

Usage and Preference of Digitalized Media for Tourism Amongst Youth of Udaipur

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Abstract

Globally, hospitality and tourism, is one of the most affected sector by the digital development. With the increase in competition the players in travel industry are always searching for latest and innovative ways to reach their customers at various levels and fulfill their needs by offering them tailor made packages. With the advent of digitalized world, social media and web portals have led to disruptive invasion in tourism industry. Today's youth is constantly engaged on such medias not only through desktops but also through their personal electronic devices which provides them the ease of connectivity. This has made easier for the travelling organizations to inform, endorse, attract and retain the people all over the globe. Looking deeper into this aspect, an attempt has been made through this research paper to throw light on the usage and preference of social media and web portals for tourism by the youth of Udaipur. For the purpose of data collection, a well-structured questionnaire was administered to 122 respondents from the age 18- 30 years. This paper also highlights the problems and challenges faced during travel due to usage of digitalized media.

Keywords: Digitalized Media, Social Media, Web Portals, Travel and Tourism Industry, Youth

Tourism in India

Tourism is significant for the country's economy and is growing rapidly worldwide. The World Travel and Tourism Council analyzed that tourism contributed 16.91 lakh crore (US\$240 billion) or 9.2% in India's GDP in 2018 and assisted 42.673 million jobs, 8.1% of its total employment. The sector is speculated to grow at an annual rate of 6.9% to 32.05 lakh crore (US\$450 billion) by 2028 (9.9% of GDP). India's medical tourism sector is projected to grow to US\$7-8 billion by 2020. In 2014, 184,298 foreign patients traveled to India to seek medical treatment.

India is a diverse country in the world with many travel and tourism attractions. Most of the foreigners like to visit India to spend a memorable and mesmerizing holiday trip experience of their life. Each state of India is unique in itself offering varied travel attractions such as wild safaris, desert safaris, warm hospitality, luxurious journey, natural wonders, art and culture, adventurous activities, spiritual places, and historical places.

India follows the tradition of "Atithi Devo Bhava"

Digital Media

Any media that is encoded in machine-readable formats is termed as digital media. Digital media can be created, viewed, modified, distributed and preserved on digital electronics devices. The ubiquity of digital media and its influence on society proposes that we are at the outset of a new era in industrial history, called as the Information Age, which is leading to a paperless society and virtual world. Digital media has an important, broad and complex impact on society and culture. Digital media combined with personal computing has led to disruptive innovation in tourism, public relations, entertainment, education, publishing, journalism, commerce and politics.

Social media is the latest catch word in Internet Marketing in recent years. Social media is the term used to portray platforms that connect people together for the exchange of information. The most popular social media platforms are: Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, Instagram, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Stumble Upon and YouTube.

The changing technology at a rapid pace and upcoming recent trends and developments have totally changed the face of the tourism industry. One such important factor in the transforming face of the tourism industry is the social media. Recently, it has been observed that digital media has significantly contributed in overall growth of global tourism. Therefore, digital media plays an indispensable role in tourism industry.

Digital media has changed tourism in following ways:

1. **Transfer of information** - Various tools of social media helps in disseminating recent trends and information about tourism industry to large number of people all over the world.
2. **Feedback** - social media tools like Facebook reviews and Instagram Business help people to give their feedback on the hotels, cafes and other places they have visited.
3. **Time** - The emergence of travel and tourism

apps has made the task easier and faster for searching the best tourist destination.

4. **International Relations** - Tools like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram has made possible for travel & tour organizations and tourists to reach out to a larger number of the audience around the world. This has led to a remarkable rise in the international relations of the countries.
5. **Loyalty Programs** - Travel agents and organizations can effectively design the loyalty programs and offer to their customer through the tools of social media so that they can be retained for a longer period of time.
6. **Keeping Updated** - Digital media via innumerable apps has helped the tourism industry to stay updated with the recent trends and technology in this constantly changing scenario.
7. **Tourism Marketing** - Most of the travel agents and companies use social media to endorse their products to reach out to a larger number of audiences.
8. **Blogs** - Presently, every travel and tourism organization has their own blogs to promote their tours and content for people and the analytics tools help these organizations to devise the number of people reading their content.

Review of Literature

Orhan Icoz, Anil Kutuk and Onur Icoz (2018) in their research paper "social media and consumer buying decisions in tourism: the case of Turkey" discussed the influence of social media on travel decision making process. It also highlighted the online buying trends of travelers and the relationship between traveler's demographics and variables like usage of social media, obtaining information from social media, the action of buying, influence and the intention to share travel experience. They used survey method for data collection and Structural Equation Modeling for data analysis. The findings indicated positive relationships between the variables studied.

Ashish Kumar Rathore, Umesh Chand Joshi, P.

VigneswaraIavarasan (2017) in their research paper "Social Media Usage for Tourism: A case of Rajasthan Tourism" studied the role of social media in the tourism industry of Rajasthan. The study highlighted the major value determinants to tourism department from opportunity perspective. It was found that importance of digitalized media is increasing hence the tourism department need to focus on these areas. The study suggested that the right mix of promotion through social media and official website could benefit the tourism department. The study discussed the challenges of social media such as legal and administrative compliance by the tourism organizations of travel related information.

Nindyta Aishyah Dwityas and Rizki Briandana (2017) in their paper "social media in travel decision making process" studied the travel decision making process with the usage of social media with special reference to Indonesian traveler community members. They used interview method for data collection. The study was based on connect of theory of travel buying behavior. It concluded that social media plays a significant role in form of source of information which helps the travelers in every stage of decision making for travel. The study recommended a model of travel decision making process via usage of social media and also suggested marketing strategies for tourism industry to retain customers.

Gergely Rathonyi (2013) in his research paper on "Influence of Social media on tourism- especially among students of the University of Debrecen" studied the various digital applications in tourism and examined them from the view of demand and supply in context of tourism which was based on participation of users. The data was collected through questionnaire to find out social media usage among students while planning a leisure travel trip. The study indicated that social media applications provide tourism companies an opportunity to easily reach the people at mass level. The finding revealed that majority of respondents use social networking sites almost every day but they don't really use it for trip planning process.

John Fotis, DimitriosBuhalis and Nicos Rossides(2012) in their research paper "Social media use and impact during holiday travel

planning process" focused on role and impact of social media on the process of whole holiday planning. The paper revealed that social media is mostly used for sharing experience after the holiday travel. It also highlighted that there is strong correlation between the perceivedlevel of influence from social media and changes implemented in holiday plans before finalizing the decision. It is also found that people trust user generated content more than the content on official tourism websites.

Research Methodology

Objectives of the Study

- To study the usage of Social Media and Web portals for tourism by the youth of Udaipur.
- To analyze the preference of Social Media and Web portals for tourism amongst the youth of Udaipur.
- To suggest some measures to overcome the problems and challenges faced during travel due to usage of social media and Web portals.

Hypotheses

- Ho: There is no significant correlation between preferences of male and female respondents for the selected reasons which have impact on travelling decisions through digitalised media.
- Ha: There is significant correlation between preferences of male and female respondents for the selected reasons which have impact on travelling decisions through digitalised media.

Research Design : Exploratory Research

Sample Design:

- Universe of the study consists of Youth of Udaipur from age 18 years to 30 years.
- The sample of research study was selected through Purposive Sampling Method.
- Sample size consists of 122 respondents out of which 61 were male and 61 were female from Udaipur.

Data Collection Tools

Primary Data: A structured Questionnaire comprising 18 questions was prepared to collect data from youth of Udaipur. Questionnaire consists of two sections: Section I focusses on demographic profile of respondents and Section II contains the questions regarding preference and usage of social media and web portals for making travel decision.

Secondary Data: It was collected through books, websites, journals, travel magazines, blogs, and newspapers.

Data analysis Techniques

Percentage Analysis, Rank Correlation, Ranks were assigned on the basis of priority sorting methods. DATA ANALYSIS

Section 1: Demographic Analysis

- In terms of age, majority of respondents i.e. n = 77, 63.11% belongs to the age group of 24- 26 years.
- Representing the area of residence of respondents, majority of respondents i.e. n= 98, 80.32% were from urban area.
- According to qualification, majority of respondents i.e. n= 75, 61.47% were post graduate.
- Majority of respondents i.e. n=60, 49.18% are having monthly salary between Rs. 10,000 to Rs 20,000

Section 2: Analysis of Usage and Preference of Digitalized Media for Travel Decisions

- Majority of respondents i.e. n=86, 70.49% prefer online medium as compared to offline medium i.e. n=36, 29.50% for making travel decisions
- Majority of respondents i.e. n=112, 91.80% found digitalized media as a helpful tool to plan their travel.
- Majority of respondents i.e. n=52, 42.62% used social media platforms and travelling apps for planning their travel within a duration of 6-12 months followed by the number of respondents i.e. n=40, 32.78% who used it within a duration of 12 months or more.

Following tables (1 to 5) reveals the ranks given by the respondents for various digital / social media platforms, travelling apps and problems faced during travel planning through digitalized media:

Table 1: Most Preferred Digital Media Platforms for Making Travel Decisions

Plat forms	Rank	%
Google search	I	41.80
Wikipedia	II	36.88
Customer review sites	III	16.39
You tube	IV	4.92
Total		100

Source : Primary Data

Table 2: Most Preferred Social Media Platforms for Making Travel Decisions

Platforms	Rank	%
Instagram	I	42.62
Facebook	II	25.40
Whats app	III	13.11
Snapchat	IV	8.19
Twitter	V	4.92
Linked In	VI	4.09
Google plus	VII	1.63
Total		100

Source : Primary Data

Table 3: Most Preferred Travelling Apps for Making Travel Decision

Ap ps	Rank	%
Make my trip	I	21.31
OYO	II	16.39
Goibibo	III	13.11
Trivago	IV	11.48
Trip advisor	V	10.66
Booking.com	VI	9.02
Cleartrip	VII	7.38
Yatra	VIII	5.74
Holiday IQ	XI	4.10
Expedia	X	0.82
Total		100

Source : Primary Data

Table 5 : Degree of Problems / Challenges Faced During The Travel Planning Through Social Media Platform and Traveling Apps

Problems / Challenges	Rank	%
Security and privacy issues	I	20.49
Misguiding pictures	II	18.03
Improper grievance redressal mechanism	III	16.39
Threats of virus / bugs	IV	15.57
Outdated information	V	13.93
Unreliable information	VI	9.84
Incomplete information about services provided	VII	5.74
Total		100

Source : Primary Data

Hypothesis Testing

The rigorous review of literature in the relevant field revealed that women are involved differently from men in their consumption of tourism. (Swain,1995). Touristic behaviors happen in public travel spaces, which are politicized, sexualized, subjective, and gendered. Studies also revealed that women's touristic experiences, movements, and freedoms are governed to some degree by a structure of patriarchal social control (Wilson & Little,2008).

Therefore, the need was felt to formulate the research hypothesis to observe the behaviours and

preferences among male and female respondents with respect to travel decisions. Considering this view, following assumptions have been made for the present study:

H₀: There is no significant correlation between preferences of male and female respondents for the selected reasons which have impact on travelling decisions through digitalised media.

H_a: There is significant correlation between preferences of male and female respondents for the selected reasons which have impact on travelling decisions through digitalised media.

Table 6: Rank Correlation

Reasons for Preference	Rank (male)	Rank (female)	Difference	D ²
Location pictures	1	2	-1	1
Promotional offers	3	5	-2	4
Services offered	5	4	1	1
Reviews and rating	4	3	1	1
References through social media friends	2	1	1	1
				Σ D₂ = 8

Rank correlation (ρ) = $1 - 6 \sum D^2 / n^3 - n$

Source : Primary Data

The rank correlation coefficient (ρ) was calculated, by comparing the ranks generated from the total scores given by 61 male and 61 female respondents. The calculated value of ρ was found to be 0.6 which justifies that there is a significant correlation between preferences of male and female respondents for the selected reasons which have impact on travelling decisions through digitalised media.

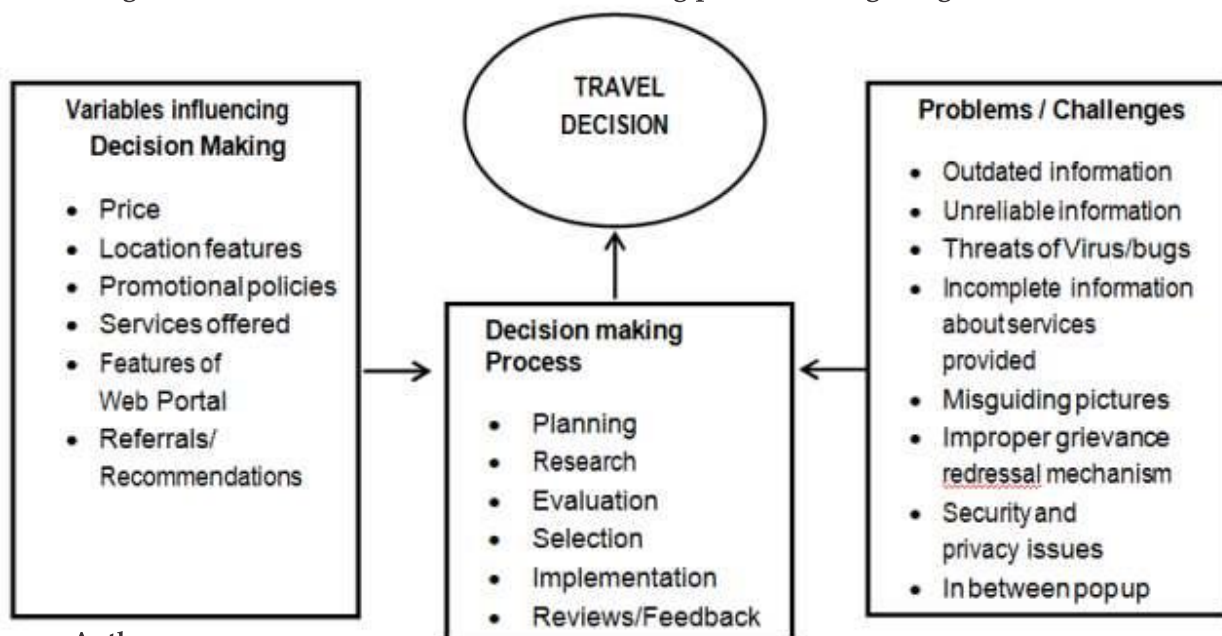
Discussion

The below process model has been constructed from the analysis of present research study :

promotional schemes and policies (seasonal, festival, etc.) offered to the customer, variety of miscellaneous services offered, features of web portals like easy access, prompt uploading, upgraded information, etc. and referrals / recommendations by friends, relatives on social networking sites.

The second components highlight the problems encountered by the users during the travel planning through digitalized media. The study revealed the problems such as obsolete of unreliable informations, threats virus / bugs, misleading informations and pictures provided by travel portals to attract customers, lack of effective

Figure 1 : A Model for Travel Decision making process through Digitalized Media



Source : Author

The above model depicts the three major components affecting travel decisions through digitalized media which are as follows:

1. Variables influencing decision making
2. Problem / challenges faced due to digitalized media in tourism
3. Decision making process

The first component of the model consists of variables influencing travel decision making related to such as price / budget of the travel package offered attractive location features highlighted on Digital Media platforms, various

grievances redressal mechanism, lack of awareness about regulatory norms and improper legal compliance, privacy and trust issues among users, annoying popup adds and cookies, etc.

Both the above mentioned components influenced every stage of decision making process i.e. planning a travel, researching the information available on digitalized media regarding travel destination and packages, evaluating the alternatives available in digital media, selecting the most suitable option for travel considering the price, services offered, promotional offers, etc. executing the selected travel plan and lastly sharing the experiences on digital media after the travel.

The interaction of these three components leads to the final travel decisions and also affects the future travel plans.

Conclusion

- The study revealed that Google search was the most preferred digital medium by Youth for making travel decisions.
- Instagram and Facebook were found to be most preferred social media platform while Make my Trip and OYO were the most preferred travelling apps.
- Easy usage, accessibility, prompt uploading, accurate and detailed information, effective comparative ratings respectively, were the main reasons for preferring the above mentioned digital mediums.
- Security and privacy issues, Misguiding pictures, Improper grievance redressal mechanism were the major highlighted problems faced by travellers while making travel decisions through digitalised media during the study.
- The results indicated that there is a significant correlation between preferences of male and female respondents for the selected reasons which have impact on travelling decisions through digitalised media. Thus, it can be concluded that the preferences for choosing digital media for travel decisions are almost similar among both, the male and female travellers.

Suggestions

- Nowadays, people tend to book trips on the click. Travel organisations should construct the booking process smooth and user-friendly for the customers by launching a webpage adapting to all devices.
- Travel organisations should develop mobile apps for adding convenience to the service and gathering valuable data for designing effective marketing strategies.
- Prompt response through email is considered

to be an effective online marketing tool in tourism. This ensures that tourists' enquiries and concerns are dealt timely with relevant and personalized message.

- The travel companies should create such websites, apps and portals which ensure security and privacy of customers.
- The information and pictures shared on digital media should be authentic and fair to develop and enhance trustworthy relationships with travellers.

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