

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE MALE AND FEMALE TOURISTS SELECTION OF DESTINATION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

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ABSTRACT

Social media platform means any medium whereby content (including, but not limited to images, videos, messages and sound files) is broadcast to, or capable of being broadcast to, the general public or a significant section of the general public. For the sake of clarity, and by way of example, Social Media Platforms include (but are not limited to) Youtube, Facebook, Twitter and also any "blog" or other type of web journal. The present study is focussing on tourists from Punjab who visits Punjab's or other states or other countries destinations important from tourism point of view. The present study is specifically focussing on comparison between male and female tourists selection of destination through social media platforms. The objectives of the study are to analyse the male tourists preference of social media platforms for destination selection, to analyse the female tourists preference of social media platforms for destination selection and to compare the male and female tourists preference of social media platforms while selection of tourism destination. A structured questionnaire is prepared to collect data from the respondents of Punjab State and online mode Google forms is used and data is collected in the month of January 2022. The findings of the study revealed that Youtube, Google Search and TripAdvisor are extremely influential social media platforms for male travellers from Punjab State whereas Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest are least influential social media platforms for destination selection for male tourists of Punjab State. The findings from table 2 and 3 also revealed that Google search, Instagram and Youtube are most influential social media platforms for destination selection and TripAdvisor, Twitter and Facebook are the least influential social media platforms for female tourists destination selection from Punjab State.

KEYWORDS: *Social Media, Tourists, Male, Female, Destination, Selection.*

Introduction

For the past 20 years, the term social media has been used to describe various online platforms such as blogs, microblogs (such as Twitter), social networking sites (such as Facebook), virtual worlds (such as Second Life), and collaborative projects (such as Wikipedia), Video platforms (eg YouTube), etc. has been used in (eg Demangeot & Broderick, 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). As a result, a broad perspective for defining this seemingly amorphous group of communication technologies has been adopted in all research areas. For example, some studies have used definitions that focus on how messages are composed (van de Velde et al., 2015), while others have focused on specific devices and products (Agichtein et al., 2008). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as "a set of Internet-based applications built on the idealistic and technological foundation of Web 2.0 that enables the creation and sharing of user-generated content." increase. Social media includes social networking sites, consumer review sites, content community sites, Wikis, Internet forums, and location-based social media. Social media has emerged as the new way in which people connect socially, by integrating information and communication technology (such as mobile and webbased technologies), social interaction, and the

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construction of words, pictures, videos and audio. It is actually more than a new way to communicate; it is an entire online environment built on participants' contributions and interactions. Social media growth has been exponential over recent years (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Social media plays an increasingly important role in many aspects of tourism, especially in information search and decision making behaviours (Fotis, 2012).

A number of studies focus on the impact and role of social media in travel related decisions. Gretzel et al. (2007) found that online reviews posted in a travel related consumer review and rating website increase travellers' confidence during decision making, reduce risk, assist them in selecting accommodation and therefore facilitate decision making. Moreover, it was found that travellers read accommodation reviews throughout the various stages of the travel planning process: Before travel as a source of ideas, as a mean to narrow down choices, and post accommodation choice in order to confirm the choice made; during the trip; after the trip to compare and share experiences; but also as an ongoing process even if there is no trip ahead. Mack et al. (2008) studied the influence and credibility of travel blogs and found that traditional WOM is more trustworthy than blog posts, suggesting that WOM generated from sources with which travellers have strong social ties is more trustworthy than WOM from strangers. However, people who post to blogs recognize that blog permissions are similar to traditional WOM permissions, and as the number of bloggers grows over time, there is room for future improvements in blog reliability (Technorati, 2010). Yoo et al. (2009) have found that user-created content is considered more reliable if posted on the official Tourism Board website rather than on review sites, travel blogs, social networking sites, or content communities. Vermeulen and Seegers (2009) investigated the impact of consumer reviews on accommodation choices and found that exposure to negative and positive consumer reviews increased hotel awareness. Cox et al. (2009) in their attempt to demonstrate the role of social media through the travel planning process has found that social media be used primarily before travel, but only to a very limited extent during and after travel. More specifically, social media was primarily used after vacation destination selection and was not used during the evaluation of vacation destination selection. In addition, social media has been perceived as less reliable than traditional sources (ie, official tourism websites and travel agencies). However, it can be argued that such results are from a sample of surveys from the official tourism website mailing list and therefore may be a positive predisposition to official sources. White (2010) points out that Facebook travel-related photos are very likely to attract viewers' interest and become part of their travel plans. Contrary to the results of Mac et al. (2008) and Yoo et al. (2009), Del Chiappa (2011) support that the credibility of tourism-related blogs can only be exceeded by consumer ratings and reviews on the websites of online travel agencies. The present paper is also focussing on how male and female tourists use various social media platforms for destination selection.

Review of Literature

• **Social Media Platforms**

DeNardis and Hachl (2015) define a social media platform as providing three specific technical features. 1. Mediation of user-generated content. 2. Interactivity between users and the possibility of direct involvement in the content. 3. An individual's ability to clarify network connections with other users. These common features include social networking sites such as Facebook, microblogging platforms such as Twitter, content aggregation sites such as YouTube and Reddit, reputation engines such as Yelp, mobile image messaging services such as Snapchat, and e-commerce sites such as Etsy. It appears in various types of information brokers and virtual gaming platform like Xbox Live. From the perspective of both the traditional industry and the travel industry, information exploration is an integral part of the consumer's purchasing decision-making process. The Internet has revolutionized this first step (Mattila, 2004). In addition to the traditional use of the Internet, social media not only reduces anxiety and perceived risks, but also improves the quality of travel (Buhalis and Law, 2008; Zeng and Gerritsen, 2014). In general, over 60% of people see online reviews, blogs, and other customer feedback before buying a new product or service (O'Connor, 2010). This ratio is over 80% in the travel and tourism industry (Fotis et al., 2012; Pantano and Di Pietro, 2013). In addition, more than 80% of those who referred to such material stated that it had at least some influence on subsequent purchase decisions (O'Connor, 2010).

• **Social Media Platforms Utilisation by Male and Female Travellers**

According to Lakshmi et al. (2017) Men and women have different levels of attraction for media content on the Internet. Men prefer simple advertising that allows them to learn about the product and

draw attention to the strengths and weaknesses of the product. In addition, Tannen (1990) discovered that women and men communicate in different gender-specific dialects. Women tend to have intimate conversations. Or, they tend to focus on related conversations whose primary function is to build understanding and empathy within a larger group of listeners. In contrast, men tend to report conversations and task-oriented conversations, the main function of which is to find a solution to the problem (Eunson, 2012). Therefore, female and male social media influencers can understand that different ways of approaching and communicating with followers on social media platforms. Through videos such as using YouTube to promote new cosmetics, female influencers tend to build relationships with female viewers who are most likely to watch the video in order to successfully convey their message. The present study has considered twelve channels of social media namely facebook, twitter, instagram, youtube, wikitravel, Wikipedia, Google search, online review sites, pinterest, travelblogs and tripadvisor and the present research is focussing on male and female preferences of these platforms of social media while their tourists destination selection. The present research is based on tourists of Indian State of Punjab and how tourists of Punjab state use these online platforms while their destination selection. In the past no extensive research has been found on use of social media platforms for the destination selection by the tourists from Punjab state and no study has been found analysing the difference between male and female travelers difference in use of social media platforms. Thus, to fill all these gaps, the present research is conducted with the title "A comparative study on the male and female tourists selection of destination through social media platforms".

Objectives of the Study

- To analyse the male tourists preference of social media platforms for destination selection.
- To analyse the female tourists preference of social media platforms for destination selection.
- To compare the male and female tourists preference of social media platforms while selection of tourism destination.

Research Methodology

• Sampling and Data Collection

The data for the present research were collected from tourists of Punjab who utilises various social media platforms while their tourists destination selection in the month of January 2022. Data was collected with the use of structured questionnaire and respondents submitted their response through online platform Google Forms. Respondents were asked closed-ended questions related to their demographic profile and on various platforms of social media which they utilise while destination selection. There were two sections in the structured questionnaire. The first section included questions on demographic profile of hotel employees. The second section consisted closed ended questions on various platforms of social media on a likert scale of 1 to 5 where 1 not at all influential, 2 slightly influential, 3 indicates somewhat influential, 4 indicates moderately influential and 5 indicates extremely influential. The primary sources of data collection was structured questionnaire and secondary sources of information were Government reports, national and international journals, published research articles, theses, books, websites, magazines, newspapers, etc.

Analysis and Findings

• Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Questionnaire was distributed to 150 respondents and out of which 100 respondents had filled the questionnaire. The gender distributions showed 56.5% of the respondents were males and 43.5% were females. 66.1% of the respondents were of the age group between 18-30 years, 17.7% were between 31-40 years and 14.5% were between the age group of 41-50 years. 62.9% respondents were single, 35.5% were married and 1.6% of the respondents preferred not to mention their marital status. 43.5% of the respondents were undergraduates, 24.2% were graduates, 27.4% postgraduates, 1.6% doctorates and 3.2% were having other professional educational qualifications. 30.6% of the respondents lives in rural area where as 69.4% of the respondents lives in urban area. 59.7% of the respondents were students, 16.1% are working in government sector, 14.5% are having private job and 9.7% are having their own-business. 56.5% of the respondents are not earning, 16.1% are earning an annual income of up to 3 lakhs, 6.5% of the respondents 3-6 lakhs, 19.4% of the respondents are earning an annual income of 6-10 lakhs and 1.6% of the respondents are earning an annual income of more than 10 lakhs. Table 1 is indicating demographic profile of respondents:

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables		(%)
Gender	Male	56.5
	Female	43.5
Age	18-30 years	66.1
	31-40 years	17.7
	41-50 years	14.5
	51-60 years	1.6
	Above 60 years	----
Marital Status	Single	62.9
	Married	35.5
	Preferred not to say	1.6
Educational Qualifications	Undergraduates	43.5
	Graduate	24.2
	Postgraduate	27.4
	Doctorate	1.6
	Others	3.2
Ares of Residence	Rural	30.6
	Urban	69.4
Occupation	Students	59.7
	Government Job	16.1
	Private Job	14.5
	Others	9.7
Annual Income	Not earning	56.5
	Up to 3 Lakhs	16.1
	3-6 Lakhs	6.5
	6-10 Lakhs	19.4
	More than 10 Lakhs	1.6

- **Analysis of Male Tourists Preference of Social Media Platforms while Destination Selection**

The first objective of the study was to analyse the male tourists preference of social media platforms for destination selection. Table 2 indicates the preference of various social media platforms used by male travellers from Punjab state. Central tendency technique was implemented to know the rankings of various social media platforms used by male travellers. Rankings were given based on the weighted mean score i.e. platform with highest weighted mean score has got highest rank. Thus, the findings from table 2 indicates that male travellers are highly dependent on Youtube channels for their destination selection as Youtube got the first rank followed by Google search and Tripadvisor. Wikipedia got 4th rank, Wikitravel 5th rank and online consumer review sites and Instagram jointly got 6th rank. Travel Blogs received 7th rank, whatsapp 8th rank, facebook 9th, Twitter got 10th rank and Pinterest received 11th rank which indicates that facebook, Twitter and Pinterest does not influence destination selection of Male travellers of Punjab State.

- **Analysis of Female Tourists Preference of Social Media Platforms while Destination Selection**

The second objective of the study was to analyse the female tourists preference of social media platforms for destination selection. Table 3 indicates the preference of various social media platforms used by female travellers from Punjab state. Rankings were given based on the weighted mean score i.e. platform with highest weighted mean score has got highest rank. Thus, the findings from table 3 indicates that female travellers are highly dependent on Google Search for their destination selection as Google Search got the first rank followed by Instagram and Youtube. Whatsapp got 4th rank, Travel Blogs got 5th rank and Wikitravel and Pinterest jointly got 6th rank. Wikipedia received 7th rank, Consumer review sites got 8th rank, Tripadvisor and Twitter jointly received 9th rank and Facebook received 10th rank which indicates that consumer review sites, TripAdvisor, Twitter and Facebook does not influence destination selection of female travellers of Punjab State.

• **Comparison of Male and Female Preference of Social Media Platforms for Destination Selection**

The third objective of the study was to compare the male and female tourists preference of social media platforms while selection of tourism destination. Findings from the table 2 and 3 suggested that Youtube, Google Search and TripAdvisor are extremely influential social media platforms for male travellers from Punjab State whereas Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest are least influential social media platforms for destination selection for male tourists of Punjab State. The findings from table 2 and 3 also revealed that Google search, Instagram and Youtube are most influential social media platforms for destination selection and TripAdvisor, Twitter and Facebook are the least influential social media platforms for female tourists destination selection from Punjab State.

Table 2: Analysis of Various Social Media Platforms used by Male Tourists

Platforms	Not at all influential	Slightly influential	Somewhat influential	Moderately influential	Extremely influential	Total	Weighted Total	Weighted Mean	Ranking
Facebook	18	10	10	18	14	70	210	3	9
Twitter	18	10	14	14	14	70	206	2.942857	10
Instaram	10	2	16	18	24	70	254	3.628571	6
Youtube	2	4	6	16	42	70	302	4.314286	1
Whatsapp	18	10	12	8	22	70	216	3.085714	8
Pinterest	18	14	16	12	10	70	192	2.742857	11
Travel Blogs	8	4	20	20	18	70	246	3.514286	7
Wkikitravel	8	6	12	20	24	70	256	3.657143	5
Tripadvisor	6	10	8	14	32	70	266	3.8	3
Wikipedia	8	2	16	22	22	70	258	3.685714	4
Consumer review sites	8	6	12	22	22	70	254	3.628571	6
Google Search	6	4	8	22	30	70	276	3.942857	2

Table 3: Analysis of Various Social Media Platforms Used by Female Tourists

Platforms	Not at all influential	Slightly influential	Somewhat influential	Moderately influential	Extremely influential	Total	Weighted Total	Weighted Mean	Ranking
Facebook	10	10	10	2	22	54	178	3.296296	10
Twitter	8	4	6	12	24	54	202	3.740741	9
Instaram	0	2	6	8	38	54	244	4.518519	2
Youtube	2	6	2	8	36	54	232	4.296296	3
Whatsapp	2	6	10	6	30	54	218	4.037037	4
Pinterest	2	6	8	14	24	54	214	3.962963	6
Travel Blogs	8	0	6	10	30	54	216	4	5
Wkikitravel	8	4	0	12	30	54	214	3.962963	6
Tripadvisor	10	6	0	10	28	54	202	3.740741	9
Wikipedia	4	6	8	8	28	54	212	3.925926	7
Consumer review sites	6	10	0	8	30	54	208	3.851852	8
Google Search	0	6	0	2	46	54	250	4.62963	1

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