

Impact of Social Media on Tourism

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Abstract: *Since the previous ten years, there have been significant changes in the organization of tourist activities due to the extravagant usage of internet and social networking sites. In a very short span it quickly developed into digital hub of exchanging knowledge about a wide range of personal topics. As a result, social media has made a remarkable impact on practically every business and service sector globally. A new era of the tourism business was ushered in by the use of Internet and other information communication technologies or ICT. Social media has become a part of social and economic life in the real world as one of the most effective instruments for online networking.*

Keywords: ICT, Travel inspiration, Digital

I. INTRODUCTION

The contribution of Travel and Tourism Industry in GDP for year 2019 was 6.8% of total economy and 191.3 billion US Dollars. According to travel marketers worldwide as of October 2019, digital advertising expenditure through social media channel is 28% and stands highest among other distribution channels.

Given the experiential nature of tourism, the information created by other travelers is even more important and influential in travelers' information search and decision making processes. Growing numbers of travelers search and consume travel information created by other travelers for their travel planning and share their experience after returning from trips (Cox, Burgess, Sellitto and Buultjens 2009).

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Social media are interactive computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests, and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. Some prominent features of social media applications are:

- Web 2.0 interactive internet-based applications,
- offers user-generated content, which means it is based on the feed made by users, like text posts, comments, photos, audio, videos, etc.
- allows the development of online social networks by connecting a user's profile with those of other individuals

2.1 Objectives

- To analyze the approach and impact of social media on the travel and tourism industries.
- To confer the privileges and drawbacks of social media usage in the context of the tourism industry.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It is based on secondary data in large part and also on personal observations. Secondary data is collected mainly from published government reports, journals, newspapers, and books. In order to have a broader perspective, research through online sources and social websites has been done.

Social Media as a Tourism Industry Trend Setter

Videos and pictures that are **shared** on social media are vigorously followed by people, and hence the impacts are almost equally vigorous. As soon as people follow, they go through the content, interpret it, and act accordingly. In this way, directly or indirectly, people start following trends set by social media posts.

It has undoubtedly altered the way people conduct travel research. These are user-based and allow not only reviews but also input.

Now, users are free to deliver their **online feedback**. The organizations reap the full benefit of the positive feedback as a marketing tool. On the other hand, for the negative ones, they create opportunities to enhance the product and services.

Impact on the infrastructure of the tourism industry:

The infrastructure of the tourism industry includes primary and complementary facilities, equipment, systems, processes, and resources that are compulsory for the functioning of tourism.

Destination: Social media has changed the way people choose their destinations. It is more of a recommendation-based phenomenon these days. Whether it be photos or experiences, trending content mostly pops up while surfing the internet. More of the positive feedback is also playing a catalyst role in the strategic marketing and promotion agendas of the respective organizations. Eventually, users tag the places, and one can get reliable information and pictures about the destination. Instagram, for example, has a special feature called the '#' hash tag. Users tag XYZ and give some description about it, and their shared views are featured in #XYZ.

Travel agents: Statistics show almost 46% of travelers post their holiday reviews on social media, and that only 43% of travelers actually read these reviews. More than 52% of travelers are largely influenced by social media when it comes to travel planning as well.

Social media is an affordable marketing tool for travel agents. Hence, they must grab the opportunity to freeze the deals by becoming a brand that people connect with by offering the right deals and by having expertise in their field. Branding must be done carefully.

The travel agents post the tips, photos, and valuable experiences of customers to ensure further business, and social media definitely disseminates the work and efforts of travel agents. Before

2010, Expedia.com and Travelocity were the only leading online booking sources for travelers. And now there are innumerable, even with comparative data available just a click away.

There are numerous communities and groups on social media that discuss their experiences, usually by sharing pictures. One can also mark his or her location. Hotels have to follow certain guidelines, which are highly anticipated by travelers.

The social media account is also necessitated in order to attract mass online customers. The events and offers are to be introduced from time to time on such pages. These can be related to food festivals, Christmas evening dinners, New Year's Eve dinners, any special event in the city or hotel, etc.

Social Media as a Critical Tool for:

Sharing Experiences: The results provide insights into such motivational factors as personal and community-related benefits through user-generated content. The study reveals a dominance of visual content along with the relevance of generous and community-related motivations. Sharing practices through social media appear as valuable articulations of sociability and emotional support. It is important to understand how old and new technologies overlap and complement each other.

The most popular social media networks for online sharing are those that allow audience control.

Tourists prefer sharing visual content over descriptive content.

There is little "real time" use of social media for holiday content sharing.

Travel inspiration: The term is widely used when it comes to social media and travel. Now days, consumers would hardly decide on their own where to travel and stay or what to do. So, instead of planning, purchasing tickets, and making additional bookings, they would rather seek travel inspiration from their friends, relatives, coworkers, and influencers. Another term that has gained popularity is "FOMO," which stands for "Fear Of Missing Out," and is commonly used for millenials because they are the most active users of social media. Henceforth, with planning, purchasing, experiencing, and sharing on social media, consumers are often inspired and follow them "religiously" to make their future plans. Due to the authenticity of user-generated, or "earned," content, there has been a transformation in not only the travel buying process but also in the post-travel experience. It's a core time for travel marketers to leverage trends and business. As per the survey, 87% of millenials got their travel inspiration from Facebook, while the rest got it from Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram.

IV. CONCLUSION

Social media and tourism marketing are indeed a match made in digital heaven. The statement itself explains the extreme positive impact of social media on tourism and marketing. Technology has undoubtedly brought about significant changes in the labor force. During the last decade, social media emerged as an integral component of marketing. It has emerged as a trend-setter in the tourism industry. It is highly influential in the overall growth of a company and brand recognition. Those who are novice entrepreneurs in the tourism industry or who are already part of the industry get to interact directly with customers and can address their queries, feedback, reviews,

suggestions, complaints, and compliments in no time and in a highly effective way. Thus, both the service provider and the customer are privileged by the use of social media.

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