

Travel Motivation Among Millennials- Role of Social Media on Tourism in Madhya Pradesh

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Abstract

The emergence of new internet-enabled technologies and social media, with increasing usage of smartphones, have transformed communication in the tourism industry. Social media has enabled tourists to search, share, and co-create tourism-related content. It has become one of the potential sources for tourists to plan, organize, and fulfill their expectations. The following paper aims to explore the role of social media on tourists' intentions to visit tourist destinations in Madhya Pradesh. The research design explores already available and published reading materials along with performing a primary data survey. The study collects responses from 170 tourists through a structured questionnaire. Analysis of the same was conducted using descriptive techniques like percentages, charts, and F test based on gender in Excel. The key findings reveal a strong influence of social media on tourism and travelers who primarily rely on social media for information searches and planning their vacations. Destination managers and travellers being the primary stakeholders have been using social media for co-creating (e-word of mouth), sharing, and disseminating tourism experiences that have led to the emergence of new business models. The study aims to assist tourism destination managers in managing their online communications to enhance their customer loyalty and destination branding through customer engagement and retention through social media marketing applications. The research study will offer unique dimensions for the extensive use of social media marketing for tourism destination image and tourist intention.

Keywords: Destination Image, Millennial, Social Media, Tourism Destinations, Tourism Intention

1. Introduction

Internet technologies and applications have transformed the way people communicate and share information. Increased internet usage has resulted in the development of new ICT tools and mobile applications for creating, sharing, and exchanging information to transform the traditional tourism industry. Web 2.0 technological applications have reshaped traditional one-way marketing communication to two ways, wherein internet users are the co-creators and collaborators. Tourism "information-intensive" industry, Web 2.0 caters to the needs of both the demand and supply of tourism for the generation, sharing, and diffusion of information. It has altered the way people plan, gather, share, and consume tourism (Buhalis, 2019b). The paradigm shifts in marketing

threatened the old business models paving the way for new models through strategic interventions. Marketers have adopted new platforms that allow them to create, disseminate, and communicate information with the users allowing them to share information (in the form of small text, images, videos, and more) with them and amongst each other of their travel destinations and experiences on real-time basis across several platforms. The tourism industry was one of the early users of Web 2.0 technologies and social media channels consisting of blogs, virtual communities, social networks, wikis, tagging, and collaborative sharing of files (on Facebook, Instagram, Flickr, YouTube, Wiki Travel, etc.) (Conti & Lexhagen, 2020). The seamless integration of mobile devices and internet technologies has a huge potential influence on decision-making and behaviour.

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Over a third of international travellers use mobile social networks for gathering and sharing information, while this is higher in fast-developing countries like India having, higher mobile and internet penetration. Social media platforms have empowered consumers to determine the creation and dissemination of information, customizing products on dynamic basis in a cost-efficient manner, and meeting the continuously evolving consumer expectations and behaviour. It has brought both functionality and emotional appeal to the existing relationship between consumers and suppliers, devising new complex business models that are gaining substantial attention and outlines the new decision-making framework. User-generated content on social media is evidently creating a similar effect (AIDA) as traditional paid advertisements on rational consumer buying decisions.

According to reports by Statista, social media advertisement spending globally in 2023 was nearly US\$ 270 billion, which is projected to surpass US\$ 300 billion by 2024 with an annual growth rate of 4.56% and an expected market volume of US\$ 1.37 billion by 2027. Facebook is the most popular platform, followed by Youtube, Whatsapp, Instagram, and others. These platforms have been successful in creating brand awareness and generating prospective leads from user-generated content (images and videos), as well as engaging existing customers with more visibility and customization for long-term retention. Social media is expected to broaden the travel outlook, aiding decisions of both the travellers and marketers or service providers assisting in policy formulation. Destination managers and marketers are rigorously making efforts on both online and physical platforms to create customized product offerings with better insights into tourists and their expectations.

The huge volume of information available on the internet and Web 2.0 (smart internet-enabled technological applications) has facilitated continuous interaction and exchange of information, hugely influencing destination choice and behaviour of tourists. The research reviews the literature to examine use of social media for tourism marketing and promotion of destinations. It analyses the perception and use

of social media for tourism planning and experience sharing during or post travel by the respondents to gain insights through a structured survey. It will be instrumental in facilitating the destination managers across the destinations in Madhya Pradesh to develop the destination image and branding with effective use of social media.

2. Literature Review

Travel behaviour and motivations are mostly observed from previous researches on consumer behaviour that is most conceptualized in different ideas, factors and influences like of technology, ethics or generation Y (Cohen *et al.*, 2014). Tourism industry strongly depends on travel motivations and behaviour that is reflected in travel decision making and choice of destination (Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011). Choice of destination has been the focal point of various researchers investigating the influence of several factors like culture, personal drive, finances or experiences to name a few and their implications in tourism marketing for product development and enhanced competitive value advantage (Ventaktesh, 2006; Zhang *et al.*, 2018; Jahmani *et al.*, 2020). It becomes imperative to understand tourism motivations and the variables which initiate the decision making process to a choice of destination and travel behaviour (Liezal *et al.*, 2012; Zhang & Watson IV, 2020; Gvaramadze, 2022b).

Tourism is information centric domain that depends on extensive search of dynamic information, information and communication technology has evolved the travel behaviour and motivations (Buhalis *et al.*, 2013). Digital means have partnered with individuals and organizations alike to create, share and search information, ideas or virtual networks. Social media has converged technology through collaborative and integrated complex systems to bring synergy amongst all the stakeholders (Tussadiyah & Zach, 2013; Srinivasan, 2015; Ganguly, 2018; Adeola & Evans, 2020; Chang & Katrichis, 2020). Easy access to information brought forward by internet enabled smartphones have created a value addition to users giving convenience to search, share, review or recommend obliterating the geographical boundaries

(Zhang *et al.*, 2018). It has a significant role in tourism planning and behaviour with adoption of new business models by tourism organizations. It has tailored tourism products and services on social media platforms integrating economically competitive key features with their revenue model and portfolio (Gohil, 2015; Nikolskaya *et al.*, 2019; Karatsoli & Nathanail, 2020) that relies on building strong trustworthy relations with clients based on interactive, engaging and educative sustainable communication and distribution channels (Sivathanu & Pillai, 2014; Ahuja & Khazanchi, 2016). Tourism studies in present or future examine the key concepts consisting of motivations, values and attitude, self-concept, perception, decision making, satisfaction and loyalty in cross cultural, emerging issues like technology, environmental consciousness and so on to assist tourist's decision making (Bell & Babyak, 2018; Rather *et al.*, 2019).

2.1 Social Media Creates Awareness and Positive e-WOM for Destination

Tourism industry like other industries have largely benefitted from increased penetration of smart technologies- mobile phones, internet applications and social media (Buhalis *et al.*, 2013; Xiang *et al.*, 2014; So *et al.*, 2020). Adoption of new communication technologies and dedicated use of social media platforms for more than three hours by generation Y and generation Z have led to several changes in consumer buying behaviour and cognitive decision making (Tomar *et al.*, 2019). It has changed the acquisition and dispersion of tangible/intangible resources to create new e-business models (Gretzel *et al.*, 2015). Social media plays a significant role in information sharing & retrieval and promoting long term consumer relationship (Gvaramadze, 2022a). Social media has a noteworthy influence on users inspiring them to plan their travel, experience tourism products but also disseminating vast information at all stages of tourism that influences their travel choices, expectations and rationalistic decision making (Fotis *et al.*, 2012; Chu *et al.*, 2020; Opute *et al.*, 2020; Gvaramadze, 2022b). Numerous research studies have outlined the role of social media in creating awareness on social and communal sensitive issues among the users by dissemination of huge amount of both

positive and negative information. Few researchers highlight increased public awareness on biodiversity, exotic or invasive species and also raising donations through global community campaigns to save near to extinct species changing people behaviour. Many researchers have previously explored the best social media channels and prominent search engines used by tourists characterized by their demographic, geographic or psychographic domain to assist marketers to strategically target different set of audience and improve reliability of tourism offerings (Dagnew, 2014; Gretzel *et al.*, 2015; Kabia & Srinivaasan, 2020; Heras-Pedrosa *et al.*, 2020).

Suggested use of social media ads engage viewers through stories, reels or other tools with audio-visual effects for consciousness on communal, developing pro-environmental or socio-economic matters. Viewers become advocates of conservation and legally binding agents to check suspicious activities and report malicious or illegal practices driving social change and reinforcing sustainable co-existence (Sivathanu & Pillai, 2014; Zhang *et al.*, 2015; Carr *et al.*, 2016; Chourasia, 2018; Hafner *et al.*, 2020; Bora & Sahu, 2022). New age technological advances like artificial intelligence, search engine optimization, virtual networks can be used effectively to reach larger audience through aptly drafted credible and educative messages to drive socio-behavioural changes (Gohil, 2015; Bell & Babyak, 2018). Tourism providers and destination management operators should largely take into consideration the both the fundamental aspects of social media in terms of misinterpretation of the message that may lead to exploitation and perpetuation of fallacious perception (Bergman *et al.*, 2022).

2.2 Social Media Marketing has a Significant Positive Influence on Tourists' Intention to Visit

User generated content (visuals, opinion or recommendations) created on social media using internet applications is identified as highly credible type of promotion that inspires and impact potential travellers' choice of destination, planning and behaviour. e-WOM had a significant positive impact on attitude of tourists wherein attitude is having a mediating relation

between factors influencing tourist behaviour for using social media to choose travel destination. (Winarko & Husna, 2020). Consumer generated content on social media applications- blogs/vlogs, share, comment or like, review sites such as trip advisor and others have undermined the conventional destination marketing organizations gaining distinction among both the consumers and suppliers for communicating, managing and building destination image and loyalty reaching to a wider audience (Staro Peceny *et al.*, 2020; Bergman *et al.*, 2022). Various researchers have studied the strong relation of social media as indicated previously for choosing a travel destination, planning and fulfilling the trip by Gen Y & Z (Werenowska, 2020; Nur'afifah & Prihantoro, 2021). Social media stickiness that emerge as an important variable guaranteeing success of online travel communities emphasizes gratification and motivation provided by social media that transmits in his travel intentions (Chang & Katrichis, 2020; Jahmani *et al.*, 2020).

Digital media convergence with varied technological platforms to disseminate multimedia content brings interactivity on demand and convenience 24*7 globally have leveraged tourism consumption across the boundaries to retain and engage users as shown in Figure 1 below (Gretzel *et al.*, 2000; Viswanathan *et al.*, 2017; Werenowska, 2020). According to several reports digital consumers spend on an average two hours a day on social media and messengers that varies with geographies and demography with an average of 2 hours 29 minutes while millennial usage is nearly 3 hours and Gen Z spends 4.5 hours (Sivathanu & Pillai, 2014; Hausmann *et al.*, 2018) (*X/Twitter: Number of Users Worldwide 2024 | Statista*, 2023). The most used applications on internet are chats and messaging with 95.7% followed by social media with 95.2% users. YouTube gathers highest number of users ahead of Google and Facebook (Jackson & Ahuja, 2016; Kumar & Shekhar, 2020). The highest ranked reason with 60.2% respondents in agreement is finding information followed by staying in touch with friends or family (54.7%). Researchers have argued destination positive image and awareness as instrumental in increasing tourism to a destination emphasizing on behavioural influence reiterating their intention to visit or revisit

on shared information and experiences (Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011; Java *et al.*, 2014).

3. Methodology

Travel behaviour is strategically significant for planning and consumption of different tourism information and products largely dominated by social media and web 2.0. Several researchers are interested to understand the role of social media on various aspects of tourism -antecedents and determinants.

3.1 Data Collection and Sample

The study employs a descriptive analysis to evaluate use of social media platforms for tourism in Madhya Pradesh within the millennial of Bhopal district of Madhya Pradesh to search for travel related information and share their experiences.

3.2 Measurement Scale and Statistical Tool

The researcher undertakes a systematic survey for collecting primary data with the use of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two parts consisting of demographic information in part 1 and part 2 consisting of statements to gain insight on general usage of social media (seeking information, reading reviews and post) and travel motivation and decision making. The above statements are measured on a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) based

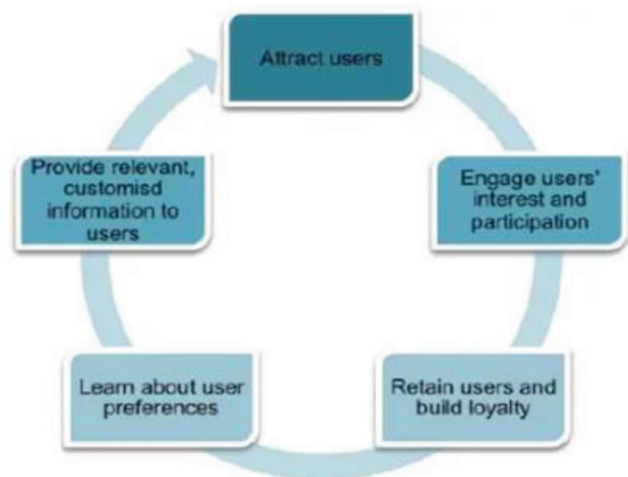


Figure 1. A Cycle of key steps for successful social media marketing (Gretzel *et al.*, 2000).

on agreement or disagreement. These statements are further analysed to explain travel behaviour at different stages-travel motivation, choice of destination, sources of information, travel planning, sharing and gathering useful information during travel and post travel.

The reliability of the questionnaire was checked by Cronbach alpha value (>.0785). Google forms were floated among more than 200 respondents using snowball sampling technique within the target sample of a private college of Bhopal, out of which we received 170 complete responses were analysed.

IBM SPSS 25.0 is used for reliability, descriptive statistics and ANOVA to examine perception and use of social media for search of information, travel decision and satisfaction based on demographic features.

4. Analysis and Findings

Social Media has taken a prominent position bringing out notable changes in dynamic marketing communication system with increasing landscape of information technology. The key tourist’s observations, behaviour and interactions on social media channels for building effective strategies directed towards targeted groups is a useful promotional tool.

4.1 Demographic Profile

Table 1 depicts the demographic and socio-economic description of the respondents. The results showcase the gender distribution comprises of 41.8% male and 58.2% female. The majority of the respondents (77.6%) belonged to 18-25 years age group, 25-32 years was 17.6% and 32-39 years was 4.7%. 68.2% respondents are graduates, 17.6% are post graduates, 4.2% have completed some diploma and rest 10% pursued some education. Annual family income of 50.6% respondents is less than Rs 5 lacs, 21.2% was Rs 5-7.50 lacs, 10% was Rs. 7.50-10 lacs, 5.3% was Rs 10-12.5 lacs, 6.5% each was Rs 12.5-15 lacs and Rs 15 lacs above respectively. 50.6% respondents came to know about tourism destinations and allied aspects from social media websites and applications like YouTube, Facebook, and so on that is same as family relatives, friends and others, 34.1% from advertisements in

electronic media and mass media like websites, digital boards and other traditional means of advertising.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 outlines the descriptive statistics of statements. It gives mean, standard deviation, variance, skewness and kurtosis value. The calculated statistical value of

Table 1. Description of the respondents

	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	71	41.8%
	Female	99	58.2%
Age	18-25 years	132	77.6%
	25-32 years	30	17.6%
	32-39 years	8	4.7%
Education	Graduation	116	68.2%
	Post Graduation	30	17.6%
	Diploma	7	4.2%
	Any other	17	10%
Marital Status	Unmarried	137	80.6%
	Married	33	19.4%
Occupation	Student	121	71.2%
	Service in Govt.	12	7.1%
	Business	13	7.6%
Annual Family Income	Service in Private	24	14.1%
	< 5 lacs	86	50.6%
	lacs	36	21.2%
	7.50-10 lacs	17	10.0%
	10-12.5 lacs	9	5.3%
	12.50-15 lacs	11	6.5%
Source of Information	Above 15 lacs	11	6.5%
	Brochures / leaflets/ billboards advertisements at MP Tourism	51	30.0%
	Tour Operators	18	10.6%
	Websites	42	24.7%
	Social Media – blogs, Facebook, YouTube etc.	86	50.6%
Use of Social Media in a day	Advertisements or articles, reports in newspapers, television, radio etc	58	34.1%
	Friends or relative’s recommendations	91	53.5%
	0-1 hour	9	5.3%
	1-2 hours	44	25.9%
	2-3 hours	76	44.7%
	3 hours and above	41	24.1%

skewness and kurtosis is within the acceptable range of +3 to -3 and +10 to -10 respectively. According to results, majority of the respondents perceive (mean value = 4.389) social media is instrumental in gathering, sharing and creating huge amount of tourism information which influence travel plans and behaviour of travellers. The mean value of 4.27 shows a large number of respondents gather travel or destination related information on social media platforms. A higher mean value of 4.047 strongly advocates influence of social media on destination branding and image.

Table 3 shows an overall comparative depiction of perceived use and actual use of social media for tourism related aspects - destination choice, travel planning, gathering or sharing user generated content through reviews, images, videos on several social media platforms. 94% respondents believe social media is most actively used channel for sharing information while 88% agreed using social media for gathering travel related information. Nearly 89% respondents believe social media influences their destination choice while only 78% agree it somewhat influences their travel choice and plans. Around 70% use it to share their pictures, videos, reviews, and other experiences during or post travel (as seen in Figure 2).

To analyse the hypothesis based on assumption about perceived and actual use of social media in tourism related aspects, ANOVA test was conducted based on demographic features.

Figure 3 shows results of one-way ANOVA test conducted to understand whether there is a significant difference in perception about social media for tourism between male and female. The P value of 0.002851 (p value <0.05%) indicates a significant difference in perception based on gender. Males believe social media is used much more extensively for sharing information, gathering information and influence their travel choices.

H_{0_1} : There is no significant difference between perception about use of social media for tourism based on gender.

H_{1_1} : There is a significant difference between perception about use of social media for tourism based on gender.

Figure 4 depicts the results of actual usage of social media in tourism and related aspects. The P value of 0.005309 (p value <0.05%) indicates a significant difference in actual behaviour or use of social media for tourism based on gender (as shown in Figure 4). Travel choices of females regarding destination or else is more influenced by social media among females rather than males as they use social media more to gather information about travel rather males use it more for sharing experiences post travel.

H_{0_2} : There is no significant difference between actual use of social media for tourism based on gender.

H_{1_2} : There is a significant difference between actual use of social media for tourism based on gender.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of variables

Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Social media helps in creating or sharing information about tourism destinations/ and promoting tourism in Madhya Pradesh.	4.388	0.721	0.520	-1.692	5.111
Social media helps in gathering information about tourism destinations and making a rational travel choice.	4.365	0.757	0.573	-1.462	3.428
Social media influences the choice of destination and travel behaviour.	4.265	0.771	0.595	-1.196	2.490
I search or gather information about travel destinations in Madhya Pradesh (reviews, images, videos or blogs) prior to travel.	4.271	0.750	0.562	-1.084	1.863
Social Media (reviews / images/ videos /comments) influence your final decision making and choices of tour destinations.	4.047	0.860	0.739	-0.876	0.918
I use social media to share my experience of a tourism destination (via comments, reviews, images or videos) on social media during or post travel.	3.924	1.035	1.071	-0.778	-0.008
Rate your overall experience of using social media for tourism planning (choice of destination, products, and activities):	3.859	0.883	0.780	-0.649	0.586

Table 3. Comparison on Perception and actual use of social media for tourism

No of People	Perception about social media			Actual use of social media for tourism related aspects (behaviour)		
	Social media helps in creating or sharing information about tourism	Social media helps in making a travel decision	Social media influences destination choice and travel behaviour	I gather information about destinations (reviews, images, videos or blogs) prior to travel	Social media influence my travel plans, choice and behaviour	I use social media to share my experience (via reviews, images or videos) during or post travel
Strongly Agree	48.24%	49.41%	42.35%	41.76%	32.35%	35.29%
Agree	45.88%	40.59%	44.71%	46.47%	45.88%	34.12%
Neutral	3.53%	8.24%	11.18%	9.41%	17.06%	20.59%
Disagree	1.18%	0.59%	0.59%	1.76%	3.53%	7.65%
Strongly Disagree	1.18%	1.18%	1.18%	0.59%	1.18%	2.35%

A comparison on perception and actual use of social media in tourism

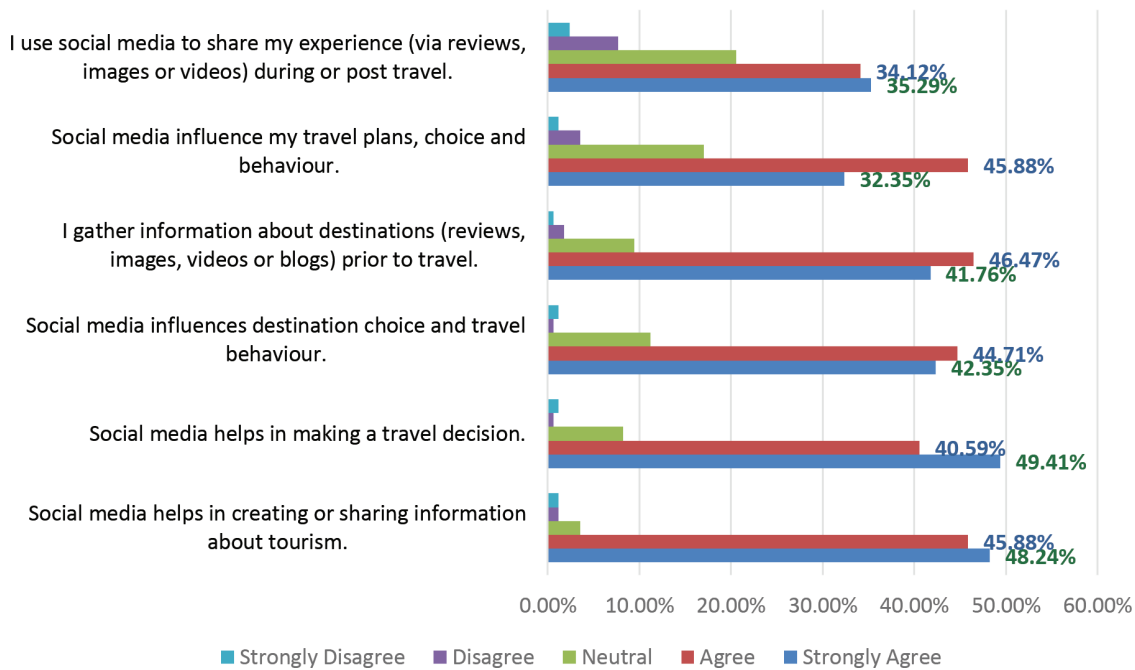


Figure 2. A comparison on perception and actual use of social media in tourism.

Figure 5 displays the results of overall satisfaction of using social media for tourism purpose as indicated by p value = 0.042775 which is less than 0.05%. Males are more satisfied and confident in using social media for travel related purpose by sharing information rather than female counterparts who use it as a popular means to gather information that influences their travel choices and behaviour.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between overall satisfaction of using social media for tourism planning based on gender.

H₁₃: There is a significant difference between overall satisfaction of using social media for tourism planning based on gender.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference between perceived and actual use of social media for tourism based on age.

H₁₄: There is a significant difference between perceived and actual use of social media for tourism based on age.

Figure 6 below shows the perception about social media based on different age groups clearly indicating that

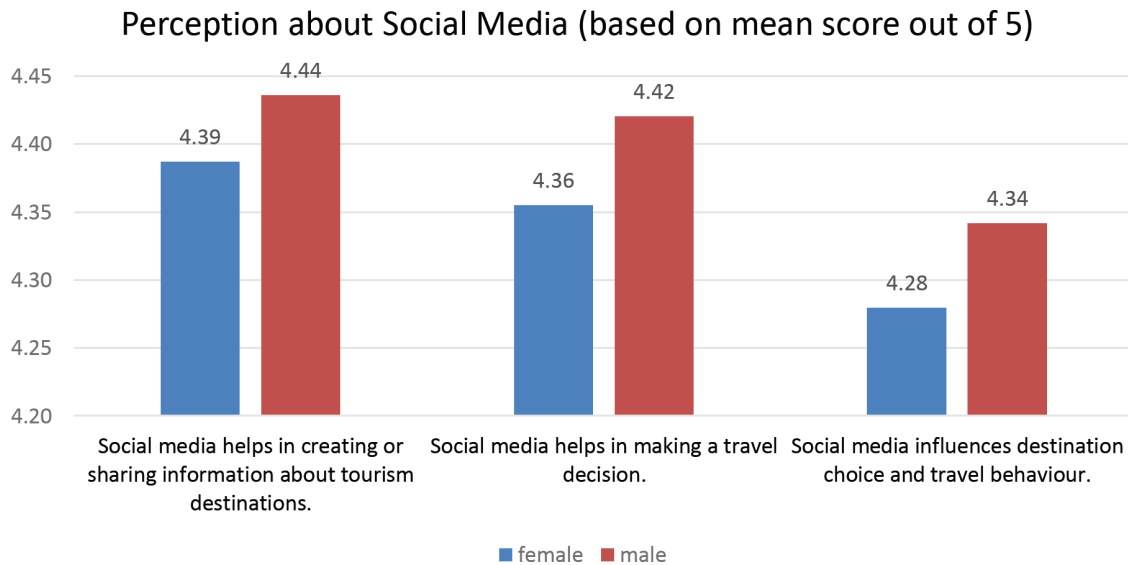


Figure 3. Perception about social media among respondents based on gender.

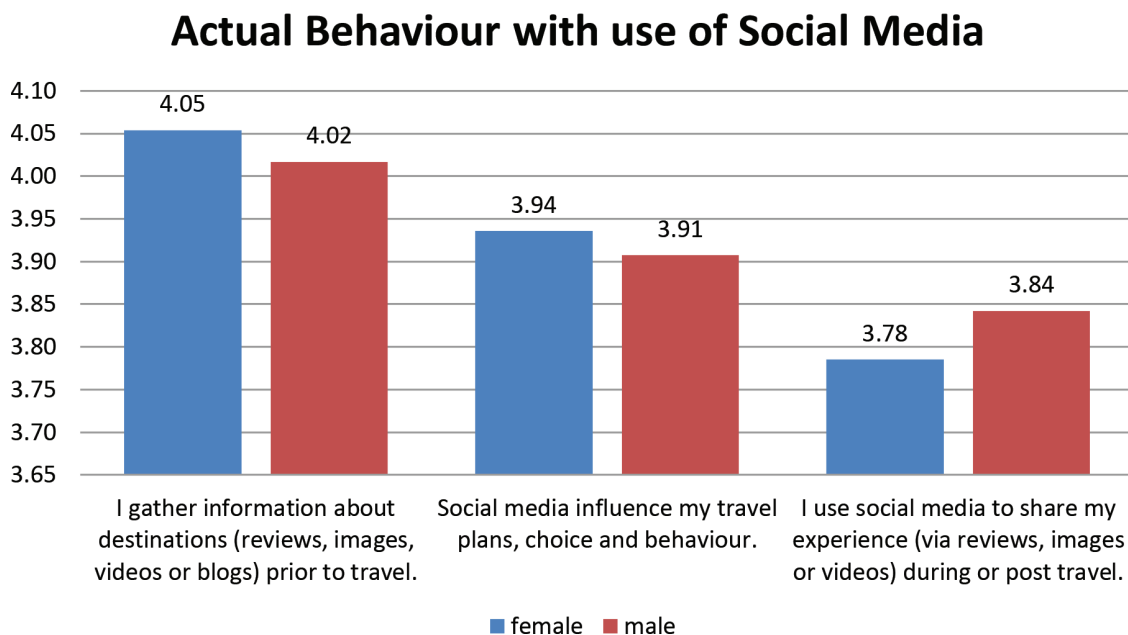


Figure 4. Actual behaviour of using social media in tourism based on gender.

respondents within the age group of 32-39 years have perceived high usefulness of social media in sharing, gathering or creating information influencing their travel choice and behaviour largely than other classes. However, the actual use of social media for search of information is nearly the same in all age groups as shown in Figure 7. Figure 7 depicts age group 25-32 is least likely to get influenced by social media and age group 32-39 years are most likely to share their experiences / reviews during or prior travel in comparison to other age groups.

H_{03} : There is no significant difference between overall satisfaction of using social media for tourism planning based on age.

H_{13} : There is a significant difference between overall satisfaction of using social media for tourism planning based on age.

Figure 8 depicts a contrast between the different age groups of using social media, wherein 25-32 years age

Overall experience of using Social Media for tourism purpose (based on mean score out of 5)

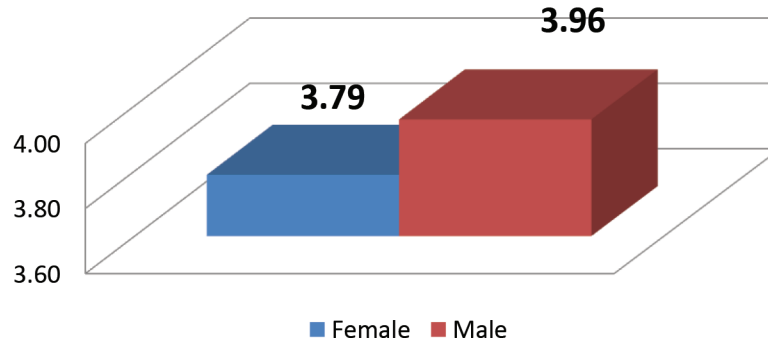


Figure 5. Overall experience of social media use in tourism based on gender.

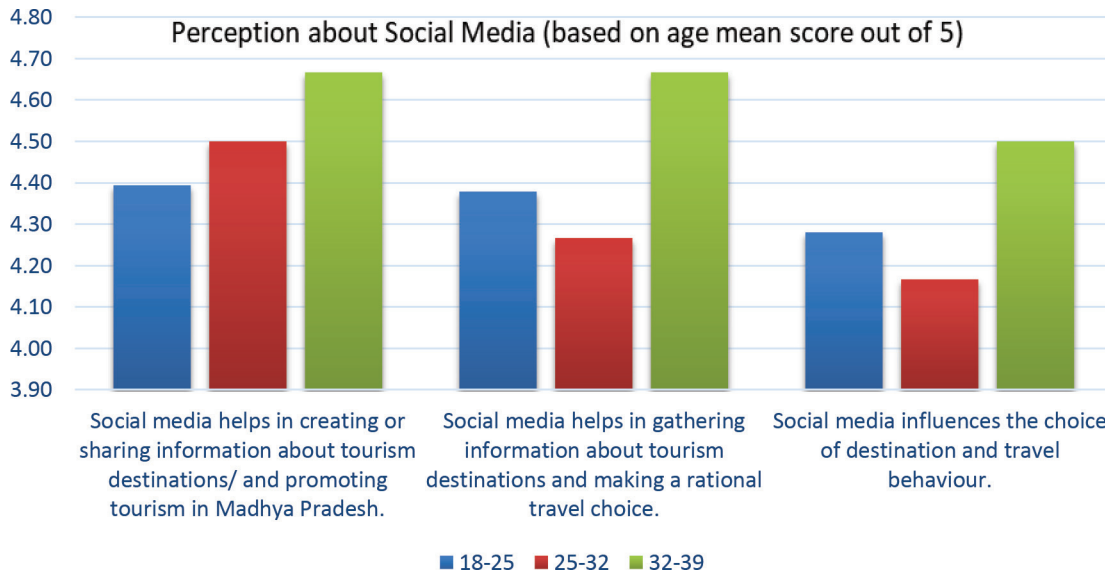


Figure 6. Perception about social media among respondents based on age.

group is highly satisfied followed by 18-25 years age group who mostly use it to gather information. While the satisfaction is low in highest age group category.

5. Discussion

The research, in agreement to previous research, have shown a strong relation of social media for travel planning and tourists’ behaviour, empowering users to share, tag, like and comment on their travel experience at different stages (Buhalis, 2019a; Hafner *et al.*, 2020; Barashok *et al.*, 2021).The convergence of marketing practices on social media has brought added benefits by attracting potential users and retaining existing tourists

through reliable communications within several stakeholders addressing several issues (Srinivaasan & Kumar Kabia, 2023).

Madhya Pradesh tourism, with its various effective promotional advertising campaigns on social media, has assisted in gaining top spot in highly optimized websites on search engines and significant branding with its new campaigns- #Intezaar Aapka soon after the reopening post covid-19 in 2020, #Buffermein safar promoting its wildlife and tiger tourism (Vasan, 2018) and lastly catering to diverse interest (rural, culinary, shopping, heritage, greenery and much more) (Jain & Mittal, 2019; Pandey *et al.*, 2014) for

Actual use of Social Media (based on age)

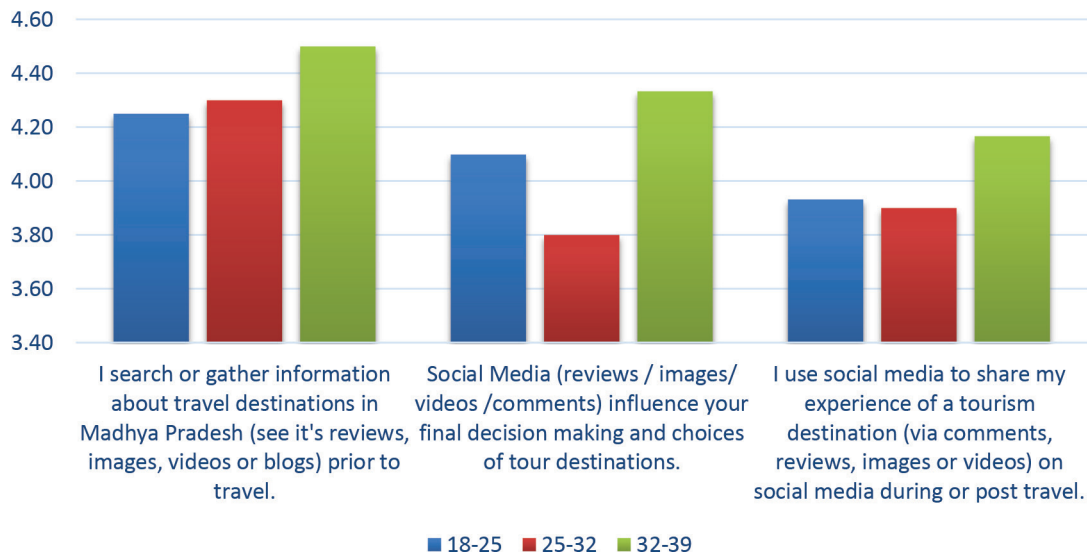


Figure 7. Actual behaviour of using social media in tourism based on age.

Overall experience of using Social Media for tourism planning (based on age):

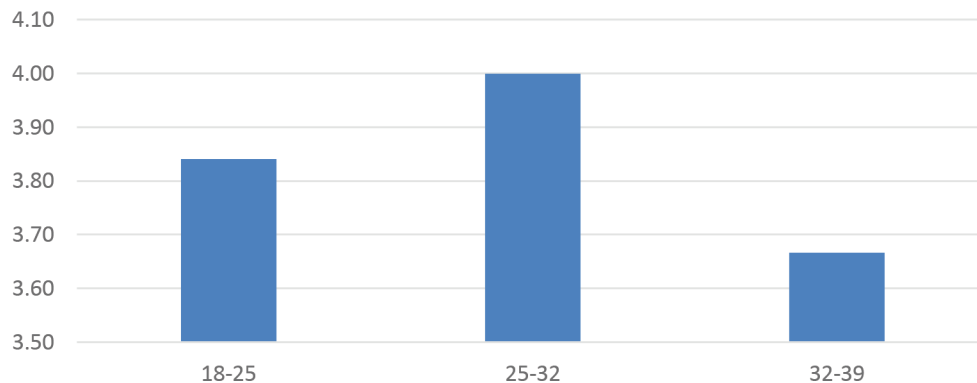


Figure 8. Overall experience of social media use in tourism based on age.

varied target groups #SabKuchJoDilChahe. (Patricia *et al.*, 2021). Madhya Pradesh Tourism tops the chart in highly optimized website on several browsers, followed by one of the most active social media handle with daily updates on recent activities, engagements like quiz with most number of share, likes or reposts (Gohil, 2015). Facebook followed by YouTube are the leading applications as seen in Figure 9 followed by WhatsApp, Instagram and others.

The study clearly indicates a distinction between the perceived and actual use of social media for

tourism planning and behaviour based on age and gender category. The perceived image about use of social media for tourism planning is relatively more than the actual usage. It is more relied as a source of gathering information. However, the influence on tourism planning, behaviour and experience of using social media varies with individual's knowledge, belief and comfort of using social media as a reliable platform. Individual's confidence and likelihood of using social media actively depends on belief system, knowledge, previous experience, and physical infrastructure.

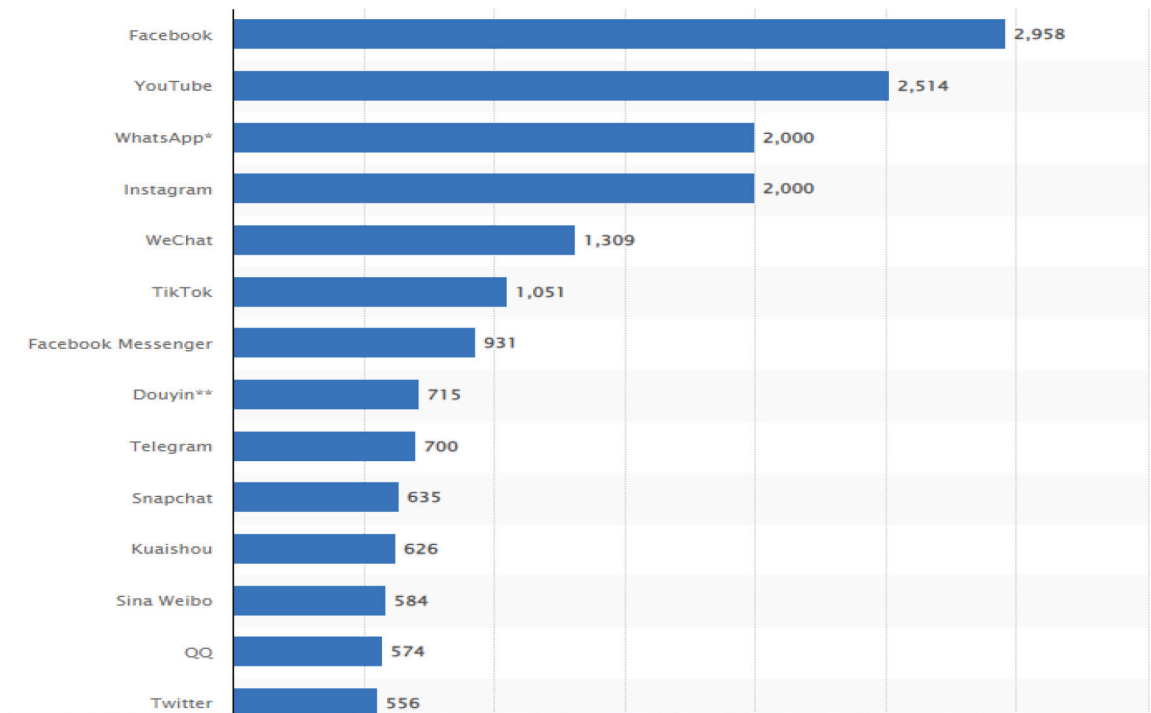


Figure 9. Popular social media apps used for tourism purposes.

6. Conclusion

The study examines the use of social media among the respondents for travel planning and allied tourism aspects in Madhya Pradesh. The study was conducted in Bhopal found high perceived use of social media in contrast to actual use of social media for tourism purpose. Use of social media platform varies largely with gender and age primarily due to their knowledge, past experiences and reliability. The study reveals new perspectives about social media platforms and use to design the strategic usage to maximize the efficacy. Rapid advances in technology have led to evolution of new business models in both the product and service industries. Social media has created a new synergy for diverse groups of people sharing common economic interests to create a new business outlook using social media applications like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and rest more extensively. Social media is considered effective in attracting potential travellers and offer multitude of tourism products/ services by destination managers. On the same account, it has become inevitable for travellers who use social media to gather information, resolve their queries (using hashtags or tagging managers, repost etc.), sharing their

experiences (images, reels, vlogs, blogs or reviews) which have been found influential in decision-making.

The strategic use of social media for tourism marketing in India is continuously evolving with promotion of new web applications to develop partnership among the stakeholders. The state tourism bodies of various states like Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh, Gujrat, Himachal Pradesh, including Incredible India campaign, have amplified their voice on social media to leverage tourism domestically, with a strong recommendation from various research works emphasizing influence of social media on decision making and travel choices (Karatsoli & Nathanail, 2020; Gupta, 2022; Tanković *et al.*, 2022). The Incredible India campaign by the government of India registered huge viewers online and spurred in foreign tourists visitors (Mishra & Sajnani, 2020). Previous researchers have outlined the comprehensive use of more than two social media platforms, like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, WhatsApp, or Twitter, by tourists for planning their travel or making a choice of destination seeking information on hotels, restaurants, attractions, weather, culture etc. The emergence of new customer-integrated technology and

marketing platforms has proved invaluable as a medium to optimize resources generating maximum revenue for several states, including Goa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and rest. Social media has opened new platforms for creating and disseminating information effectively to develop long term strategic relationship through the continuous exchange of information and increased ownership.

Social media has flagged off a new discussion forum for e-word of mouth to leverage new business revenue models. The online social media platforms are assisting the destination managers to customize their offerings to meet the customer's expectations and improve the tourism facilities, services, and infrastructure. It will be a definitive step ahead to lead profitable digital marketing campaigns if used diligently and effectively. The current study is limited to a study group of millennials in a district, as identified from a private college, thereby limiting the ability to generalize the findings to other groups and areas. Thus, there is a huge scope to conduct the study in different regions on diverse groups to generalise the efficacy of test results broadly. It also indicates the need for framing appropriate and relevant digital social media policies and regulatory frameworks for commercial purposes for the mutual benefit of all stakeholders. Lastly, reliance on social media platforms through digital engagement of customers cannot be a long-term strategy without improving the customer satisfaction, products and infrastructure. Thus, the influence of social media could be used to foster the customer expectations and goals of destination managers and channel partners with local community engagement with diligent use and observation of regulatory frameworks.

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Appendix

Social Media Platforms:

Weblogs have gained substantial share in online travel market that has empowered travellers to gather unbiased opinion, travel advices or suggestions diffusing e-word-of-mouth fostering willingness to travel and book or re-visit the same destination or provider creating loyalty. It has gained lot of popularity among the suppliers too for conducting free online real time basis market research investigations and tourist’s expectations keeping a log of potential influence of its search engine. Most of the digitally proactive and responsible companies have framed a special policy to respond on both positive and negative comments online.

Social Collaborative networking websites have enabled users to set their public profile and create a community inviting other like minded people. This facilitates sharing information, itineraries and organizing trips online developing new e-business models and tourism products catering to needs of different type of target community. “cyberintermediaries” surfaced as a new type of users who collaborate and organize customised travel experiences for diverse groups.

Podcasting has gained the limelight in last few years with better camera and picture quality with high speed internet enabled smart phones and variety of free online editing applications. Users upload audio / video files on websites like Youtube.com, Instagram on real time or recorded file facilitating the viewers better decision making and unbiased experience of multiple people.

Wiki travels an online travel related encyclopaedia run on a collaborative basis by the visitors creating, sharing and updating the information on a constant basis has become online travel guide. Thereby empowering the users to be co-producers, co-designers and co-marketers creating a new technology enabled business models.

Web 3.0 have leapfrogged the economy enabled with advanced technological applications like search engine optimization, cloud technologies, affiliate links and customized user options have given a new platform for seeking, creating and disseminating information. It has led to emergence of folsconomy – a collaborative tool for identifying, tagging, sorting and sharing contents like travbuddy.com, flickr.com.