take place through social media, which will boost the tourism sector. After reading the final comments on social media, consumers now favor social media as a useful source for booking their vacation packages. Without a doubt, social media is a very powerful marketing tool for the travel industry, helping to promote destinations, reach the target audience, and communicate with users. However, in order to minimize any negative effects, it is crucial to avoid posting any sensitive information about your potential or existing customers. This study is evaluated based on results about how social media affects traveler decision-making and how the industry uses it. In the future, quantitative methods may be used to examine how social media affects the potential for tourism marketing. It's accompanied by quantitative research in the form of structured questionnaire surveys that look at how different social media platforms affect tourism.

Future Research Directions

Future studies will be backed by quantitative research in the form of questionnaire surveys to gain insight into the impact of social media tourist marketing on consumer decision-making. This study offers some preliminary insights, and we are hoping that social media may be valuable for many tourism firms and will be an intriguing field of study and research for academics concerned with the issue. This study focused on the possible implications of social media platforms on the customer decision-making process while purchasing any tourist and hospitality service, particularly hotel rooms, airline tickets, and

automobile rentals. The model developed in this study might be evaluated by comparing the social media usage and travel decisions of individuals from various civilizations and/or nations. The implications of social interactions on social media and their effect on consumer purchasing behavior might be comprehended through the aforementioned additional and more comprehensive research. Since this study's sample size is rather limited, more research should be undertaken with larger, more representative groups. It is common knowledge that social media will continue to touch many facets of our lives, and this research gives only a little glimpse into this significant phenomenon.

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ACTIVE INTERNET USER IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS

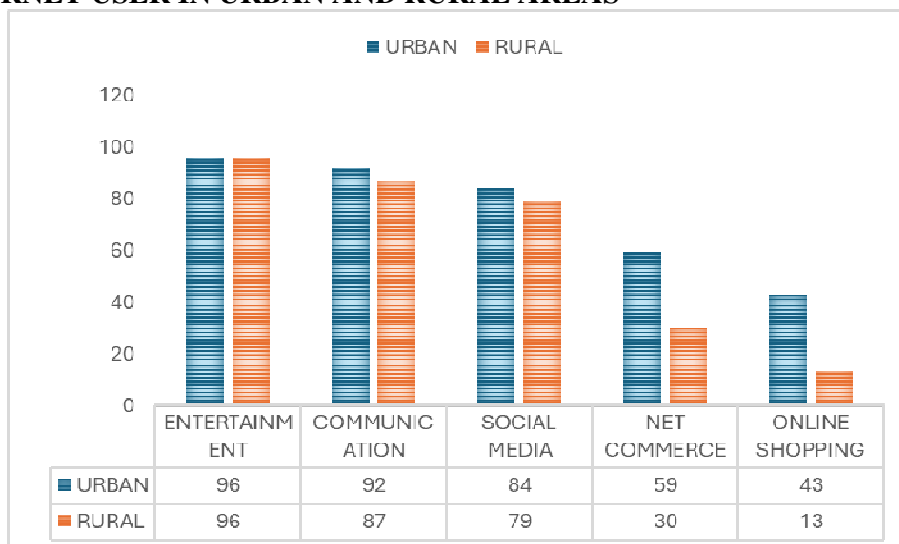


Figure: 1 Source: KANTAR ICUBE 2020, ACTIVE INTERNET USERS IN INDIA

TRIP DECISION-MAKING STAGES

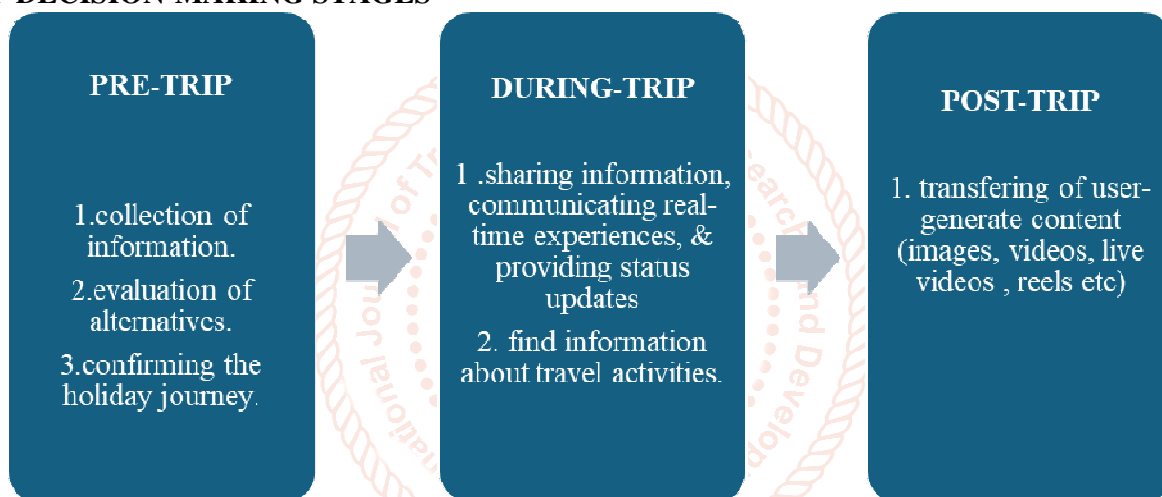


Figure: 2 Source: In the planning stages of a vacation, social networking platforms are employed (Matiki et al., 2017)

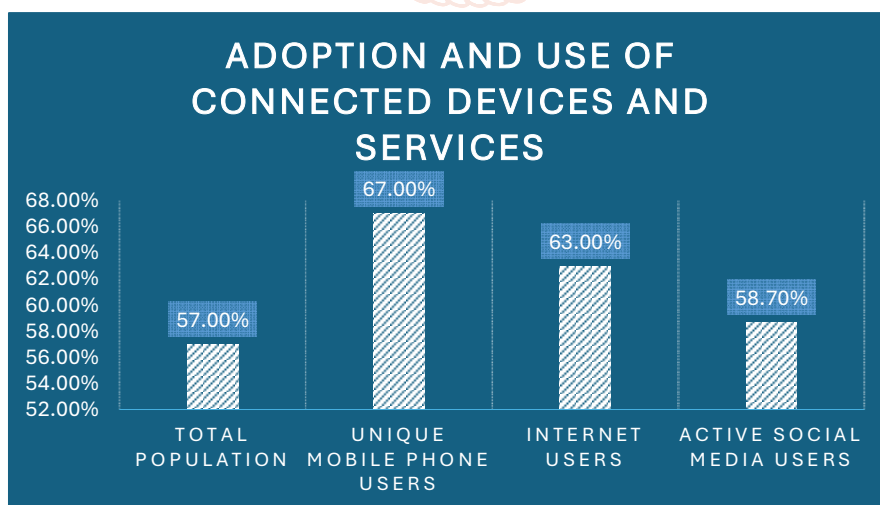


Figure: 3 Sources: ESSENTIAL DIGITAL HEADLINES (APRIL 2022), GOVERNMENT BODIES, UNITED NATIONS, US CENSUS BUREAU

Monthly estimate of foreign exchange earnings (FEE) from Indian tourism from 2018 to 2020

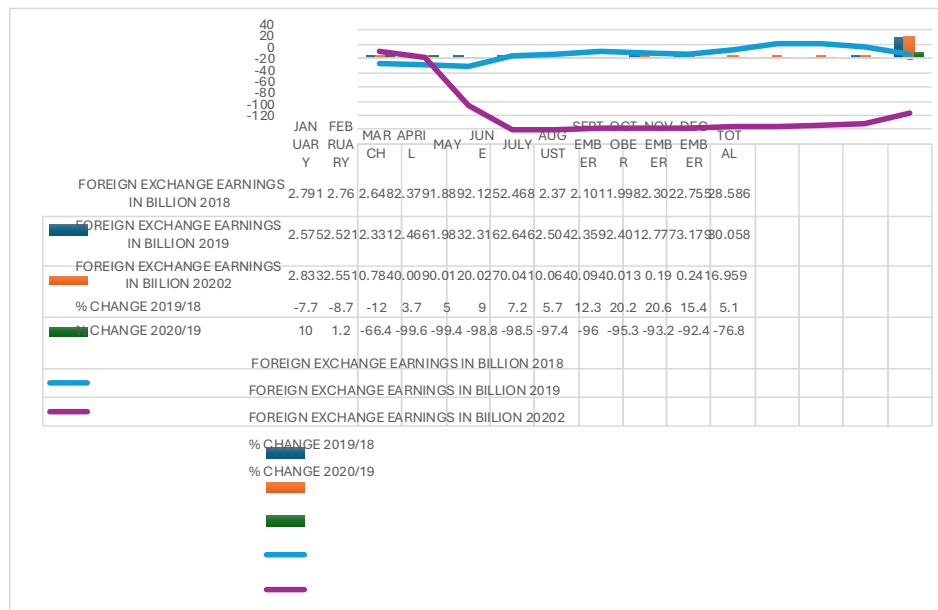


Figure: 4 Source: Tourism Departments of Tourism of State/ Union Territory

From 2001 to 2020 Domestic tourist visits to all Indian states / UT in terms of number.

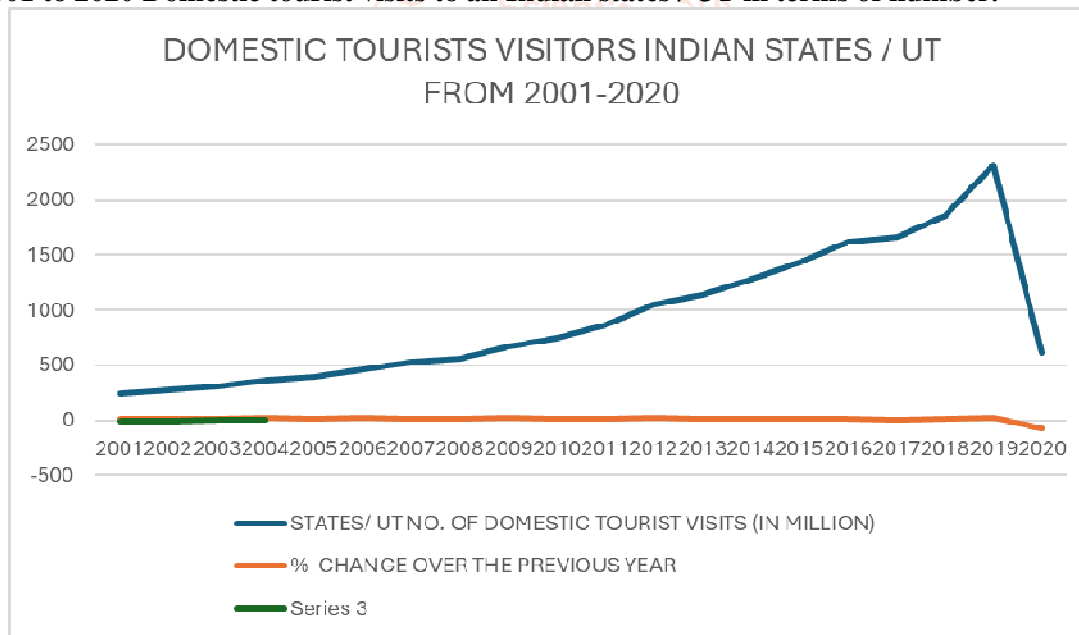


Figure: 5 Source: Tourism Departments of Tourism of State/ Union Territory

States/UTs of top 10 in 2020 of India in Number of outside Traveler Visits

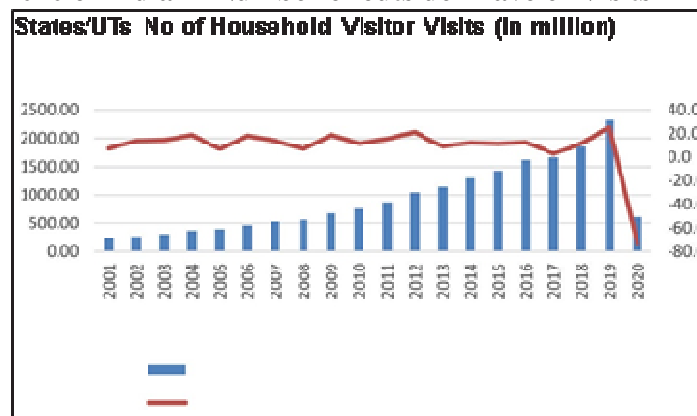


Figure: 6 Source: Tourism Departments of Tourism of State/ Union Territory

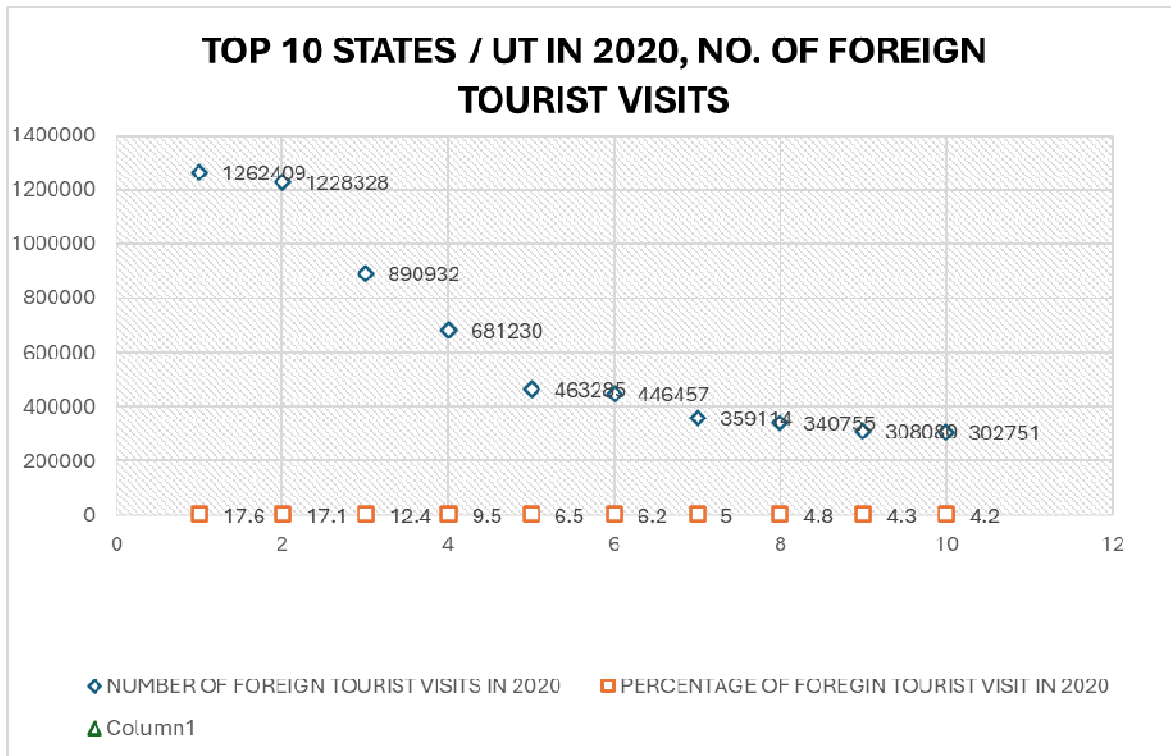


Figure: 7 Source: Tourism Departments of Tourism of State/ Union Territory

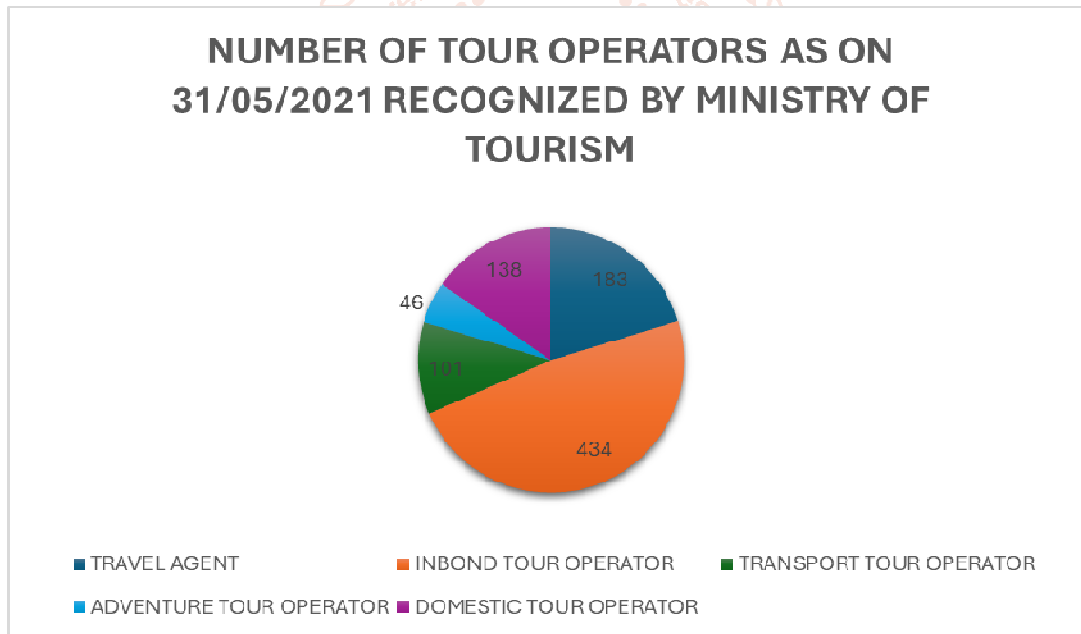


Figure: 8 Source: Tourism Departments of Tourism of State/ Union Territory

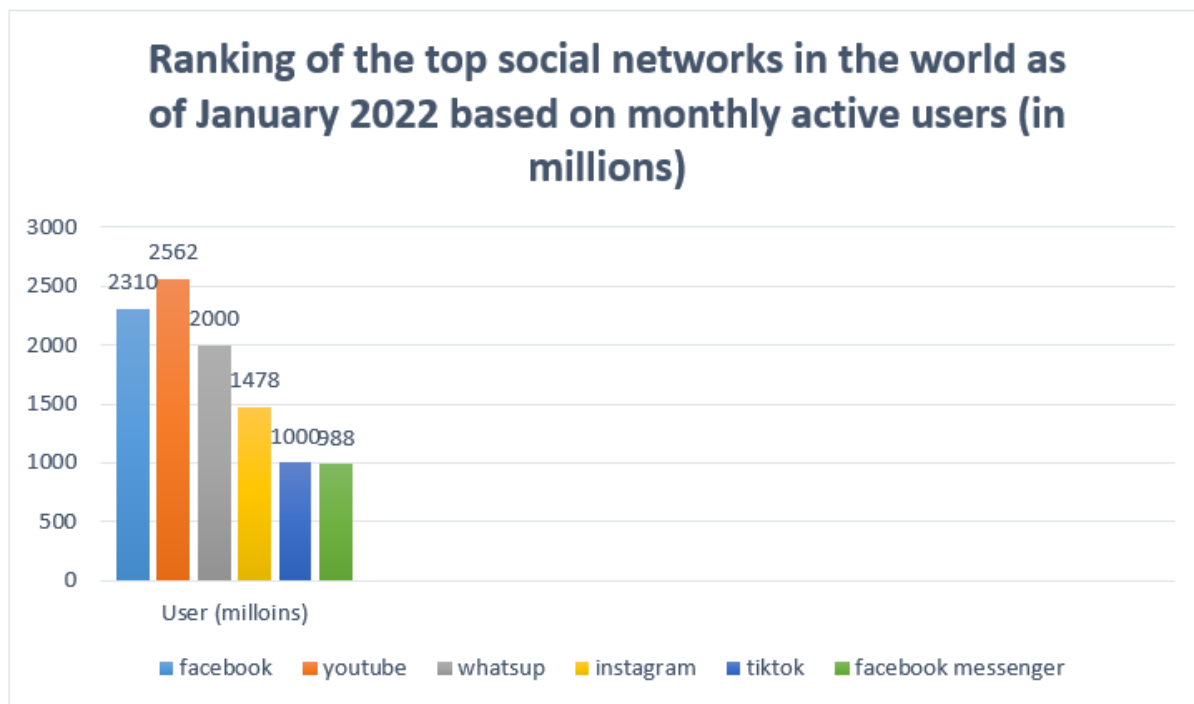


Figure: 9 Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>

Inbound Tourism: Arrival of Foreign Tourists (FTA), Arrival of Non-Resident Indians (NRI), and Arrival of International Tourists (ITA) 2001-2020

Year	India's FTA (million)	Rate of altering from the past year (%)	Entry of NRI in India	Rate of altering from the past year (%)	Entry of universal tourists to India (million units)	Rate of altering from the past year (%)
2001	2.54	-4.2	-	-	-	-
2002	2.38	-6.0	-	-	-	-
2003	2.73	14.3	-	-	-	-
2004	3.46	26.8	-	-	-	-
2005	3.92	13.3	-	-	-	-
2006	4.45	13.5	-	-	-	-
2007	5.08	14.3	-	-	-	-
2008	5.28	4.0	-	-	-	-
2009	5.17	-2.2	-	-	-	-
2010	5.78	11.8	-	-	-	-
2011	6.31	9.2	-	-	-	-
2012	6.58	4.3	-	-	-	-
2013	6.97	5.9	-	-	-	-
2014	7.68	10.2	5.43	13.11	-	-
2015	8.03	4.5	5.74	5.7	13.76	5.0
2016	8.80	9.7	6.22	8.5	15.03	9.2
2017	10.04	14.0	6.77	8.8	16.81	11.8
2018	10.56	5.2	6.87	1.4	17.42	3.7
2019	10.93	3.5	6.98	1.7	17.91	2.8
2020	2.74	-74.9	3.59	-48.6	6.33	-64.7

Table: 1 Source: Tourism Departments of Tourism of State/ Union Territory

Major Airports terminal 2019-202

S. No.	Airports Name	Year 2019	Contribution %age	Year 2020, JAN TO MAR	contribution in %age
1	Airport of Delhi	1230400	42.0	304599	36.4
2	Airport of Mumbai	484694	16.6	130717	15.6
3	Airport of Bangalore	217549	7.4	50499	6.0
4	Airport of Chennai	208155	7.1	57102	6.8
5	Airport of Dabolim	171226	5.8	97533	11.6
6	Airport of Cochin	105197	3.6	33831	4.0
7	Airport of Hyderabad	83207	2.8	19109	2.3
8	Airport of Kolkata	81983	2.8	22757	2.7
9	Airport of Tiruchirapalli	55825	1.9	16960	2.0
10	Airport of Ahmadabad	38930	1.3	13912	1.7
	Others	251137	8.6	90702	10.8
	Total	2928303	100.0	837721	100.0

Table: 2 Source: Tourism Departments of Tourism of State/ Union Territory