

TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MOTIVATOR TO TRAVEL

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Abstract-The study seeks to identify the level of impact of travel photography on social media and as a motivator to travel. Respondents from Bengaluru, India rated the various social media platforms like Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and Google Plus to find out which of them created the most impact on tourism, or in other words which among them motivated travelers the most to visit a destination because of its pictorial content. The motivation to travel to a destination could be because of pictures that a respondent's friend has uploaded or because of the contents that various photography pages upload. From the study, it was found that Facebook has the largest number of users and any image and content uploaded on it would reach an enormous crowd while Instagram instigated a strong sense of travel in the minds of travelers. This meant that any content that had to be uploaded to promote tourism at a destination would be most effective, if uploaded on Instagram. The tool used for this study was Correlation and variables like motivation, travel related pages and interest to follow these travel related pages; Length of usage of social media and extend of use of social media during the day; And various social media platforms and the importance of each of them were correlated. To conclude the study, the objectives of the study were satisfied as it was found that social media does play a significant role in the promotion of a destination and any content uploaded on social media to promote a destination would always be effective.

Keywords: Social Media, Travel Photography

Introduction to the Support of Social Media for Travel Photography

Travel photography is a genre of photography that involves capturing people, culture, and history of a particular destination through the lens of a camera. Each destination is unique and has various attractions that draw people to it. It is becoming quite popular in the present time, social media being one of the major reasons. Social media has various forms of technologies such as web and mobile oriented technologies that are used for interactive communication among large number of users. People these days want to travel more and see places they have never seen before because they are seeing pictures on social media of the destinations they wish to visit, uploaded by their friends and relatives. According to a survey conducted by the internet world stats website in 2011, there were 2,267,233,742 active internet users in the world, which accounted for 32.7% of the entire world population. Social media these days is the best way to reach out to a large crowd compared to advertisements, and many companies are taking up this as a major marketing strategy. Today, it is not only used by millennials but also by boomers.

The study focuses on the photography aspect of social media that is indirectly promoting tourism. When a social media platform user views pictures of their friends, who have uploaded these from various destinations, it creates a sense of motivation in them to go and visit the same place as well. That same user then visits the place, takes a couple of pictures from the destination and uploads them on their social media account, which then is viewed by their friends. The same process keeps repeating resulting in the promotion of tourist flow to the particular place. Apart from the regular social media platforms that are used regularly such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc., people have started using travel blogs such as Tumblr wherein they write their experience about their trip to a destination and also add pictures to support the write up. These pictures and experiences draw the attention of people, making them want to travel to the same destination. Instagram alone, to be considered as a social media platform has around 500 million active users with an average of 80 million photos being uploaded each day, which means that all the social media platforms put together can influence the travel decisions of people in a huge way. Facebook is the most popular social media platform today with about 1.55 billion monthly users and more than 450 million daily users, out of which 89% of the users are millennials. 42% of the users publish travel related posts and therefore Facebook is considered to be the king of social media today especially with reference to travel. Twitter accounts to almost 320 million users of which 32% of the users are millennials and it is estimated that 37% of users will purchase from a brand they follow on Twitter.

Millennials are perhaps the most difficult to attract and target because they are the most sought – after demographic group in today's travel industry. They want personalized travel experiences that express their personality and taste, but they expect affordable prices and flexibility in booking, packaging and other aspects of travel. What makes millennials even more difficult to reach out to is that they often avoid conventional channels of communication such as advertisements in print, radio, and television; However, millennials view social media as very crucial to their professional and personal lives. A recent study of mobile and social media usage found that millennials check their smart phones or mobile devices an estimated 45 times at least per day, and more than 80 percent cited using Facebook as an inspiration for future travel plans. Utilizing a robust social media

strategy allows travel companies to directly engage in two-way communication with this hard-to-pin-down demographic group and allows companies to craft clear and focused messaging to reach this generation of travelers.

It is necessary to understand that millennials cannot just be seen as leisure travelers but people who use social media regularly in their daily lives as well. Many millennials work with B2B, B2C and other logistics firms and they use social media for their daily transactions as well. For instance, a supplier may find a new client using Facebook, who would then enter into a partnership, which would lead to an increase in growth and profitability by viewing social media to be more than a leisure-based platform. The ease of creating accounts has attracted many millennial users to this platform. When a person who has traveled to a destination motivates another person who wishes to travel to the same destination using social media, he is creating a feeling of comfortability and confidence for the person who is desiring to travel to that particular destination as he mentions all the comforts and hardships that he had to go through at the destination in the post he uploads on the media. This allows the traveler to equip himself and take necessary safety measures accordingly while traveling to that particular destination.

A trend is noticed these days where in host communities specify which photograph is appropriate or inappropriate to the tourists because they are indirectly benefited by tourist arrivals. So, before a photographer uploads a photo on social media, he would have already consulted with the host community about the quality and effectiveness of that particular photo. Images, unlike reading a paragraph, are an easy attraction for people's attention as it can be gazed at, enjoyed and felt. The familiar say, "a photo talks a thousand words" still holds good. A picture empowers a simple comprehension of the subject, which the dialect neglects to pass on. As a piece of promotion, a special blend of substance and photography is certain to profit the brand. This is the time of picture informing, the sole motivation behind which is to convey thoughts through pictures and images as individuals have less time today to experience loads and heaps of data. In antiquated circumstances, when dialect was not easily detailed or found, pictures were the prime wellspring of transport. In the present circumstances, things are more of a similar kind with pictures transcending their significance over other works as they are more difficult to follow.

Many travel picture photographers work on a specific genre of photography, for example, travel portraits, landscape or documentary photography and additionally shooting all parts of a travel. A lot of the present Travel Photography style is adopted from early work in Magazines, for example, Steve McCurry of National Geographic Magazine. This genre of photography involves shooting a wide assortment of subjects under fluctuating conditions, e.g. low light indoor photography, ample light for buildings and landmarks, shooting in the city where in conditions might be hostile, capturing memories that rarely occur, catching the magic of light while shooting, to name few.

As travel has turned out to be more accessible, to an ever-increasing extent, the class of photography is opening up to beginners and experts alike. Amateur travel photography is frequently shared through websites like Flickr, 500px and 1x. Travel Photography, unlike the other genre like fashion, product or food photography, is an underestimated form of photography, where in the difficulties encountered are a lot more prominent as the light and other shooting conditions cannot be easily controlled. Generally, travel photographers earn through stock photography, magazine assignments and business ventures. These days, the relevance of stock photography advertisements has crumpled and an increasing number of photographers are utilizing more incentive strategies like blogging, public speaking, business undertakings and educating others.

Other than travel publications like National Geographic Traveler, Conde Nast Traveler, etc. the interest for photography exists in enterprises like Travel and Photo Education. Many travel photographers are today driving photograph visits through organizations, for example, Intrepid Exposures. They use the insight on interesting travel areas, the experience of filling in as expert photographic artists and utilizing them to help travel fans take awesome travel pictures amid their outings. Many others are ending up as instructors in the field of ambient light photography. Some of them are into assignments, which inherently utilize their qualities, e.g. shooting outside or inside of structures for modelers and interior planners. Photographers like Steve McCurry are regularly charged to shoot business publicizing work, utilizing their aptitude for movement and documentary photography to deliver capable promotional pictures.

The impact of web-based social networking in the travel industry cannot be exaggerated, though it might not have reformed tourism business in a big way, it has absolutely made travel organizations rethink about how they can collaborate with clients, accomplices, sellers, and others. It is hard to anticipate what the future of online networking in the travel industry may hold, however with texting and video applications like Snap Chat and others, it is not impossible to envision a future when travel organizations and others in the travel industry impart and work with clients or accomplices through videos and messaging applications. A travel company can easily make a video ad or testimonial and distribute it utilizing an application like Snap Chat, appointments and reservations can be supported or finished through these online services; Whatever the case, it is for certain that online networking and travel business will share an enduring relationship.

Over the years, there have been numerous challenges in utilizing online networking in tourism. Various nations and organizations have distinctive realities with respect to the use of web-based social networking in tourism administration. The significance of web-based relationships has not been fully exploited and it had been estimated in 2010 that only 28% of travel agencies in the Asia-Pacific region used web-based social networking. On the other hand, tourism businesses are by and large confronting incredible difficulties in overseeing web-based social networking initiatives, for example, while trying to build a clear

and measurable networking technique, to show a suitable return of speculation and while trying to incorporate online networking into business processes.

There have been few quantitative investigations already carried out on the effect of online networking in tourism, contrasted to the greater part of current examinations concentrating on more qualitative explorations. Accordingly, future examinations should offer strong proof to show the positive commitment of online networking on the number of travelers, perspectives on the positive images of destinations, or monetary return of interest on the use of web-based social networking in the tourism industry. Economic studies should also be supported and empowered. Outstandingly, all the current examinations should employ a micro approach, concentrating on particular areas of the issue, for example a specific online networking strategy, a specific application during a specific stage of travel planning or decision-making process. Obviously, this also leads to a need for a comprehensive macro level approach in exploring the overall impact and the role of web-based social networking, while concentrating on each phase of the travel planning procedure and endeavoring to cover all phases of the decision-making process.

Social media keeps on evolving while progressively impacting numerous social and financial functions. Tourism businesses should be prepared to take advantage of the numerous web-based social networking outlets, as they have for long depended to a great extent on destination reputation, buyer assessment, spread of information, and positive word-of-mouth advertising. Social media therefore plays a critical part in tourism business and research on web-based networking media in tourism is still in infancy stages. While case studies do concentrate on qualitative discussions on the effect of social media in tourism, it is important to encourage investigation on the impact and effect of web-based social networking on all facets of the tourism industry.

Such could also be the importance of travel photography and social media in tourism. The study gains further significance because social media and travel photography act as major factors in promoting tourism to a destination. Analyzing the demographic information of users of various social media platforms, it is evident that any picture uploaded will never go unnoticed. With the increasing trend and interest towards photography, there are more number of photographs being uploaded every day on social media, and more the number of posts, more will be the attention attracted from people towards the destination.

Review of Literature on the Extensive Use of Technology in the Tourism Industry

An initial study (Albers, 1988) examined the relationship between photography, travel and its ethnicity. It not only showed the representation of ethnicity in the travel context but also identified few approaches that could be used in the analysis. It also related photographic communication on a wider examination, and in doing so the research studied the effects of both the ethnic appearances and universalizing the inclination of certain photographic expressions in the tourism field around the world.

A huge increase in the use of the web to both create and share or distribute content was seen in another study (Sigala, 2007). Mass collaboration was considered as a tool as it allowed for the active participation of the users in producing, consuming and sharing information online. The content one shared not only had an impact on the profile but also had a huge say on the expectations and in decision making. The study introduced newer technologies or Web 2.0 technologies as having a significant effect on tourism demand and supply. Hence the paper concentrated on the Web 2.0 applications in the tourism and hospitality industry that actually affected tourism demand and supply.

A case study was conducted to examine the consumer generated content on Trip Adviser in the city of Lisbon as online social networking websites were getting very popular on the internet off late (Jorge Aguiar Miguens, 2008). The web-based services specified having consumer generated content, which was good in the sharing the information among people. It not only discussed the radical changes by new forms of business models and collaborations but also discussed about ways in which users collaborated to image a destination. Effective information was available on various forums like Trip Advisor and the reviews generated by users and consumers were found to be highly relevant for travel planning. According to another study (Doris Schmallegger, 2008), the rise of the internet as a source of communication and information in the tourism industry offered numerous challenges for Destination Marketing Organizations and other tourism enterprises. The study suggested that there are five practical functions for the internet, namely promotion, product distribution, communication, management and research. Numerous published literatures and real time examples of DMOs and other tourism enterprises that used blogs as a business strategy were reviewed and the study not only found few effective examples for the functions but also did reveal few challenges to achieve them.

Technology and Sociology had taken up a whole different concept on the internet, known popularly as Web 2.0 (Dippelreiter, 2008). Companies and individuals had started to adapt these technologies and had also started to create new ones. Eight tourism communities were evaluated in the research based on the ideas that were drawn from the community studies. The findings were shown as the life cycle of the tourists before and after the trip, by discussing their values and prospective problems. A study (Chung, 2008) presented the concept of Web 2.0 as applied in the business of travel and tourism by conducting a survey and studying the concept from both domestic and international social websites and also from few literature reviews. It also supported the practicality of using Web 2.0 for travel and introduced concepts or applications like blogs, page, and podcasts. Though Web 2.0 technologies were not accepted by many, the corporate world seemed to have already adapted the whole concept (Fountain, 2008). With mergers and acquisitions having already taken place, the technology has an effect on consumer behavior and

customer empowerment. The results from the study not only affected technology and development, but also marketing and business strategies by briefly identifying the technological and commercial basis for the new trend.

In the research (Choudhury, 2009), a structure was proposed to connect the picture content with the online communities. It is often difficult to get a community to give the right feedback. Social media have two specifications for content and community. The study characterized images into three type's i.e. visual features, text tags generated by users and social interactions. Significantly, it was demonstrated that combining picture content, content labels and social collaboration highlights beat the instances of just utilizing picture substances or labels. According to the study (Mangold, 2009), the exposure to online media has made communicating on a large scale about a destination, product or the company very easy and convenient. The article argued about social media having two elements in the promotion mix. The first element in the traditional sense, meaning that the companies can talk to their customers directly, while the second element in the non-traditional sense, allowing customers to talk directly to one another. The conversation among consumers about the content, timing and frequency of social media are out of the direct control of managers. Also, by offering consumers with the right networking platforms, various blogs, social media tools and promotional tools to engage them with, helps the managers to understand the discussions among consumers that may be consistent and this may lead to the achievement of the organization mission and performance goals.

(Guillet, 2010) studied the use of social media marketing in the Hotel Industry in Hong Kong. According to the study, hotels exhibited poor performance in using social media as they could not learn directly about their customers. Another research (Cova, 2010) dealt with the concept of tribal marketing, which is increasingly through the development of online group technologies. The paper examined new developments in the online community by taking a detailed look at two cases, which are specified through an ethnographic approach. The study showed that customers when grouped together, are capable of developing a potential critical opposition with little or no assistance. These customer groups can be a major risk for companies. (Xiang, 2010) investigated the extent to which social media appeared as a search engine for travel related searches. The investigation used an exploration outline that reenacted the explorer's utilization as an internet searcher by utilizing an arrangement of pre-characterized catchphrases in blend with nine US visitor goal names. Social media has become very important in the process of sharing content and in social networking (Asur, 2010). The content generated on websites can be left unused and the article testified on how the content on social media can be used to predict prospective outcomes. Twitter is widely used to predict the revenues for movies at the Box-office. It is often easy to predict the outcomes through the reactions received for the content created, and the predictions on sentiments from twitter can also be used to better the prediction power of social media.

The study (Stephanie Hays, 2011) found that when the public sector is cutting down on the funds for marketing a destination, the social media gains prominence for Destination Marketing Organizations. Social media has become very convenient and effective in reaching out to a global audience with limited resources. Semi-structured interviews and content analysis were used to examine the impact of social media marketing strategies, and a framework of best practices for National Tourism Organizations were identified to learn from. The study argued that social media was used largely experimentally among the top DMOs and their marketing strategies significantly varied. In another study (Chiappa, 2011), social media brings a huge influence in making travel plans, both on the actual process of planning and also on the post travel experience. Online travel applications can succeed in altering travel plans after reviewing of the already available information.

Online travel communities are also changing the behavior of consumers in the travel industry (Casalo, 2011). Travelers tend to depend on the recommendations given by their peers and hence they look up to online communities for information. The consumers will follow information offered by the online communities that are considered more reliable and trust worthy, and this influences the attitudes of the consumers and also builds a trust towards the online communities. Few implications for practice were also very well discussed in the paper. The study (Lo, 2011) was about the use of online technologies for sharing photos among the residents of Hong Kong. The arrival of Web 2.0 had changed the process of destination choice and information search. Not much has been documented on the use of Web 2.0 and other platforms or websites to post travel photographs across an entire community. It was also found that though 89% of the travelers took pictures, only 41% of them posted them on social media. Instant messaging, travel portals and blogs were the media that were used to post pictures. In general, it was observed that people who posted pictures online were younger, well-educated and earned better income than others, who did not. Many also used varied sources of media to spread the pictures widely.

The research (Ahmad, 2011) showed how online networking has changed similarity with tourism and photography. According to the study, web-based social networking encouraged communicating among people about different themes including tourism. Important sites like Flickr (photographs) and Trip Advisor (travel) drew in and bonded between individuals with similar interests. Interacting with people with strong ties helped in creating good product awareness through word of mouth. As a first, the study searched to understand photography in travel as a word of mouth marketing tool. To recognize explanations behind individual travel photography posts, the study utilized the Theory of Planned Behavior, which was more easily understood for clarifying individual practices. The study utilized catchphrase scans for Islamic tourism on an intrigue site like Flickr and the quantity of shared travel photographs for the League of Arab State Nations mirrored the number of the nation's Muslims and vacationers who were depended on the internet.

The paper (Muñoz-Leiva, 2012) analyzed the behavior of tourists towards Web 2.0 and Travels 2.0 sites. A structural equation model was applied by the author on three websites that were selected for the study, that is the blog of a hotel, its TripAdvisor

community and its Facebook profile. A research was conducted to visualize the three different travel portals; the results revealed that the original Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was essentially a healthy model for studies aimed at examining these sites. Focusing on the social media sites, the study exhibited the relationship between reasoning and interactive variables that may differ depending on the websites.

With the change of eras, the methods of communication have developed and changed the daily routine of lives (Saravanakumar, 2012). Social media has today become a platform to express one's beliefs, ideas, and mannerism in a new way. To stand out in the booming or changing digital field, it is important to incorporate with social media conversations, with a correct plan and social media strategy. Likewise, it is very important for companies to undertake different marketing strategies to market and promote their products or business on social media. This is successful because the consumers have a platform to directly interact with the business or the company. The growth of community websites like Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook have shown that since the industrial revolution, social media has evolved into the biggest shift the world has ever seen. An article (Wendy Lange-faria, 2012) showed how travelers are influenced by the huge amount of information content that is generated, which presents a number of challenges and opportunities to Destination Marketing Organizations. The review combined the existing research, theories and concepts, to understand the applications of social media by the tourism authorities, and to connect past researches to future success.

Another research (Leung, 2013) discussed the impact of social media in the decision-making process of travelers. The study reviewed the articles that were published in academic journals between 2007 and 2011, mainly in the fields of tourism and hospitality. Based on the analysis of the content, the perspectives of suppliers and consumers were understood. The consumer-centric studies were generally focused on the usage and impact of social media on making travel plans and the supplier-centric studies were more of promotion, management, research and product distribution. The findings of the study demonstrated the strategic importance of social media in tourism competitiveness. According to a study (Zeng, 2014), social media plays a significant role in the tourism industry, and its growing role is becoming an emerging topic for numerous research studies in the future. Social media helps in information search and in decision making while planning travel, in promoting tourism, and it also focuses on the best ways to interact with customers. The power of social media to market a tourism product always turns out to be an excellent strategy. The article reviewed the publications of research focusing on social media in tourism. With the support of literature reviews the study found that the research conducted on the topic is minimal and it also found that it is quite difficult to analyze the impact of social media in the tourism industry.

According to the study (Tifentale, 2015), lots of opportunities have opened up for digital visual culture and in 2012, a research team that was led by Lev Manovich used computational and visualization data methods to study about the large numbers of photographs on Instagram. In the first project, it was found that there were about 2.3 million Instagram photos that were shared by a large number of people in 13 global cities. The users learned from each other about the kind of attention or reaction that were received because the same set of filters, image-correction controls and the same size of image squares were used. The article studied applications like Instagram in creating new universal visual languages that would erase local specificities. A recent study analyzed the importance of social media in the life of a disabled person. It improves the quality of their lives by providing them knowledge about the daily awareness in the society (Altinay, 2016). There are few tourism administration offices that help in online networking and systems administration. The study advances to give a better view about web conveniences and availability of administration for the benefit of the disabled ones among the general public.

Photography is one of the most common qualities in the tourism field (Chalfen, 2017); The whole concept of photography is seen in two ways; that is photographs taken by tourists and the photographs that are made available by the people in the host community. The study also focused on the relationship between tourists and their photographic behavior, the contents of the pictures taken; the cultural standards of the subject or a picture and the usage of camera; and how the host communities responded to being photographed. Another very recent article (Jie, 2018) studied about photography tourism in Yuanyang, China to a deeper extend. Through a detailed examination it was found that tourists showed a very strong interest in the process of photography and the role played by photographers in the field of tourism. Photography in tourism has a dominant rank and is well recognized.

Methodology of the Present Research

Based on the intensive review of literature, the present study focused on travel photography on social media, and travel photography as a motivator to travel. These pictures that are uploaded on social media could directly or indirectly influence and motivate others to travel to the same destinations, as well.

The main objective of the study was to understand the significance of various Social Media platforms on Travel Photography. But, while arriving at a significant conclusion, as all the social media platforms taken into consideration were popular among respondents, a clear distinction as to which social media platform is the best to promote tourism was not acquired.

The present study was exploratory and analytical in nature, as it aimed at elucidating the impact of social media on travel photography. According to the study, social media referred to Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Google Plus, and the study was conducted in Bengaluru, a metropolitan city in Southern India. Through simple random sampling technique, 105 responses were acquired and data was mainly collected from Baby Boomers, Generations X, Y and Z, who always travel and constantly upload photographs on social media.

A semi-structured questionnaire was created to gather the required data. The questionnaire included multiple choice questions and Likert Scale questions that made it easier to record the responses from the respondents. For the purpose of analyzing the gathered data and to draw observed conclusions and interpretations, tabulation and graphical representations were incorporated. In addition, data processing and analysis included statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics with the help of software package (SPSS).

Findings from the Study

Majority of the respondents belonged to the age group of 20 to 30 years. Least number of respondents belonging to the age group of 60 and above showed minimum interest in filling up the questionnaire on the topic, while respondents in the age group of 20 to 30 years very quickly filled in the questionnaire. This indicated that people belonging to the age group of 20 to 30 years are the most active users of social media. They form a group of travelers on whom social media has made a huge influence on travel to various destinations. They also felt that social media is an important tool in tourism marketing and it should be used as a significant platform for promotion of a destination or travel.

People in the age group of 60 and above are less active users of social media and they are the group of travelers on whom social media has made minimum influence on to travel to various destinations. It is observed that majority of the respondents consider social media as important in the field of tourism indicating that social media should be used as a tool for promotion as well.

It was observed through the study that majority of the respondents have been using social media for over a year indicating that they are well versed about how social media works and there is a possibility that they will be following travel and tourism related pages or blogs. Majority of the respondents used social media for more than an hour indicating that they spent good amount of time on the social media platforms and there is also a very high chance that they will be viewing some travel related pages or blogs during this time.

Majority of the respondents spend more time using Facebook over the other social media platforms indicating that Facebook had a higher chance of influencing them to travel to destinations than any other social media platform. Majority of the respondents also agreed to the fact that social media motivated them to travel to destinations. This indicated that social media is an ideal platform to promote travel and tourism.

Majority of the respondents follow travel and tourism related pages on social media indicating that any form of promotion of a destination or travel through social media will impact a large crowd, thereby promoting tourism on a larger scale. Majority of the respondents also felt that the trend of following travel related pages on social media is increasing day by day and this indicated that social media was turning out to be the best platform to promote tourism and travel.

A good number of respondents also felt that Instagram, as a platform for high quality photographs and images instigated a strong sense of travel in their minds over the other social media platforms indicating that more number of travel and tourism related pages could be added on to Instagram.

When it came to capturing photographs, majority of the respondents preferred to click pictures on their mobile phones rather than using cameras. This indicated that they always carried their mobile phones with them during travel, and that they were looking for quicker means to capture pictures and did not want to spend time on setting up the camera to a perfect setting for capturing the pictures.

The respondents took some time to upload pictures on social media after they click them. However, they also responded that given a chance they preferred to upload the pictures as soon as they clicked them without any delay. Respondents also preferred to upload the photographs on Instagram than any other social media platforms indicating that for majority of them, Instagram was proving to be the most sought after online platform to upload pictures. The respondents preferred Instagram mainly because of its user interface and its sole purpose as a platform to upload photographs. Also, increased interest in travel related pages on social media like Facebook and Instagram directly motivated the users to travel to the attractions and destinations, displayed in them.

Majority of the respondents took time to upload pictures on social media as they waited for better opportunities to capture better quality pictures and preferred comparing between the photographs clicked so as to upload the best ones at a later time. The younger pool of respondents also did not prefer using any specific travel blog or travel page to upload photographs. They preferred their personal profile pages for the same.

Suggestions

Social media can be used as the ideal tool to promote tourism in an attraction or in a destination, as a large group of people follow travel related pages on social media. Even those who did not follow the pages had started showing interest in following these pages in future. Hence, more number of such travel related pages indirectly means a larger increase in travel and tourism to the destinations and attractions.

Since majority of the respondents were millennials, themes such as adventure tourism, dark tourism, culinary tourism, to name a few should be promoted on social media as it would reach out to a larger crowd and this would indirectly increase the inflow of young tourists to a destination.

More number of travel related pages and blogs can be created on various social media platforms as majority of the respondents have been using these platforms for over a year and spending good amount of time on these pages, indicating that there is a high possibility of the respondents liking and following these pages. This would also offer the respondents better access to more information on the destinations and travel, and indirectly motivate them to travel.

Travel Professionals can concentrate on speaking and sharing information about their travel services and attractions on Facebook and Instagram, as majority of the respondents used these two social media platforms. Possibility of more number of travelers chancing upon information on these platforms were more.

Though people spend more time on Facebook, it was observed that Instagram instilled a better sense of travel in the minds of travelers, indicating that Instagram could be a better social media platform to promote travel and tourism at a destination. Hence, more number of advertisement tools can be used while creating travel pages on Instagram. The user interface of Instagram can also be improved constantly and it should be able to continue to provide a more user-friendly platform to its users.

Mobile Phone Manufacturers can also take note of the fact that phone cameras are most preferred by the young travelers to capture pictures at a destination, rather than always using cameras and their supporting apparatus. As the study found that the young travelers always looked for quicker means to click photographs.

Conclusion to the Study

With increased use of various tools of promotion, social media is evolving into a significant online tool for marketing and promotion. Social media has helped to a great extent in increasing tourist flows to destinations and attractions by allowing its users to constantly upload photographs that indirectly attracts tourists to the destinations. Facebook and Instagram have been the most popular social media platforms due to their high number of users, they have acted as important tools for promotion and they have also attracted large number of their users to destinations and attractions. Along with these platforms, travel blogs and photography pages have also supported in increasing tourist flows to destinations. Today, social media is witnessing a powerful trend as being engaged as a promotional tool that may never saturate itself and it will continue to encourage people to travel.

Scope for Future Research

The research focuses on social media as a tool only to promote tourism at a destination. Advanced research may be conducted focusing on other innovative methods to promote tourism to destinations. The study focused only on the positive aspects of promoting tourism at a destination through social media. Future studies can consider the threats as well.

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