

A Study on Social Media's Impact on Travellers' Choice of Destination

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Abstract — Travel and tourism ranks among the most promising industries globally, and information plays a critical role in this field. Nowadays, the manner in which travellers use this information during their travel decision-making process has evolved. The extensive advancement of Information and Communication Technology, particularly within the tourism sector, is one of the factors that has driven this change. Social media are engaging communication platforms typically utilized for community-driven contributions, content sharing, interactions, and cooperation among individuals. Notable social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Wikipedia, LinkedIn, and others. These social media outlets act as sources of information and impact decision-making processes. Experiences from travel, along with photos, videos, and other media shared on social platforms, can impact future tourists when choosing their destinations. This research aimed to explore how social media influences the decision-making of tourists. Data were gathered from 167 participants utilizing a judgmental sampling method. The gathered data were examined through principal component analysis, resulting in the reduction of 15 variables to two factors (social media information regarding the destination and social media word-of-mouth). Additionally, the level of impact of the identified factors on tourists' choices for destination selection was assessed through regression analysis, indicating that these two factors account for 52.2% of the data variance.

Keywords — Travellers' Destination, Social Media, Word-Of-Mouth, Component Analysis.

1. Introduction

Due to the evolution of technology infrastructure and the extensive availability of the internet, consumer behavior has changed significantly. In recent times, individuals turn to the internet to assist them in making various decisions. Social media consists of a collection of online communication channels used for community-based input, interaction, content sharing, and collaboration.

Social media is increasingly becoming a fundamental aspect of daily life. Social media has gained traction in recent years due to its capacity to share photos/videos, opinions, events, etc., in real-time. Social media provides its subscribers the chance to connect with new individuals, join groups that align with their interests, develop professional networks, among others. The use of social media as an information source is rising swiftly. Individuals look for information on social media to identify options, assess choices, and reach decisions.

The current study aims to investigate the influence of social media on the decision-making process regarding tourist destination selection. Social media enables every user to function as a communication vehicle. As individuals share their travel-related experiences, photos, videos, and other information on their social media accounts, these can act as stimuli for others within their network. Additionally, the entire tourism industry can benefit from social media to advertise their services. Various tourist destination authorities can enhance their visibility, even on an international level. The findings of

this study will assist destination businesses in gaining a better understanding of their prospects concerning the influence of social media factors.

2. Objective of the Study

- To determine the elements of social media that affect tourists' choices when selecting a destination.
- To examine the extent level of encouragement twisted by these elements.

3. Review of Literature

Souza and Machado [2017] investigated the role of social media at various stages of trip planning. Their results indicated that travellers rely on social media throughout all phases of trip planning as a trustworthy source of information.

Sahin and Sengun [2015] explored the significance of social media in tourism marketing. Their results indicated that social media can influence the tourism sector in both beneficial and harmful ways, with the younger generation being heavily influenced by content shared by others on social media.

Carnoy [2017] pointed out that social media has profoundly altered how travel companies interact with their potential customers. They identified that social media has changed tourism marketing in five specific ways: travel research, social sharing, enhanced customer service, interactive travel agencies, and modified tourist behavior.

Olenski [2014] noted that 20% of leisure travellers rely on social media platforms to assist in their travel planning and destination choices. The research also discovered a significant impact of social media on our daily decision-making, including choices related to travel and tourism.

Dwityas and Briandana [2017] similarly found that social media play a crucial role as an information source in travellers' decision-making processes, and this information aids travellers at every stage of their decision-making journey.

Li [2016] asserted that tourists who intend to travel to foreign countries are more likely to utilize social media in tour planning. He also noted that tourists use social media not just for information but also for recommendations and reviews regarding travel destinations.

Minazzi [2014] proposes that the preparation for travel arises from an internal desire to acquire new experiences by visiting a specific place. Importantly, this internal desire may be triggered by internal or external stimuli, or both. Therefore emphasizes that visitors concentrate on fulfilling such needs by seeking out a destination that has a high potential to satisfy these desires. In this regard, social media indeed plays a crucial role in assisting travellers in identifying tourist goods and/or services that can fulfill these needs. Multiple aspects of social media, such as trustworthiness, reliability, and dependability, were found to be significant in tourists' decision-making processes.

Munar and Jacobsen [2013] found that tourists display a high level of trust toward travel-related review websites. Beyond trustworthiness, other dimensions of the impact of social media on tourism that researchers and scholars have examined in the past include credibility or reliability. In this context, one of the researchers' concerns revolves around whether travel consumers perceive social media as a credible and reliable resource for travel research and planning

Uysal, et al [2012] observed that a majority of travellers consider social media to be a dependable source for offering various information that could assist them in searching for and organizing their travels. This is especially true given that, in many instances, the content accessed through social media accurately reflects the current situation of the destination(s) that travellers are interested in. In addition, social media users can effortlessly discover essential information regarding their intended destination through social media platforms.

4. Methodology of the Study

This research primarily relies on primary data gathered through a structured questionnaire. The survey was carried

out via personal interviews and an online survey (utilizing Google Forms). A judgmental sampling technique was utilized, and participants were chosen from various tourism locations (for personal interviews) as well as travel-related blogs and social media groups/pages (for the online survey). Data was gathered from 167 participants who travelled regularly.

The data collection occurred between July 15, 2019, and August 10, 2019. Descriptive statistics were employed to examine the demographic profile of the participants. Principal Component Analysis was used to determine the social media factors that affect tourists' destination selection decisions, while regression analysis was conducted to forecast the impact of those identified factors on tourist decision-making. SPSS-24 was utilized for data analysis.

5. Data Analysis and Findings

Essentially, demographic information is data that has been statistically gathered regarding the attributes of a population. Table 1 of the study's sample size is 167, with a majority being male. Additionally, the majority of respondents belong to the age range of 18-30 years, and roughly 80% of them are students.

5.1 Principal Component Analysis

To conduct Principal Component Analysis (PCA), the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test for sampling adequacy is essential. The KMO test assesses the appropriateness of the collected data for performing factor analysis. The subsequent Table-2 illustrates the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity.

Table-2: KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.931
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1467.002
	df	105
	Sig./ p-value	0.000

This table displays two tests that identify the appropriateness of gathered data for structure detection. The KMO values vary from 0 to 1, and a general guideline suggests that KMO values between 0. 8 and 1 indicate the sample is suitable.

Based on Table-2, we can infer that the gathered data is suitable for performing PCA. Bartlett's test of sphericity serves as another measure to assess the strength of the relationships among variables. This test evaluates the null

hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. Table-2 indicates that the p-value for Bartlett's test of sphericity is 0.000, which is below 0.05.

Table-3: Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Social media offers insights into 'emerging travel locations.'	1	0.63
Reviews of destinations by others on social media assist me in choosing a location.	1	0.73
'Comment' and 'Reply' on social media offer valuable insights.	1	0.52
'Videos' and "pictures "posted on social media motivate me to choose a destination.	1	0.70
The information on social media about tourism appears trustworthy to me.	1	0.50
Social media assists me in collecting information related to tourism expenses.	1	0.59
Concerns related to safety and security for tourist destinations can be detected through social media.	1	0.58
Social media can be useful for discovering information about restaurants and dining options.	1	0.54
Information regarding accommodation options can be sourced from social media.	1	0.66
Social media offers insights into transportation infrastructure.	1	0.73
Social media assists me in choosing the ideal time to visit.	1	0.64
Social media offers insight into culture and heritage.	1	0.58

Table-3 displays the communalities prior to and following extraction. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is based on the fundamental assumption that all variance is shared, meaning that prior to extraction, all communalities equal 1. The extraction column represents the shared variance in the data structure. Extraction communalities are assessments of the variance in each variable attributed to the factors in the factor solution. Communality values greater than 0.5 should be taken into account for additional analysis. Therefore, based on Table-3, the researchers took into account all the variables for additional analysis.

5.2 Regression Analysis

A straightforward linear regression has been performed to forecast the influence of social media on tourists' choices regarding destination selection. The results of the regression analysis are displayed in the tables below.

Table-4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.723	0.522	0.516	0.715
Predictors: (Constant), Social media word-of-mouth, Social media information about destination				

Table-4 illustrates the summary of the regression analysis model. In this context, the letter R signifies the relationship between the regression or variable (the influence of social media on choosing tourist destinations) and the regression and variable (social media information regarding the destination and social media word-of-mouth).

The value of R is 0.723, indicating that a strong correlation exists between the regression and the regression and. In this model, the computed R square value is 0.522, which indicates that linear regression clarifies 52.2% of the variance in the data.

Table-5: ANOVA

Table 5.11.10.1						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	88.260	2	44.130	86.364	.000(a)
	Residual	80.734	158	.511		
	Total	168.994	160			
a. Predictors: (Constant), Social media word-of-mouth, Social media information about destination						
b. Dependent Variable: Influence of social media on choices for tourist destinations						

The Table-5 illustrates the F-test. The F-test for linear regressions posits the null hypothesis that the model accounts for 'zero' variance (i.e. $R^2=0$). In this case, the F-test is notably significant, hence it can be inferred that the model accounts for a significant amount of variance in 'role of social media in tourist destination selection decision'. To put it differently, it can be deduced that the present regression equation effectively characterizes the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

Table-6: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	3.994	.056		70.892	.000
	Social..media information about destination	0.332	.057	.323	5.881	.000
	Social media word-of-mouth	0.664	.057	.646	11.753	.000
Dependent Variable: Role of social media in tourist destination selection decision						

The coefficient table offers the essential details to forecast the influence of social media on choosing a tourist

destination based on 'Social media information about destination' and 'Social media word-of-mouth', and these independent variables statistically significantly aid the model. According to Table- 7, the calculated regression coefficients are: $\beta_0 = 3.994$, $\beta_1 = 0.332$ and $\beta_2 = 0.664$.

of host communities. New York: Springer Science & Business Media.

6. Conclusion

The objective of the research was to determine the different challenges of social media that can affect tourists' decision-making. Since social media are commonly used resources for information, tourists employ these platforms in their decision-making processes. Social media offer details concerning transportation options, travel routes, lodging, and dining establishments, along with issues and risks, safety concerns, and the culture and heritage of tourist spots. Additionally, social media also act as a word-of-mouth communication medium in the decision-making of tourists.

In today's business environment, the influence of social media can be leveraged by the tourism sector to draw in, keep, and increase the number of travellers to their locations. The findings of this research can be utilized by decision-makers from various enterprises linked to the tourism industry. However, this study examined the effect of general social media on tourists' decision-making. Further research can be pursued concentrating on particular social media platforms.

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