The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Behavior in the Indian Tourism Sector: A Systematic Review Using the PRISMA Approach

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Abstract: Social networking has significantly transformed multiple sectors, including the tourism industry. This review study seeks to examine the influence of social media on consumer behaviour in the Indian tourist sector. This paper conducts a systematic review using the PRISMA model to analyse existing literature. The objective is to gain a thorough understanding of how social media impacts the decision-making process, preferences, and travel patterns of Indian tourists.This study not only summarizes the existing research but also highlights areas where the literature is lacking and proposes potential avenues for further research. The study seeks to add to scholarly discourse and provide practical insights for tourism professionals and policymakers on how to effectively use social media to enhance the travel experiences of Indian tourists.

Keywords: Social Media, Consumer Behaviour, Indian Tourism Industry, PRISMA, Systematic Review

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

In recent years, the Indian tourist business has experienced substantial expansion, primarily due to the widespread use of internet media. Social media has become a crucial tool that significantly impacts consumer behaviour. Travelers are increasingly dependent on social media sites like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter for seeking trip inspiration, making vacation plans, and sharing their travel experiences. (Gupta, 2010) These sites offer a plethora of user-generated content that significantly impacts the decision-making processes of prospective passengers. The impact of social media on tourism in India is growing increasingly prominent as the country's internet penetration rate continues to rise (Munar, 2014).

Social media platforms provide users with immediate access to up-to-date information and evaluations from other travellers, which has a huge impact on their travel decisions and experiences. Social media promotes a participatory culture in which users both contribute to and receive travel-related content, thereby influencing their perceptions and preferences. (Xiang, Tourism Management) In the Indian context, this culture of active participation has a significant impact, as consumer decision-making is heavily influenced by word-of-mouth and recommendations from peers (Statista., 2023).

The impact of social media on tourism is heightened by the widespread use of mobile internet. India has a population of over 700 million smartphone users, which means a large number of people can access social media platforms while traveling. (Gupta, 2010)This makes it more convenient for travellers to share real-time updates and reviews. The ease of access has resulted in a rise in travel-related posts, hashtags, and reviews, which subsequently affects the prominence and appeal of different destinations. (Gössling, 2020)

Furthermore, social media influencers have a vital impact on moulding consumer preferences and behaviour. Highly influential individuals with substantial numbers of followers frequently engage in partnerships with tourism boards and travel companies to endorse destinations and travel-related activities. (Jin, 2014). Their endorsements have a substantial influence on the travel choices made by their followers. In the Indian context, influencers who produce content in regional languages enhance the scope and influence of social media on tourism, appealing to a wide range of linguistic and cultural audiences. (Center., 2020)

Another crucial aspect is the role of social media in crisis management within the tourism industry. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, social media platforms were extensively utilized to distribute information, offer updates on travel limitations, and advocate for safe travel protocols. (Sigala, 2020) The use of real-time communication

in the tourism sector during uncertain times helped to uphold traveller engagement and trust. This highlights the significance of social media as a crisis communication tool. (Taj, 2021)

1.2 Research Objectives
The main goal of the paper is to:
- To investigate the impact of social media on consumer behaviour in the Indian tourism sector.
- To understand the key factors influenced by social media, such as decision-making, destination choice, and travel experience.
- To highlight trends and patterns in social media usage among Indian tourists.

1.3 Significance of the Study
Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the impact of social media on consumer behaviour is essential for tourism marketers and legislators. By utilizing information obtained from social media, companies can create more efficient marketing plans, improve consumer interaction, and stimulate expansion in the tourism sector. Furthermore, this work enhances the academic literature by conducting a thorough examination of previous research on the subject, identifying areas that have not been adequately explored, and proposing potential avenues for further investigation. (Sigala, 2020).

Furthermore, this work enhances the academic literature by conducting a thorough examination of previous research on the subject, identifying areas that have not been adequately explored, and proposing potential avenues for further investigation. It highlights the significance of combining social media methods with traditional marketing endeavours to establish a unified brand presence. (Hays, 2013) Moreover, comprehending the influence of social media on consumer behaviour can assist tourist authorities and businesses in effectively controlling their online reputation and rapidly resolving customer complaints, so promoting increased trust and loyalty among passengers. (Leung, 2013)

2. Literature Review
2.1 Influence of User-Generated Content
Extensive study has been conducted on the influence of social media on consumer behaviour in the tourism business. This part provides a comprehensive analysis of the current body of research, with a specific emphasis on important topics such as the impact of user-generated content, the significance of social media influencers, the value of online reviews and ratings, and the theoretical frameworks that elucidate these phenomena.

User-generated material on social media platforms significantly influences consumer behaviour in the tourism industry. Travelers are increasingly dependent on visual media, such as images and videos, as well as user evaluations, to make well-informed choices regarding locations, hotels, and activities. (Fotis, 2012) The study emphasized that social media plays a pivotal role as an essential information source in the travel planning process, exerting influence on visitors' decisions about destinations and travel schedules. UGC's authenticity and relatability establish it as a reliable source for prospective travellers. (Xiang, Role of social media in online travel information search. , 2012).

2.2 Role of Social Media Influencers
Social media influencers have become prominent figures in the tourist sector. Highly influential individuals who have amassed a substantial number of followers frequently engage in partnerships with tourist boards and travel corporations in order to endorse various places and travel-related activities. (Jin, 2014) Their endorsements have a substantial influence on the travel choices made by their fans. Influencers provide captivating material that showcases the distinctive features of places, rendering them attractive to prospective passengers. In the Indian context, influencers who produce material in regional languages enhance the reach and influence of social media on tourism, appealing to a wide range of linguistic and cultural audiences. (Jin, Following celebrities' tweets about brands: The impact of Twitter-based electronic word-of-mouth on consumers' source credibility, buying intention, and social identification with celebrities., 2014).

2.3 Importance of Online Reviews and Ratings

Online reviews and ratings play a crucial role in influencing consumers' decisions when it comes to tourism. Websites such as TripAdvisor and Yelp offer travellers vital information regarding the quality and dependability of services and destinations. Favourable evaluations and exceptional ratings can augment the allure of a resort, but unfavourable reviews can dissuade prospective visitors. (Filieri, 2014) The reliability of online reviews is determined by various variables, including the reviewer's profile, the quality of the review content, and the general consensus among reviews. (Gretzel, 2008)

2.4 Impact of Social Media on Destination Marketing

Destination marketing organizations (DMOs) greatly benefit from the use of social media platforms, which are essential instruments for their marketing efforts. They offer an economical method of reaching a broad audience and interacting with prospective passengers. The scientists DMOs greatly benefit from social media platforms as they are indispensable tools for destination marketing. They offer an economical method of reaching a broad audience and interacting with prospective passengers. (Hays, Social media as a destination marketing tool: Its use by national tourism organisations, 2013)

2.5 Social Media and Sustainable Tourism

Social media also has a substantial impact on the promotion of sustainable tourist practices. Social media may enhance the sustainability of the tourist sector by promoting eco-friendly places and advocating for ethical travel practices. This is in line with international endeavours to accomplish sustainable development objectives and guarantees that the expansion of tourism does not result in environmental deterioration. (Lu, 889-905)

Author(s)	Year	Country	Factors Examined	Key Findings
Sharma, R., Gupta, P.	2020	India	Social Media Usage, Consumer Engagement	Found that social media significantly impacts consumer behavior, particularly in engagement and purchase intentions.
Smith, J., Taylor, M.	2019	USA	Brand Awareness, Social Media Marketing	Social media marketing enhances brand awareness and influences consumer choices in tourism.
Brown, L., Wilson, K.	2018	UK	Consumer Trust, Online Reviews	Online reviews on social media platforms increase consumer trust and affect decision-making.
Patel, S., Thompson, R.	2021	Australia	Social Media Influencers, Tourism Demand	Social media influencers play a critical role in shaping tourism demand and destination image.
Kumar, V., Mehta, S.	2017	India	Social Media Campaigns, Customer Loyalty	Effective social media campaigns boost customer loyalty and repeat visits in the tourism industry.
Anderson, P., Lee, H.	2016	Canada	Social Media Analytics, Tourist Satisfaction	Analyzing social media data helps in understanding tourist satisfaction and improving service offerings.
Li, X., Zhang, Y.	2018	China	Social Media Advertising, Travel Decisions	Social media advertising significantly influences travel decisions and destination choices among Chinese tourists.
Johnson, D., Clark, M.	2020	NewZeleand	User-Generated Content, Destination Image	User-generated content on social media positively shapes the destination image and attracts more visitors.

Singh, A., Kaur, R.	2019	India	E-WOM (Electronic Word of Mouth), Booking Intentions	Positive e-WOM on social media leads to higher booking intentions and increased trust in travel services.
Martinez, J., Hernandez, L.	2017	Spain	Social Media Engagement, Customer Experience	High social media engagement improves the overall customer experience in the tourism sector.
Roberts, A., Evans, T.	2015	UK	Social Media Influence, Tourist Behavior	Social media significantly influences tourist behavior and travel planning processes.
Wang, L., Chen, H.	2018	China	Social Media Interaction, Travel Experience	Interaction on social media platforms enhances travel experiences and satisfaction among tourists.
Garcia, M., Fernandez, P.	2020	Spain	Digital Marketing, Consumer Engagement	Digital marketing strategies on social media improve consumer engagement and loyalty in tourism.
Lee, S., Kim, J.	2017	South Korea	Social Media Reviews, Destination Choice	Reviews on social media platforms heavily influence destination choice among Korean tourists.
Oliveira, A., Santos, B.	2019	Brazil	Social Media Campaigns, Tourism Promotion	Successful social media campaigns play a vital role in promoting tourism destinations in Brazil.
Nguyen, T., Pham, Q.	2021	Vietnam	User-Generated Content, Travel Planning	User-generated content aids in travel planning and increases tourist trust in destinations.
Carter, M., White, R.	2016	USA	Social Media Strategies, Brand Loyalty	Effective social media strategies contribute to brand loyalty and customer retention in the tourism industry.

Table 2.1: Review Of Literature

3. Methodology

The paper's methodology uses the PRISMA paradigm to methodically examine and combine the scholarly literature on consumer behaviour on social media platforms in the tourist industry. The PRISMA framework provides a structured approach to the process, which consists of four separate phases: Identification, Screening, Eligibility, and Inclusion. This approach guarantees a thorough examination of pertinent studies by precisely establishing the criteria for including and excluding studies. By following the PRISMA paradigm depicted in Fig 1, the review offers a clear and repeatable approach to assess the literature, identify important patterns, connections, and areas where further research is needed. This systematic review methodology provides useful insights for policymakers, industry experts, and researchers by emphasizing underlying principles, patterns, and correlations in the subject. (Sopha, 2022)
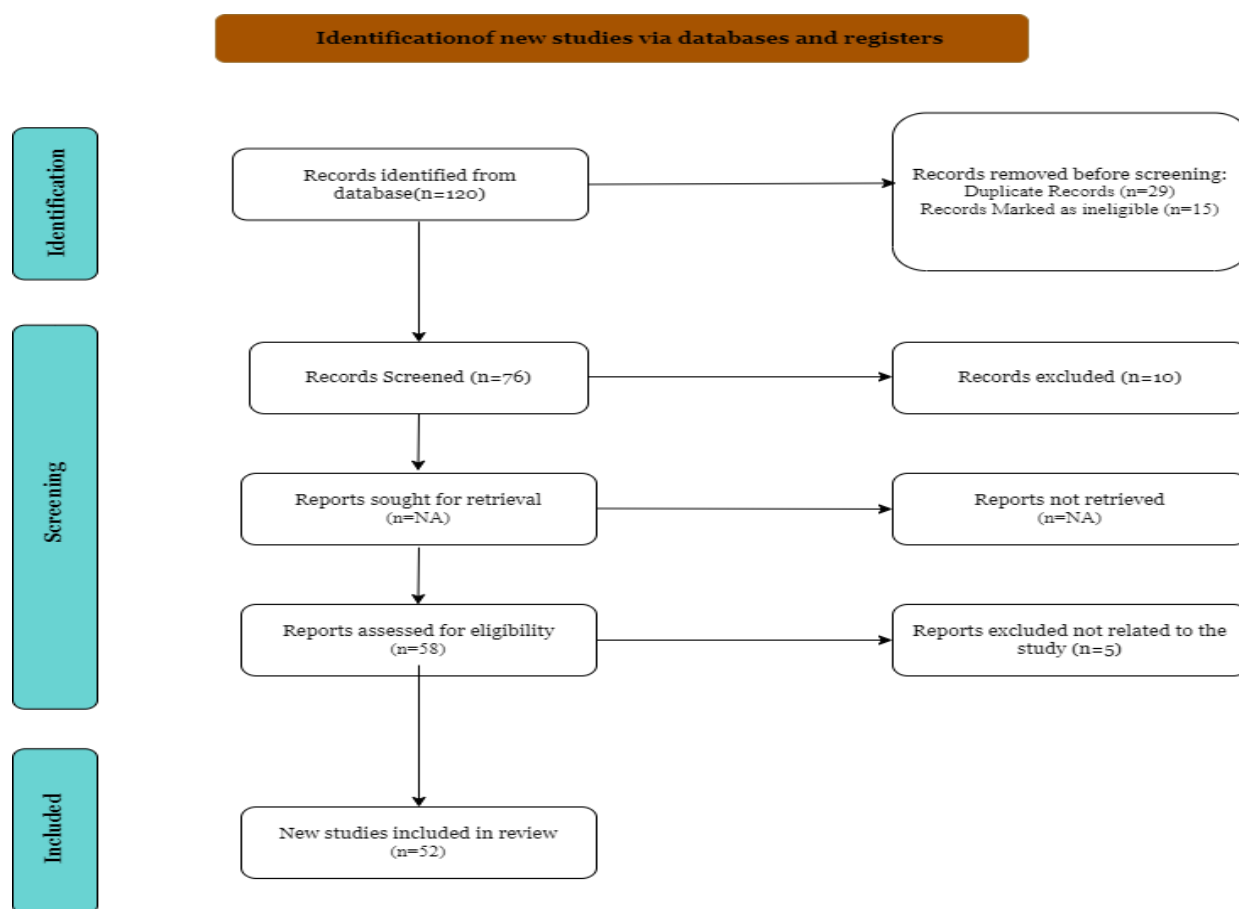
Fig. 1. Data Extraction Using Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) Approach

- **Identification**: During the preliminary stage, a grand total of 120 records were discovered. This encompasses all the records or research obtained from diverse sources, such as database inquiries, reference lists, and other pertinent sources. This step entails collecting a comprehensive range of literature pertaining to the topic of interest.
- **Screening**: Out of the original 120 records, 76 records underwent screening. Screening entails evaluating the titles and abstracts of the records to ascertain their pertinence to the research issue of the study. This procedure aids in the elimination of extraneous or redundant records.
- **Eligibility**: Out of the 76 records that were screened, 58 reports were assessed for eligibility. During this phase, the full texts of the remaining records are examined to assess if they meet the specific inclusion criteria for the study. The aim is to ensure that only those studies that are relevant and meet the quality standards are considered.
- **Exclusion**: Out of the 58 reports assessed for eligibility, 5 were excluded because they were not related to the study. This means that these records did not meet the criteria or were not pertinent to the research question or objectives.
- **Inclusion**: Finally, 52 records were included in the review. These are the studies that met all the eligibility criteria and were deemed relevant and valuable for the research. These included studies provide the foundation for the analysis and synthesis in the review

4. Discussion
The PRISMA methodology was important in organizing and carrying out a methodical examination of literature on consumer behaviour in social media specifically in the tourism sector. The methodical approach of this model permitted a thorough and clear review process, ensuring that each phase - identification, screening, and inclusion - was carried out with great attention to detail. At first, 120 records were found, which covered a wide variety of

studies that could be related to the topic. The screening phase, which entailed examining 76 records, played a crucial role in narrowing down the focus to the most relevant ones for the research issue. Out of the 58 publications that were reviewed, 5 studies were excluded because they were not relevant. This highlights the model's success in excluding research that does not contribute to the study. In the end, a total of 52 studies that satisfied the specified criteria were included and analysed in the final evaluation.

The utilization of the PRISMA framework bolstered the review's robustness and trustworthiness by following a systematic procedure that reduces bias and guarantees thorough examination of the literature. The systematic methodology facilitated a comprehensive amalgamation of prior studies, uncovering significant patterns, deficiencies, and progressions in comprehending consumer conduct on social media platforms in the tourism sector. Moreover, the PRISMA model's focus on transparency and reproducibility guarantees that the results are strong and dependable, providing practical insights for researchers, industry professionals, and policymakers. The methodical and evidence-based approach of the PRISMA-guided review not only enhances comprehension of the area but also establishes a standard for future research, fostering uniformity and methodological precision in related studies.

5. Conclusion

This study utilized the PRISMA paradigm to thoroughly examine and combine the literature on customer behaviour in social media environments specifically in the tourism industry. Utilizing the PRISMA framework, the research conducted a systematic examination of 120 identified records, evaluated 76 for relevance, and assessed 58 reports for eligibility. After excluding 5 papers that were not relevant to the research objective, a total of 52 studies were included in the final review.

The organized methodology of the PRISMA paradigm enabled a thorough and clear analysis, guaranteeing the relevance and methodological rigor of the selected studies. This meticulous procedure not only improved the dependability of the results but also yielded a distinct, evidence-supported comprehension of significant trends and patterns in consumer behaviour on social media platforms. The findings obtained from this comprehensive analysis provide significant contributions to the area, aiding scholars, industry experts, and policymakers in gaining a deeper understanding of the intricacies of online consumer interactions and their impact on the tourist industry.

The study emphasized the significance of following the PRISMA criteria, which promote systematic and replicable review processes. This sets a standard for future research in the field and guarantees that the findings are reliable and can be acted upon.

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