ROLE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING IN TRAVEL AND TOURISM IN SOUTH INDIA-AN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This Research paper aims to explore the Role of Influencer Marketing in Travel and Tourism in South India. Responses from 200 samples, in the age group of 15- 55 were collected from across South India. An extensive review of Literature covering 25 research articles from California to China and Indonesia to Ireland were done to understand the usage of social media and the role of influencing marketing. A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was framed covering various factors to ascertain the role of social media and that of influencer was administered through a google form. With the primary data collected various quantitative analysis using statistical tools such as percentage Analysis, Chi Square test, one-way ANOVA and Pearson Correlation were applied to draw meaningful findings. It was found that Educational Qualification and age played a role in usage of social media and liking for travel. Income plays a role on frequency of the trip and choice of destination and more importantly the significant role of influencer marketing in promoting tourism was identified

Key Words: *Travel, Tourism, Influencer, Marketing, Social media*.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism accounts for 10% of global GDP and provides employment to 1 in every 10 persons worldwide. It not only Stimulates the local economic growth, and a favourable BOP, but it also has a multiplier effect on tourism related business such as hotels, restaurants, travel agents, guides, retailing, clothing, laundry, transportation and the demand for local food and crafts. Additionally, it also helps in Preserving culture, and natural sites, helps in the betterment of infrastructure and healthcare facilities, and more importantly it promotes local entrepreneurship- help the tourists and local communities alike. In India tourism jobs are likely to be increased by 9% and theme-based tourism such as Coastal, North-eastern, Himalayan, Desert, Tribal, Heritage, Wildlife, Spiritual, is being focused by the Govt.

In this backdrop, the 5As of tourism industry namely- attractiveness, activities, accessibility, accommodation, and amenities are the factors to be leveraged and capitalized in emerging markets in alignment with the first A- attractiveness the role of Influencer marketing seems to play a pivotal role. A business partner who has a significant social media presence to market a products and services is called as Influencer. They cut across all strata of people to reach viewers and influence their decision in all walks of life. Building a successful partnership Connecting and interacting with influencers can be

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the beginning of a strong relationship

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

25 articles from various Research journals and magazines were referred including that of Rojalin Mohanty, Ansuman Samal, Sagar Mohite and Shubhendu Shukla (2022) in their paper "Impact of Influencer Market on Consumers of the Tourism Industry" Josh C. McNair (2021) in his study "An Analysis of the Impact of an Influencer" Kshitij Mokhare , Atul Satpute , Vaibhav Pal, Prajakta Badwaik (2021), in their article "Impact of Influencer Marketing on Travel and Tourism" found that Influencer marketing significantly impacts the travel and tourism industry, with most participants choosing their destinations based on social media influencer recommendations. Perceived trustworthiness and content quality are crucial aspects of influencer marketing. The marketing industry is constantly evolving, and influencer marketing is a successful model for travel and tourism companies. Applying theories to practical knowledge can help select the best policies and long-term strategies for value development and industry integration.

- ➢ Apart from leisure, marine tourism pilgrimage tourism is also gaining popularity
- ➢ Intensive marketing is required to promote tourism in a country (mariyano 2017, Indonesia vs Thailand/Malaysia)
- ➢ Research performed in California, Ireland, China, Indonesia ascertained significant role of influencer marketing in promoting tourism
- ➢ Research papers also revealed that Instagram, Tik Tok, You tube and facebook being leading social media platforms that influences tourism

NEED OF THE STUDY

- • Identify the impact of Influencer marketing on travel and tourism
- • To observe peoples tastes and preferences on Travel and Tourism
- • To examine social media habits and how as a platform it promotes influencer marketing

OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To analyse if Age, Education, Gender, Income, and occupation play a role in travel liking and decisions
- ❖ To identify the impact of Influencer Marketing on Travel & Tourism Industry
- ❖ To observe if age factor affects usage of travel influencer
- ❖ To examine the role of travel influencer on travel plans

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on primary data collected from 200 respondents using a standardized questionnaire. The respondents were recruited using the Convenient Sampling Methodology. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, ANOVA, and Chi-square are used to analyse data.

LIMITATIONS

- ✖ There are chances of biased responses being received
- ✖ Statistical tools have its own limitations

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Respondent's Demographic Distribution

Particulars	No. of. Respondents	Percentage
Age: 20 – 30 Years	109	55
Gender: Female	150	75
Education: Post Graduate	111	56
Occupation: Student	110	55
Income: 2,50,000 p.a	112	56

Source: Computed

The table above shows the demographic distribution of the responders. The accompanying table illustrates that the majority of the 200 respondents are females aged 20 to 30 who have completed their postgraduate education. Also, it can be noted that more than 50% earn an annual income of 2,50,000 annually.

Table 2: Travel Information

Particulars	No. of. Respondents	Percentage
Interest in Travelling	154	77
Travel Duration: Every Year	101	51
Cost spent on Travel	63	32
Trip Planned - Family	71	36
Usage of social media	142	70

Source: Computed

The above table depicts travel related information of the study. It can be stated that majority of the respondents were interested in Travelling on a yearly basis. They prefer to spend around 10,000 to 25,000 for travel on an average. It can also be stated that family members take decisions related to trip. Majority of the respondents make use of social media in their trip related choices

Table 3: Popularity of Influencer Marketing

Particulars	No. of. Respondents	Percentage
Travel Influencer Awareness - Yes	113	57
Destination Decision: social media	62	31
Travel & Tourism Interest of Present Generation	82	41
Awareness of Various Culture	104	52
Type of Food	89	45
New Language	75	38
Appealing Information	75	38
Impact of Travel Influencer	85	43
Travel Plan Distribution	73	37

Source: Computed

The above table states that majority of the respondents are aware of Travel Influencers. The respondents decide on the type of destination based on social media. Majority of the present generation respondents show interest towards travel & tourism stating that they are made aware of various cultures, food varieties, and new language by marketing influencers and are able to plan the trip from the beginning to end.

Table 4: Benefits of Influencer Marketing

Particulars	No. of. Respondents	Percentage
Loyal Audience	34	67
Quickly builds trust	75	38
Improve Brand Awareness	114	57
Enriches Content Strategy	87	44
Building Winning Partnership	90	45
Provides Amazing value to audience	71	39

Source: Computed

The able table depicts that majority of the respondents felt that Influencer were able to gain the loyalty of customers, build trust, improve brand awareness, enrich content strategy, provide amazing value to audience and build winning partnership.

Table 5: Educational Qualification & Usage of social media

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18.770	3	6.257	9.802	0.000
Within Groups	125.105	196	0.638		
Total	143.875	199			

H_0 = There is no significant difference between educational qualification and usage of social media.

According to the preceding table, the significant value is 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 threshold. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected and it is possible to conclude that there is a considerable difference between educational background and social media usage.

Table 6: Educational Qualification & Travel Liking

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.077	3	2.026	3.174	0.025
Within Groups	125.078	196	0.638		
Total	131.155	199			

H_0 = There is no significant difference between educational qualification and travel liking. The preceding table shows that the significant value is 0.025, which is less than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. As a result, it may be concluded that there is a large disparity between educational qualifications and travel preferences.

Table 7: Age Distrbution & Usage of Travel Influencer

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.518	4	2.629	3.298	0.012
Within Groups	155.477	195	.797		
Total	165.995	199			

H_0 = There is no significant difference between age distribution and usage of travel influencer.

The table above shows that the significant value is 0.012, which is less than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. As a result, there appears to be a considerable variation in age distribution and travel influencer utilization.

Table 8: Age Distribution & Influence of Influencer's Content

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.097	4	2.274	2.598	0.038
Within Groups	170.723	195	0.876		
Total	179.820	199			

H_0 = There is no significant difference between age distribution and influencer's content. From the above table it is found that the significant value is 0.038 which is less than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis got rejected. So,it can be inferred that there is a significant difference between age distribution and influencer's content.

Table 9: Income & Travel Regularity

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	15.370	4	3.842	3.470	.009
Within Groups	215.910	195	1.107		
Total	231.280	199			

H_0 = There is no significant difference between income and travel regularity.

Table 4.2.5 shows that the significant value is 0.009, which is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. As a result, it may be concluded that there is a large difference between income and travel frequency.

Table 10: Income & Cost of Traveling

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	29.158	4	7.289	6.323	.000
Within Groups	224.797	195	1.153		
Total	253.955	199			

H_0 = There is no significant difference between income and cost of traveling.

The preceding table shows that the significant value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggests a big gap between income and travel expenses.

Table 11: Correlation

		R1	R2
R1	Pearson Correlation	1	0.630
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	200	200
R2	Pearson Correlation	0.630	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	200	200

H_0 = There is no relationship between impact of travel influencers on travel plan andplanning the trip until it is finished.

R1 = Impact of travel influencers on travel plan; **R2** = Planning the trip until its finished. The above table is a correlation table. Where two variables have a positive correlation (r=0.630, p = 0.000). There is a moderate yet substantial link between these two variables. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. The results show that impact of travel influencers on travel plan are influenced by the consumers who plan their trip with

travel influencers until it is finished.

Table 12: CHI-SQUARE TEST

	Value	df	Asymp.Sig (2-tailed)
Pearson Chi-Square	34.787	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	31.893	8	.000
Linear-by-LinearAssociation	16.979	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	200		

H₀: There is no substantial association between occupation and travel preferences. Because the significant value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted with a 46.7% confidence level. As a result, we can conclude that there is a significant correlation between consumer occupation and preferred travel destinations.

Table 13: CHI-SQUARE TEST

	Value	df	Asymp.Sig (2-tailed)
Pearson Chi-Square	37.373a	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	35.893	8	.000
Linear-by-LinearAssociation	21.546	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	200		

H₀ = There is no significant relationship between age and usage of social media.
A significant result of 0.000 (less than 0.05) rejects the null hypothesis while accepting the alternative hypothesis at a 46.7% level of significance. As a result, there is a significant relationship between age and social media usage.

SUGGESTIONS
- As influencers are becoming more popular, they are emerging as one of the prominent agents of promotion
- Since Instagram & Tik Tok are emerging as the most popular social media, tourism can be promoted in a focused way through these channels
- LinkedIn can also be capitalised to promote tourism by respective destinations, state government, travel agents to announce offers, activities, new theme-based accommodations, adventures, pilgrimage tourism updates
- To tap the potential travels package with different budget that suits the needs and pockets of the travellers can be researched and arrived at.
- New destinations that are attractive but less popular, can be made attractive with adventure, nature trip, trekking, bird watching etc can be promoted for inclusive growth
- Millennials can be tapped in a big way by effective marketing reaching out through corporate tie ups and social media.

CONCLUSION

As the younger generation becomes more relevant in the marketplace, the ideas that drive their purchase decisions spark new tourism trends. Eco-travel, transformative travel, Solo travel, health travel, pilgrimage travel, are the newer trends that is becoming increasingly popular in the travel space. Today specifically tailored AI in the form of internet chatbots, handles queries with ease and helps in assisting the customers with vital and timely information thus Artificial Intelligence plays a role in

transforming the tourism experience. Of a customer. As tourism along with technology is advancing at a faster pace it is bound to contribute to greater GDP and the national and at the global level. Influencer marketing, thus has a bigger stage to play facilitating the destinations and the travellers alike. This study can be carried out with other parts of India and other countries too to better understand the social media usage patterns and role of influencers

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