

Social Media as a Travel Influencer : A Review of Recent Studies

Harjot Kaur

Assistant Professor,
Chandigarh University, Chandigarh

Abstract

The utilization of Social Media and other web 2.0 applications has shaped the travel trends in recent times. Social Media, as one of most ground-breaking web based systems administration instruments, has been incorporated into a piece of social and economic life in reality. Travellers have become tech-savvy and they are changing the way travel is consumed. From getting motivated by an Instagram post to Facebook suggestions for a famous travel destination to sharing live videos and pictures while on a tour, social media has impacted tourists at each step of travel decision making. This study reviews the latest trends and analyzes the social media-related research articles which act as a travel influencer. This paper additionally adds to the scholarly community and industry by distinguishing some examination voids in surviving exploration and giving a motivation to future research.

Keywords: Social Media, Web 2.0, Travel Trends, Tech-savvy, Destination, Travel Decision

Introduction

With the emergence of innovation and Social Media, the voyager's adventure has progressed toward becoming an altogether different approach than it used to be. The voyaging no longer depends on manuals incorporated by 'specialists' with outdated data or even paper maps to explore their most recent tourist destination. Rather, explorers presently have the benefit of prompt access to data over the web as Buzzfeed guides, TripAdvisor surveys, and other social networking websites like Instagram photographs portraying their most recent get-away. This constant access to pertinent tips and, frequently, publicly supported data, has eventually changed the manner an individual organizes a trip from motivation to booking.

Also, buyers never again settle on a goal, look into what to do or where to remain, and after that buy the required tickets. Rather, their way to travel, both buy and experience, has turned out to be nonlinear. They swing to their companions, colleagues, and influencers inside the extending web based life world to discover travel and excursion motivation, and even arrangements to help their newfound goal.

Since the landing of Web 2.0, web, particularly

Social Media, networking has turned into the piece of life. Web 2.0 isn't just affecting the web client who depend increasingly more on locales with client association and networks but also in showcasing and advancement of driving organizations that are coordinating internet based life promoting into their incorporated advertising correspondence program to connect with existing and imminent customers.

Travel Decision Making

The figure below (Matheison and Wall, 1982) depicts the steps in travel decision of a traveller which can be associated with the activities of Information use in Social Media (McCann, 2008). The model describes the use of social media in travel decision making. Each phase mentioned below is said to be influenced by Social media in one or the other form.

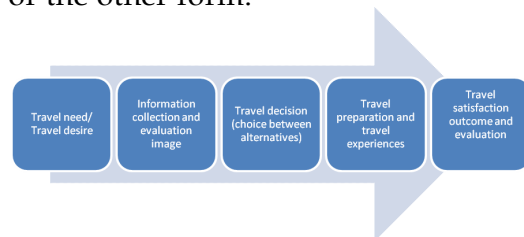


Figure: Model of Travel buying behaviour (Adapted from Matheison and Wall 1982)

The above model can be summarized in three phases as describes below:

1. Pre-tour phase: It refers to the phase which is an individual faces or go through before actually making a final decision or travelling. This phase includes three steps namely, (i) Identification of a travel need or travel desire which may be the result of influence of Social media or others. (ii) Second step will be the collection of information related to travel through various online sources and evaluation each alternative based on the features and characteristics of destination as well as the experience and belief of other tourism as highlighted on Social media. (iii) Third step include making the choice between alternatives based on which the traveller will make the final decision to book a travel service.
2. During-tour phase: In this phase wherein the traveller is undergoing tourism and experiencing tourism services while at the destination. The tourist in this case may update his live activities or pictures which may impact other travellers or influence people. This may also include searching of other information which helps tourist to gather more information about the destination and activities which he may undergo.
3. Post-tour phase: This is the most crucial phase of tourism which may impact the potential travellers as well as the destination's image. Once the traveller is back from vacations, he may post his reviews on Social media and other social networking websites which is actually the evaluation of the overall experience and other travellers can conclude the satisfaction level which will predict his next travel decision.

The above model depicts the overall behaviour of tourist before, during and after the tour influenced by Social media which helps us in knowing the future travel needs of a traveller as well as its impact on other potential traveller.

Literature Review

To consider Social Media as a showcasing specialized tool, it must see each part of them.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) characterize Social media as a gathering on the Internet dependent on the applications that have fabricated ideological and innovative establishments of Web and permit the creation and trade of substance made by client (Sinclair and Vogus 2011). In any case, there are some essential qualities vital for a site to be known as the site into an interpersonal organization. Pages ought to contain client profiles, content, a way that enables clients to have contact with one another to convey, to present remarks on destinations on one another and to participate in virtual gatherings dependent on normal interests (Gross and Acquisti, 2005; Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe, 2007; Lenhart and Madden, 2007).

Travellers have communicated through photographs and video recordings about forever and a day and simply web based life on the Internet gives a medium to proceed with this exchange. Safko and Brake (2009) even contend that it is conceivable about anyone to have taken an interest in social media without letting it be known perusing: a blog, the messages of another individual from a network or viewing a video on Youtube.

Travel basic leadership is fairly a many-sided issue, which, likened to the general purchasing conduct process, includes various consecutive stages starting from need recognizable proof to post buy conduct (Horner and Swarbrooke, 2007; Schiffman and Kanuk, 2009).

A customer in any industry is encompassed by an assortment of inner and outer elements while taking a choice to purchase an item. The travel industry, being a segment comprising chiefly of administration based items (Cooper, et., al, 1993), basic leadership in it is frequently commented as a high contribution work out (Nankervis, 2001).

Travel and the travel industry, one of the biggest and most unique worldwide ventures today, has produced around 9 percent of aggregate GDP and has made in excess of 200 million occupations over the world, speaking to 8 percent of worldwide business (WTTC, 2005). The ongoing reports demonstrate that the quantity of universal traveler entries has crossed one billion in the year 2012, which is an achievement ever of. The traveler, the fundamental performing artist in the travel industry framework, is a definitive shopper in the entire business of the travel industry, and

he/she purchases an extensive variety of items and administrations from different business divisions having a place with the business amalgam. This activity is normally viewed as a mind boggling process as the basic leadership so as to buy a travel industry item includes assortment of exercises, and manages impalpable items.

Basic leadership is about how buyers settle on their choice so as to buy an item (Solomon 1996; Andreason, 1965; Foxall and Goldsmith, 1994). While settling on the choice, the shopper makes decisions about picking the correct alternative (Peter and Olson, 1999). There are distinctive measurements with respect to the procedure of basic leadership, of which one regularly examined is the passionate inclusion of shopper, which is characterized as "the psychological, enthusiastic and physical exercises that individuals participate in while choosing, buying, utilizing and discarding items and administrations so as to fulfill needs and wants" (Wilkie, 1994).

As indicated by Leon schiffman and Leslie Kanuk, it is "the way toward settling on buy choices dependent on psychological and enthusiastic impacts, for example, motivation, family, companions, publicists, good examples, temperaments, and circumstances that impact buy" (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2009). From another perspective, the purchaser is considered as the issue solver occupied with objective coordinated exercises of looking for data lastly touching base at cautiously thought to be judgmental assessments (Hadjiaphaniss and Christou, 2006).

The model proposed by Howard and Sheith (1969) see shopper conduct as the result of the goal (judicious) and also abstract (passionate) components. Similar calls attention to the job of shopper fulfillment that the customer looks for in connection to the buy of merchandise and ventures, notwithstanding the need to unmistakably comprehend the inspirational powers which manage the basic leadership parts of buyers.

There are various creators who have called attention to that basic leadership is a procedure, which includes a progression of stages, for example, require acknowledgment, look for data on different items as indicated by the need, arrangement of elective decisions, assessment of options, demonstration of procurement and

utilization and post buy conduct (Foxall and Goldsmith, 1994; Kotler, et.al., 2003; Horner and Swarbrooke, 2007).

A few creators have proposed various stages in this procedure in various ways. While Leon Schiffman and Leslie Kanuk recognize customer basic leadership into three particular interlocking stages, for example, the info organize, the procedure arrange and the yield arrange, Christopher Lovelock and Jochen Wirtz partition the buyer basic leadership into three unmistakable stages as pre-buy organize, benefit experience stage and post experience arrange. (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2007). Despite the fact that diverse creators have distinguished stages in various ways, every single such idea, in one way or other, center around similar exercises. In every one of the procedures proposed by different specialists, data seek is a pivotal angle which expresses that data is extremely significant in basic leadership (Lawson, 1997; Andreason, 1965; Schiffman and Kanuk, 2009).

The requirement for data is increasingly applicable with regards to the travel industry and considerably the basic leadership is additionally of expanded multifaceted nature. The administration attributes are the prime reason which settles on basic leadership exceptionally strenuous and worrying for sightseers. As per Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007, basic leadership in the travel industry is a high contribution practice and the purposes behind the equivalent incorporate high customer responsibility, abnormal amounts of frailty connected to elusiveness, solid impact of other individuals in basic leadership, long haul choice, abnormal state of data inquiry and abnormal state of enthusiastic importance. As proposed by Yale (1995), there are numerous different components that settle on the movement basic leadership increasingly troublesome.

Notwithstanding the determinants in the purchasing conduct of regular items, traveler goal determination incorporates various different elements (Yale, 1995; Middleton and Clark, 2001; Mathieson and Wall, 1982). In the feeling of Horner and Swarbrooke (2007), a vacationer needs to assess different perspectives while taking a choice - which goal (nation, district, resort) to pick, which method of movement (like planned air, sanction air, ship, rail, mentor, vehicle, transport)

to utilize, which kind of convenience (Eg. adjusted or non-overhauled) to decide for remain, term of the occasion, at which time should the occasion be taken, regardless of whether to go on a bundle visit or attempt autonomous travel, and if picking a bundle visit, which administrator to contact – these are some pertinent elements to consider.

It is usually comprehended that wherever the requirement for data is critical, the job and impact of Information and Communication Technology is of extraordinary criticalness, and correspondingly new media. Because of the intricacy of basic leadership and the inherent attributes of the travel industry items, data require in each phase for a potential vacationer is surprisingly high (Cooper et al, 2003; Middleton 1994; Horner and Swarbrooke, 2007). In such manner, new media is something that has developed as the most significant intuitive instrument because of the headways in Information and correspondence advances.

Subsequently, thinking about the above elements, it very well may be presumed that a visitor for the most part goes through a progression of stages and exercises while taking a choice with respect to participating in a visit. In every one of those stages he/she requires an extensive variety of data and the most recent intelligent new media has a task to carry out in every one of them. The investigation is consequently sought after with the supposition that the stages engaged with the basic leadership are inspiration/require distinguishing proof, data seek, arrangement of elective decisions, assessment of choices, choice, utilization and post buy conduct.

Research Methodology

The present paper has been composed with the broad research on contemporaneous information, sites and meeting procedures on the travel industry related perspectives. Broad web review has been directed to look for, analyse and decipher data. Moreover, wherever conceivable, the perspectives of experts have been utilized to inspire explicit data for subjective investigation. The examination likewise consolidates the bits of knowledge picked up from a few meetings in the region of online the travel industry in India and abroad.

Conclusion

In reality, Tourism industry can't keep its eyes close on the possibilities of New Media, particularly from the perspective of advertising and advancement. The developing patterns incorporate the expanded use of hand-held gadgets for data inquiry and kind of things, and the escalated utilization of online life in different perspectives. This examination was attempted with the target of distinguishing the job and importance of new media in movement basic leadership and the investigation built up the accompanying: New media presently has played a critical job in a significant number of our everyday exercises. Taking a choice to go by a vacationer is an action of outrageous trouble because of the intrinsic qualities of the travel industry items and administrations. Basic leadership is typically done through a procedure including diverse stages. The impact of new media is inescapable in need recognizable proof for movement, in data seek, in distinguishing the choices for movement, in picking the correct travel alternative, while voyaging, and in addition after the movement in giving input and sharing the encounters. Alongside aiding in distinguishing the requirement for movement, new media frames the correct choice for accepting a visit and additionally to make the utilization simple and charming.

The key innovations of Social Media that support the Tourism industry unrest proceed with their consent. Online networking of travellers is set up wherever there is a web association and it must be considered for all publicists, advertisers and substance makers as a centre piece of their correspondences. Social networking has affected each part of the tourism Industry and changed the way travel is incorporated.

Social Media in Tourism Industry empowers a substantially more positive association with purchasers where genuine advantages are made as well as the consumers as it helps them in making a right decision. However every coin has two sides. If social media is creating a positive impact on consumers or marketers like Brand awareness, reputation building, decision making, evaluation of alternatives, etc; similarly it also has negative impacts which may include ineffective use of social media which may include posting fake reviews and stories, indulging in living a screen life and forgetting the real

experience of travel. This may also include creating curated stories or feed which may not be true in real sense hence making a wrong decision of choose an alternative based on that feed.

Social Media helps the consumers in making a travel decision in one or the other ways and act as an advertising and promotion channels. Clients can make positive or negative views for the organization, its items and administrations, contingent upon how the organization is introduced to them. So the picture or the apparent nature of purchasers, influences sentiment or message that they will transmit to others for decision making in Social Media. Social Media is a new trend in Tourism Industry which is quickly developing and subsequently it must be overseen well in an effective way.

References

1. Andreasen, A. R. (1965). Attitude and consumer behavior: A decision model in new research. In L. Preston (Ed.), *Marketing* (p.1-16). California: Berkeley, CA: Institute of Business and Economic Research.
2. Cooper, C. P., Fletcher, Gilbert and Wanhill. (1993). *Tourism: Principles and Practices*. London: Pitman.
3. Foxall, G. R., & Goldsmith, R. E. (1994). *Consumer psychology for marketing*, London: Routledge. doi:10.1111/j.1470-6431.1995.tb00535.x
4. Hadjiphanis, L., & Christou, L. (2006). The role of ecommerce on consumer behaviour. *Journal of Business Administration*, 5(1), Retrieved from www.atu/business/spring2006/
5. Horner, S. & Swarbrooke, J. (2007). *Consumer behaviour in tourism*, 2nd edn., Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann. doi:10.1002/jtr.414
6. Lawson, R. (1997). Consumer decision making within goal driven framework, *Psychology and Marketing*, 14(5), 427-449. doi: 10.1002/(SICI)1520-6793(199708)14:5<427::AID-MAR1>3.0.CO;2-A
7. Lovelock, C. & Wirtz, J. (2007). *Services Marketing: People, technology, strategy*. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.
8. Middleton, V. T. C., & Clarke, J. (2001). *Marketing for Travel and Tourism*. New York: Butterworth-Heinemann.
9. Nankervis, T., & Kelly, I. (2001). *Visitor destination*, 33 Park Road Qld: John Wiley & Sons Australia.
10. Peter, J. P., & Olson, C. J. (1999). *Consumer decision making, consumer behaviour and marketing strategy*, Boston: Irwin/McGrawhill.
11. Schiffman, L. G. & Kanuk, L. L. (2009). *Consumer behaviour*. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.
12. Sinclair, Jollean K. and Clinton E. Vogus. 2011. "Adoption of social networking sites: an exploratory adaptive structuration perspective for global organizations." *Information Technology Management* 12: 293-314, DOI 10.1007/s10799-011-0086-5.
13. Safko's, Brake's *The Social Media Bible (The Social Media Bible: Tactics, Tools, and Strategies for Business Success by Lon Safko and David K. Brake (Paperback - Dec 4, 2018))*
14. Solomon, M.R. (1996). *Consumer behaviour*. New Jersey: Engle-wood Cliff.
15. Mathieson, A., & Wall, G. (1982). *Tourism: economic, physical and social impacts*. London: Logman.
16. Universal McCANN, 2008. *Power to the people Social media tracker: Wave. 3*. New York: Universal McCANN. Retrieved from http://www.universalmccann.com/Assets/wave_3_20080403093750.pdf
17. WTTC, (2005). *Annual report on tourism performance*, World travel and tourism council.
18. Wilkes, W.L. (1994). *Consumer behaviour*. New York: Wiley
19. Yale, P. (1995). *The business of tour operations*. London: Longman Group Limited.