"Exploring The Influence Of Social Media On Tourism: A Demographic Analysis Of Tourist Behavior With Respect To Gujarat"

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study investigates the dynamic interplay between social media engagement and tourist behavior in the context of Gujarat, a culturally rich and diverse state in India. Recognizing the transformative power of social media in shaping travel experiences and destination choices, the research focuses on unraveling demographic patterns and understanding the multifaceted impact of social media on tourist decision-making processes. I have presented the findings from the quantitative data in this study. Thus, the current study's data were analyzed using SPSS software. The pilot research has a sample size of n=50. One method for defining the characteristics of the data collected for this research is the descriptive analysis. The purpose of the descriptive analysis is to enable the visualization of the data's quantitative analysis into a graphical model. The Cronbach's alpha value has been used in reliability analysis, specifically, to calculate the internal consistency of the data. To determine the respondents' demographic data, the study was converted into a percentage analysis. **Keywords:** travel experiences, destination choices, social media, tourist decision-making processes

Introduction

As one of the biggest service sectors and a significant contributor to economic growth, tourism is widely acknowledged. The World Tourism Organization's 2018 data shows that the tourism industry makes a significant contribution to GDP growth and job possibilities.

The significance of tourism as a tool for economic growth has gained widespread recognition. Numerous nations concentrated their efforts to enhance their tourism services due to the favorable impact that the tourism business provided (Chang et al., 2010). According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), there were over 1.087 billion foreign visitors in 2013, representing a growth of 4.6% annually, and US$ 1075 billion in tourism earnings, or an 11.1% annual increase. The Gross Domestic Product generated by the tourism industry to increase to 10.5% by the year's end (Padachi, 2009).According to estimates from the travel and tourism sector, 255 million new employment with a 9.2% annual growth rate were produced in 2011. Globally, there will be 328 million jobs in this sector by 2022 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2012).

Social media marketing is not the same as traditional marketing techniques when it comes to promoting tourism services. Therefore, in order to accomplish branding and positioning in order to impact and produce revenue through social media marketing, several tactics and strategies are needed (Gordhamer, 2009). Social media marketing communication for tourism involves reaching out to customers who use social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and other channels to inquire about travel, tourist destinations, and other relevant information before making travel-related decisions.High-speed internet has made social media marketing more effective for reaching customers and evaluating products and services based on user feedback. The tourist business is facing problems due to advancements in information and communication technology (Wang et al., 2007). However, this competition is becoming more beneficial.

Literature review

Inbound tourism, or travel from outside the nation, is a major source of income for the nation and is a significant export activity. It also generates a lot of business activity, income, employment, and foreign exchange for the local markets.

Customers have several opportunities to share and disseminate brand-related content and product usage information internationally owing to social media platforms like Twitter and YouTube. Customers nowadays are quite informed and willing to explore product specifics online before making a buy. (Pop et al., 2022).This study sought to anticipate the relationships between customer behavior, habits, and social media marketing operations. It also investigated how social media marketing influenced how customers used social media platforms.(Setegne Dessie, et al., 2022).This article focuses on the factors that online Indian customers consider when purchasing online. According to the study's findings, the top five criteria influencing customers' attitudes toward online shopping are knowledge, perceived value, considered enjoyment, and security/privacy.(Koufaris, 2022).In this study, the author looked at how growing product sales using digital marketing strategies may lead to growth, and as part of that discussion, he investigated consumer behavior. (Carter, 2021)Social media marketing is so critical for educating people, altering their preferences, and influencing their purchasing decisions. Given that 61% of survey respondents were more likely to make a purchase after witnessing engaging social media ads, social media marketing has a major long-term impact on client purchasing intentions.(Ebrahim, 2020). Understanding client purchasing behavior is critical to success in today's competitive hotel industry. It is vital for business owners in Gujarat state to understand client purchasing behavior in order to make informed decisions about their competitive strategies as the hospitality industry grows. Understanding client purchase behavior allows businesses to better target their customers and develop marketing strategies that can help them improve their market share and profitability. (Sun and Wang, 2020)Social media marketing is an essential marketing tool and approach. The time required to reach the clients is an important aspect in this goal. Social media marketing is affordable and takes very little time to reach its target audience. This type of advertising makes it easy to attract clients and influence their purchase decisions. (Sharma et al., 2020). Marketers may use this information to adjust their advertising campaigns to the preferences of their target audience. Brand awareness is critical to the success of an organization's present goods as well as the introduction of new ones. When it comes to purchasing a product, each customer has their own distinct thought process and attitude. If a company does not understand the customer's reaction, it runs the danger of being unable to foresee how a market would react to its products.(Aydin, 2020). Companies in the digital era attempt to capture clients' attention with exceptional offers and exciting things that stick in their minds and promote a positive brand image. As a result, brand loyalty will arise through the usage of communication channels (such as mobile phones, media, and television) that they own and may utilize to protect the value of their brands. (Tajvidi and Karami, 2021).Customers are the lifeblood of every business, and social media marketing allows companies to build genuine and mutually beneficial connections with their customers. However, in order to realize meaningful economic results, businesses must better plan, manage, analyze, and update their social media marketing campaigns.(Hu and Olivieri, 2021).Businesses may ensure that customers have a positive image of their organization by consistently providing high levels of service quality. This will increase word-of-mouth referrals and attract new clients (Woodside & Bernal Mir, 2019). Anwesha et al. (2016) discovered that social media is transforming the way travelers and tourists seek for, read, trust, and rationalize tourism-related information.According to Christou et al. (2020) and Woods (2016), digital advertising now outspends television in terms of paid advertising.The internationalization of a destination is crucial because it opens up possibilities for the inflow of foreign cash into the economy, information and knowledge exchange, reputation enhancement, reduced reliance on domestic travel, and high levels of sustainability overall . After doing a cluster analysis of the Mediterranean destinations' performance rankings, Glyptou et al. draw the conclusion that sustainable destinations have low environmental impact along with strong social and economic performance. According to a number of observers, digital technologies are challenging the fundamentals of hospitality and tourism experiences by obfuscating the distinctions between technology services and human value (Choi, Choi, et al., 2020; Choi, Oh, et al., 2021). Self-service bag drops, chatbots used for commercial communication, and hotel service robots are a few examples of how personal and often personalized connection is being diminished (Roy & Naidoo, 2021; Tuomi et al., 2020).

Research objectives
1. To Identify Demographic Patterns in Social Media Engagement.
2. Evaluating the Impact of Social Media on Travel Decision-Making.
3. Measuring the Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing Strategies.

Research Methodology:
1. Questionnaire Design:
- Develop a comprehensive questionnaire designed to gather demographic information about the respondents (e.g., age, gender, income, nationality) and their social media usage habits concerning tourism-related content.

- Include questions to gauge the influence of social media on various aspects of travel decision-making, such as destination selection, activity planning, and accommodation choices.
- Incorporate Likert scale questions to measure the extent of agreement or disagreement with statements related to the impact of social media on tourism behavior.
- Add open-ended questions to allow respondents to provide qualitative insights and elaborate on their experiences and perceptions regarding social media's role in tourism.

2. Sampling Strategy:
- Utilize a purposive sampling technique to select respondents who have recently visited Gujarat as tourists.
- Aim for diversity in the sample by including tourists from different demographic groups (e.g., different age ranges, genders, income levels) to ensure representation across various segments.

3. Data Collection:
- Administer the questionnaire to the selected sample of 50 tourists either in person (at tourist sites, hotels, etc.) or online (via email, social media platforms).
- Ensure clarity in instructions and provide necessary guidance for completing the questionnaire to minimize biases and ensure data accuracy.

4. Data Analysis:
- Employ quantitative analysis techniques to process demographic data and responses to closed-ended questions. This could involve descriptive statistics to summarize demographic characteristics and social media usage patterns.
- Utilize statistical tests to identify significant relationships between demographic variables and social media influence on tourism behavior.
- Conduct thematic analysis for qualitative data obtained from open-ended questions to identify common themes, patterns, and insights regarding tourists' perceptions and experiences with social media in the context of Gujarat tourism.

Analysis and interpretation

Table 1 Frequency personal information of the respondents

Respondent's profile		Frequency	Percent
Age Group	20-30 Years	14	28.0
	31-40 Years	23	46.0
	41-50 Years	13	26.0
Education Qualification	Graduate	26	52.0
	Post graduate	14	28.0
	Doctorate	3	6.0
	Others	7	14.0
Location	Ahmedabad	8	16.0
	Rajkot	13	26.0
	Vadodara	16	32.0
	Gandhinagar	13	26.0
Family income Monthly	Below 25,000/-	4	8.0
	Rs.25,000 to Rs.50,000	17	34.0
	Rs.50,001 to Rs.75,000	13	26.0
	Rs.75,000 to Rs.1,00,000	7	14.0
	Above Rs.1,00,000	9	18.0
Budget spent on Tourism	Rs.10,000 to Rs.20,000	13	26.0
	Rs.20,001 to Rs. 25,000	22	44.0
	Rs.25,000 to Rs.30,000	8	16.0
	More than Rs.30,000	7	14.0
Do you use social media	Yes	42	84.0

	No	8	16.0
How Much time do you spent on social media per day	1 Hr	8	16.0
	2 Hrs	28	56.0
	More than 2 Hrs	14	28.0
Whose reference matters for making travel plan	Social Media	39	78.0
	Friends	7	14.0
	Family	4	8.0
factors in order of importance when it comes to influencing your tourism buying behavior,	Sponsored posts from tourism companies on social media	2	4.0
	Online reviews and ratings	13	26.0
	Traditional advertising(TV, print, radio)	3	6.0
	Recommendations from friends and family	11	22.0
	Influencer endorsements on social media	21	42.0

Table 2 Descriptive statistics

	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Social Media Usage	.94954	1.00	4.67
Influence of Social Media	.69987	1.25	4.50
Decision Making Behavior	.72531	1.00	4.00
Perception	.73079	1.33	4.67

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 2 outline the characteristics of four variables. Firstly, regarding Social Media Usage, the mean value is 2.9133, with a standard deviation of 0.94954. Respondents reported spending a moderate amount of time on social media platforms, ranging from a minimum of 1.00 to a maximum of 4.67. Secondly, in terms of the Influence of Social Media, the mean value is 2.9650, with a standard deviation of .69987. This suggests that respondents perceive social media to have a moderate influence on their tourism-related decisions, with responses ranging from 1.25 to 4.50. Thirdly, with respect to Decision Making Behavior, the mean value is 2.8000, with a standard deviation of .72531. This indicates a moderate level of engagement in decision-making processes influenced by social media, ranging from a minimum score of 1.00 to a maximum of 4.00. Lastly, in terms of Perception, the mean value is 3.1200, with a standard deviation of .73079. This suggests that respondents generally hold positive perceptions of tourist destinations shaped by social media, with responses ranging from 1.33 to 4.67.

Cronbach's alpha:

Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal reliability, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is considered to be a measure of scale reliability. A "high" value for alpha does not infer that the measure is one-dimensional. Exploratory factor analysis is one method of checking dimensionality. Below, for conceptual purposes, we display the formula for the standardized Cronbach's alpha:

$$\alpha = \frac{N \cdot \bar{c}}{\bar{v} + (N-1) \cdot \bar{c}}$$

Here N is equal to the number of items, c-bar is the average inter-item covariance among the items and v-bar equals the average variance.

Before going to start the analysis, internal consistency of data is checked through Cronbach's alpha (α) value. Cronbach's alpha value is one of the measurements in reliability analysis. There is a relation between Cronbach's alpha and correlation. Cronbach's alpha generally increases when the correlation among the items increases.

Based on the Cronbach's alpha value, we concluded the following about the data:
· If α ≥ 0.9 – Excellent
· If 0.7 ≤ α < 0.9 – Good
· If 0.6 ≤ α < 0.7 – Acceptable
· If 0.5 ≤ α < 0.6 –Poor
· If α < 0.5 – Unacceptable
· Cronbach's alpha value – What amount of internal consistency exists among the data of items.
· Cronbach's alpha if item deleted – It gives the information about which item appeared to have low consistency among other items.

Reliability Analysis
Social Media Usage (SMU):
 The Social Media Usage (SMU) scale with Three items obtained the Cronbach's Alpha value (α = 0.706), the test results revealed that the Social Media Usage (SMU) is reliable. The Reliability result of the Social Media Usage (SMU) is given in below table 3.

Table 3 Reliability test

Construct	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Media Usage	03	.703

Influence of Social Media (ISM):
The Influence of Social Media (ISM) scale with Four items obtained the Cronbach's Alpha value (α = 0.723), the test results revealed that the Influence of Social Media (ISM) is reliable. The Reliability result of the Influence of Social Media (ISM) is given in the table below.

Table 4 Reliability test

Construct	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Influence of Social Media	03	.723

Decision-Making Behavior (DMB):
The Decision-Making Behavior scale with Three items obtained the Cronbach's Alpha value (α = 0.755), the test results revealed that the Decision-Making Behavior is reliable. The Reliability result of the Decision-Making Behavior (DMB) is given in below table 5.

Table 5 Reliability test

Construct	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Financial Literacy	03	.755

Perception (P):
The Perception (P) scale with Three items obtained the Cronbach's Alpha value (α = 0.779), the test results revealed that the Perception (P) is reliable. The Reliability result of the User Perception (P) is given in below table 6.

Table 6 Reliability test

Construct	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Perception (P)	03	.739

Factor analysis
Factor analysis is used to extract the factors from independent variables. Generally, this analysis is used to develop questionnaires. Suppose the data contains so many variables. That situation we could use this analysis to reduce the number of variables from the data. This analysis groups variables with similar features together. The reduced factors can be used for further analysis.

Values are extracting from this test and their usage
· Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure must be greater than 0.5
· Bartlett's test of sphericity should has the p-value less than 0.05
 From the total variance explained table, we can estimate the amount of variance explained by each factor

Table 7 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.849
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5728.698
	df	325
	Sig.	.000

KMO and Bartlett's tests to assess the suitability for factor analysis. The obtained KMO value was 0.849, indicating high sampling adequacy, and the Bartlett's test was highly significant (P = 0.00), supporting the factor analysis.

	Factors					% of Variance
	1	2	3	4	5	
Social Media Usage						
I spend a significant amount of time on social media every day.	.763					
I follow Gujarat tourism accounts on social media for updates and information.	.790					22.164
I rely on social media for real-time updates on events and festivals in Gujarat.	.751					
Influence of Social Media						18.346
Social Media Influence my choice of tourist destination	.616					
"I trust the information I find on social media when planning a trip to Gujarat."	.745					
Posts from friends and family on social media strongly impact my travel decisions.	.689					
The visual content on social media platforms influences my travel choices.	.628					
Decision-Making Behavior						17.644
Recommendations from individuals on social media influence my travel plans.	.843					
I frequently share my own travel experiences on social media platforms"	.616					
The impact of social media on your decision-making process when booking accommodations	.829					
Perception						
The visual content on social media platforms significantly shapes my perception of tourist destinations	.759					
I perceive social media as a reliable source of information for tourism options	.798					15.694
Positive reviews and recommendations from social media users enhance my perception of Gujarat as a desirable travel destination	.773					

Table 7 reveals the factor analysis for the thirteen items are taken into a factor analysis. The total thirteen questions are reduced to four factors. The four factors are Social Media Usage, Influence of Social Media, Decision-Making Behavior and Perception
Ø Social Media Usage is the factor which has three items with loading values are .763, .790, and .751.

Ø Influence of Social Media is the factor which has three items with loading values are
.616, .745, .689, and .628.
Ø Decision-Making Behavior is the factor which has three items with loading values are 0.843, 0.616, and 0.829.
Ø Perception is   the factor   which has   three items with loading values are 0.759,0.798,0.773.

Table 8 Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Decision-Making Behavior	0.93766667	0.74027867
Perception	0.921	0.73332308

	AVE	CR
Social Media Usage	0.99233333	0.76146834
Influence of Social Media	0.99233333	0.76146834

 Table 8 reveals Convergent and Discriminant Validity Test. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) should be superior to 0.5 and Composite Reliability (CR) should be larger than equal to 0.7. Here, all the factors of AVE values are greater than 0.5, and CR value is 0.9 which is greater than equal to 0.7; hence Convergent, and Discriminant validity exists.

Pearson's Coefficient of correlation:
Validity test is a measure of the degree of validity or the validity of a research instrument. Validity test was conducted using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The strength and direction of association between two variables are measured by Pearson correlation coefficient. The two variables must be measured on a continuous (interval) scale. The correlation coefficient (r) ranges from -1 to 1. Based on the sign of the correlation coefficient we may conclude the following manner :
· When r is –1, we say there is a perfect negative correlation.
· When r is a value between –1 and 0, we say that there is a negative correlation
· When r is 0, we say there is no correlation
· When r is a value between 0 and 1, we say there is a positive correlation
· When r is 1, we say there is a perfect positive correlation

Table 9 Correlation Analysis

	SocialMedia Usage	Influence of Social Media	Decision Making Behavior	Perception
Social Media Usage	1	.426**	.362**	0.272
Influence of Social Media	.426**	1	.469**	.369**
Decision Making Behavior	.362**	.469**	1	0.167
Perception	0.272	.369**	0.167	1

Table 9 presents the correlation analysis results, examining the relationships between four key variables related to social media's impact on tourism. Starting with Social Media Usage, there is a moderate positive correlation with Influence of Social Media (r = 0.426, p < 0.01) and Decision Making Behavior (r = 0.362, p < 0.01), suggesting that individuals who spend more time on social media are likely to perceive its influence more strongly and engage more in decision-making processes influenced by social media. Similarly, Influence of Social Media exhibits a moderate positive correlation with Social Media Usage (r = 0.426, p < 0.01) and Decision Making Behavior (r = 0.469, p < 0.01), indicating that individuals who perceive social media's influence more strongly are also more likely to spend more time on social media and engage more in decision-making processes influenced by it. Decision Making Behavior demonstrates a moderate positive correlation with both Social Media Usage (r = 0.362, p < 0.01) and Influence of Social Media (r = 0.469, p < 0.01), implying that individuals who are more engaged in decision-making processes influenced by social media are also likely to spend more time on social media and perceive its influence more strongly. Lastly, Perception shows a weak positive correlation with Influence of Social Media (r = 0.369, p < 0.01) and a very weak positive correlation with Social Media Usage (r = 0.272, p < 0.05) and Decision Making Behavior (r = 0.167, p > 0.05), indicating that individuals who perceive social media's influence more strongly are also more likely to hold positive perceptions of tourist destinations in Gujarat. However, the correlations with Social Media Usage and Decision Making Behavior are relatively weaker.These correlation analysis findings provide insights into the interrelationships between social media usage, its influence, decision-making behavior, and perception regarding tourism buying behavior in Gujarat, highlighting the complex dynamics at play in shaping individuals' decisions and perceptions through social media platform.

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