



THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING (SMM) ON TOURIST MOTIVATIONS AND TRAVEL DECISION – MAKING PROCESS: STUDY OF TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN

Tilovmurodov Dostonbek Furqat o'g'li,

Alfraganus universiteti Xalqaro turizm menejmenti kafedrası o'qituvchisi

e-mail: dostonbektilovmurodov7777@gmail.com ORCID: 0000-0001-5645-822X

Abstract: Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are extremely common nowadays. People may simply create personal profiles and utilize them to create virtual networks of online and offline connections. Facebook today has over 890 million active users, while Twitter and LinkedIn have about 284 million and 300 million respectively. Although social media usage among people originated in the United States, more than 80 % of social media users are now non-residents of the United States demonstrating the global appeal of social media and its vital importance in the business sector. This project would educate academics, researchers, politicians in the tourism industry, and government officials on the importance of social media marketing.

Key words: social media marketing, social marketing, social media platforms, tourism, destination choice, decision making

ВЛИЯНИЕ МАРКЕТИНГА В СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ СЕТЯХ (SMM) НА ТУРИСТИЧЕСКИЕ МОТИВАЦИИ И РЕШЕНИЯ О ПУТЕШЕСТВИИ – ПРОЦЕСС ПРИНЯТИЯ РЕШЕНИЯ: ИЗУЧЕНИЕ ТАШКЕНТА, УЗБЕКИСТАН.

Аннотация: Платформы социальных сетей, такие как Facebook, Twitter и LinkedIn, в настоящее время чрезвычайно распространены. Люди могут просто создавать личные профили и использовать их для создания виртуальных сетей онлайн и офлайн-подключений. Сегодня у Facebook более 890 миллионов активных пользователей, а у Twitter и LinkedIn — около 284 миллионов и 300 миллионов соответственно. Хотя использование социальных сетей среди людей зародилось в

Соединенных Штатах, более 80% пользователей социальных сетей в настоящее время являются нерезидентами Соединенных Штатов, что демонстрирует глобальную привлекательность социальных сетей и их жизненно важное значение в бизнес-секторе. Этот проект будет обучать ученых, исследователей, политиков в индустрии туризма и государственных чиновников важности маркетинга в социальных сетях.

Ключевые слова: маркетинг в социальных сетях, социальный маркетинг, платформы социальных сетей, туризм, выбор направления, принятие решений.

IJTIMOY MEDIA MARKETINGNING (SMM) TURISTLARNING MOTIVATSIYA VA SAYOHAT QARORLARI QABUL QILISH JARAYONIGA TA'SIRI: TOSHKENT, O'ZBEKISTONNI O'RGANISH MISOLIDA

Annotatsiya: Hozirgi kunda Facebook, Twitter va LinkedIn kabi ijtimoiy media platformalari juda keng tarqalgan. Odamlar shunchaki shaxsiy profilarni va ulardan onlayn va oflayn ulanishlarning virtual tarmoqlarini yaratish uchun foydalanishlari mumkin. Facebook bugungi kunda 890 milliondan ortiq faol foydalanuvchiga ega, Twitter va LinkedIn esa mos ravishda 284 million va 300 millionga yaqin. Garchi odamlar orasida ijtimoiy mediadan foydalanish Qo'shma Shtatlarda paydo bo'lgan bo'lsa-da, ijtimoiy media foydalanuvchilarining 80 %dan ortig'i hozirda Qo'shma Shtatlarning norezidentlari bo'lib, ijtimoiy medianing global jozibadorligini va uning biznes va servis sohasidagi hayotiy ahamiyatini namoyish etadi. Ushbu loyiha akademiklar, tadqiqotchilar, turizm sanoatidagi tadbirkorlarga va hukumat amaldorlariga ijtimoiy media marketingning ahamiyati ko'rsatishdan iborat.

Kalit so'zlar: ijtimoiy media marketing, ijtimoiy marketing, ijtimoiy media platformalari, turizm, maqsad tanlash, qaror qabul qilish.

INTRODUCTION

According to study by Dinan and Sargeant [1], social media provides information for individuals interested in eco-friendly and sustainable tourist destinations. In this context, social media marketing offers tourism organizations the option to adopt a more sustainable approach by providing social marketing methods and technology that may influence tourists' sustainable travel behaviors. This backs up Han's [2] arguments about how to inspire tourists to take greater personal responsibility for the location and its surroundings. In this context, social media is referred to as an important channel for tourism information. The advancement of internet technology has significantly enhanced the importance of social media in everyday life [3]. Social media has increased in popularity as a reliable source of information and communication. They have significantly impacted the way many firms, particularly those in the tourism and hospitality industries, handle marketing communications. The authority of the content shared on these platforms adds to the effectiveness of social media. Such information may provide travelers with a trustworthy understanding of tourism sites and services. It is recommended that scholars investigate the effects of social media on tourism because it has become one of the most important sources of information. To lessen the risk of purchasing tourism services, which is due to the experimental character of the majority of tourism product purchases, travelers must gather a large

amount of information before making a final decision to purchase travel-related things [1,2,3]. Tourists today rely primarily on information provided by others to reduce the risk and uncertainty associated with purchasing travel-related products. Many people believe that information shared by other travelers online is equivalent to offline recommendations from friends, family, and other travelers. It has also been observed that because visitors frequently seek out other customers' ideas and views while making product or service selections, internet platforms cause significant changes in their actions. Social media content usually draws attention due to how it is presented, particularly in the form of graphics and experiences. Because of the ability to observe or read about other visitors' experiences, social networks are already becoming important sources of information for travelers [4]. According to one study, social media posts, particularly those from persons with a strong reputation, can have a considerable influence on trip planning as well as final decision-making. Academics in tourism have placed a strong emphasis on how social media influences travel decisions. According to a recent review of the literature, the majority of this research has focused on how social media influences behavioral intention, with very few studies on actual behavior. A few studies, many of which used a deductive approach, have produced relatively little insight into the roles of social media in tourist decision-making. Cox's study was the first to investigate the roles of social media [5].

Social Media Marketing in Uzbekistan – Uzbekistan

is one of the most invested countries to creative growth. Long-term social development policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan is concentrated on strengthening the digital society. The government promoted the adoption and use of ICT technologies through a variety of initiatives, including the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan's Decree «About Continuous Improvement of Computerization Process and Implementation of ICTs,» dated May 30, 2002, and the Cabinet of Ministers' ordinance on the subject, which defines priority measures in this sector; [6]. The idea of the Republic of Uzbekistan's Law «On Information Technology»; Adoption of the Project to Improve ICT and Computerization Operations in the Republic from 2002 to 2010, as well as supplementary rules and laws. The present regulatory framework aimed at promoting ICT has the primary goal of establishing a comprehensive national information system by embracing broad use of modern ICT and telecommunications technologies in all sectors of the economy and public life. The Internet and telecommunications sectors have improved dramatically as a result of a range of government initiatives to promote the country's ICT industry. The number of small and micro-firms operating in the Transport and Communications sector increased by 0.2 % between 2014 (4,6 %) and 2015 (4,8 %). Internet and mobile communication services are also growing in popularity. Mobile and phone communication services, as well as Internet network services, are the key revenue drivers in Uzbekistan's communications industry, according to the Statistics Committee. Revenue from Internet network providers increased from 10.8 % in 2013 to 14.0 % in 2014. These statistics, first and foremost, show the growing popularity of using the Internet in all parts of the country's economy [6].

Interest of the article - this study is to examine visitors' behavior who use social media marketing to travel or engage in tourism activities in Tashkent, and this paper aims to analyze the literature and provide a structured description of the notion «social media» and its various types; discuss the challenges and opportunities of incorporating social media into tourism marketing strategies in developing countries (using Uzbekistan as an example); and examine the current situation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to a survey, individuals who prioritize smart and sustainable tourism attractions can benefit from social media. As a result, social media marketing enables tourist firms to take a more sustainable strategy by providing social marketing methods and tools that can impact visitors' sustainable behavior. This is consistent with Han's [8] statements about urging tourists to take greater personal responsibility for the place and its

environment in order to promote sustainable tourism. Social media is regarded as a significant medium for tourist information in this context, particularly in relation to environmental standards, engagement in pro-environmental social media activities, and the establishment of pro-environmental online communities [8]. The research has found three significant driving factors in Asian regions that are pushing a paradigm change in tourism prospects, including the introduction of mobile social media and gamification. In response to the global pandemic during the previous year, a plausible relationship between sustainable tourism and social media users is discovered. They discovered that tourists' use of social media supports and influences their purchases of locally created souvenirs, hence helping the growth of local community-based tourism. Although the use of social media in travel planning has been hotly contested, national tourism markets differ in many ways, including how potential visitors respond to social media impact [8]. Given the intangible nature of travel services and the perceived risk throughout the trip decision-making process, the impact of social media on consumer behavior has received considerable attention in the tourism and travel sector. Several studies have been conducted to investigate visitors' intentions to use social media, as well as the usage and influence of social media on travel information searches, attitudes, and purchasing intentions. The increasing relevance of social media in many aspects of tourist decision-making warrants an in-depth examination of the role that social media sites play in tourists' information search and decision-making processes. Despite their rare, qualitative study has been performed to explore the effect of social media on visitors' decision-making processes [9]. The analysis of tourist adoption and the processing of information from internet reviews was the primary focus of the research. A qualitative in-depth study was conducted on the influence of social media on customers' hotel decision-making process, with a specific focus on the 'evaluation stage,' which involves information search and selection via social media, and inductively investigated social media methods used by hospitality and tourism practitioners. Although social media has been highlighted for its potential to influence the five stages of tourists' decision-making process (need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior), the study provides little to our understanding of tourists' actual use of social media and its influence on each stage of the decision-making process [9]. According to sources, consumers evaluate the impact of online reviews on tourism businesses. Tourist-generated material on social media increases prospective passengers' confidence and expectations. These personal experiences are judged real or credible based on similar/shared experiences (photos, videos,

blogs, podcasts) of other travelers, resulting in a higher rate of use among potential travelers consulting reputable sources of e-WOM information when arranging a trip. During the planning and decision-making process, government-sponsored tourist websites, travel companies, mass media advertising, and other forms of tourism information websites are also likely to be used. Potential visitors, according to Schroeder and Pennington-Gray [10], acquire information from these many sources to construct a pool of collective knowledge of information. Other experts feel that social media's participation in tourism has an impact on the market; social media develops destination image and influences tourists' decision-making processes through viewpoints and experiences. Prior to the emergence of web-based platforms, the mass media was the key source of information on tourist locations, molding their image through numerous mediums of communication such as television, radio, newspapers, and movies, among others. Over the last two decades, social media has grown into a web-based communication platform that reaches a diverse range of people that create and share their own content [10].

METHODOLOGY

This study included qualitative research, which is an effective way for investigating unique occurrences. This sort of research is less technical than quantitative methods and focuses on people's attitudes in everyday circumstances, making it appropriate for investigating tourism and hospitality issues. This research can be conducted using ethnographic fieldwork and a combination of inductive and explorative methodologies. Such procedures include interviews, participant or non-participant observations, focus groups, and other comparable methods. According to Woodman, qualitative research approaches topics differently from the methodology mentioned above. It is predicated on the fundamental idea that «reality» is subjective: each human being builds a unique, personal vision of how the world works based on his or her own encounters with it. Qualitative research information provides user experiences, tastes, goals, habits, and a range of other types of information that are vital in developing a product that will actually fit into a consumer's life. The goal of qualitative analysis is to analyze the subjective meaning or social output of persons, events, or activities through non-standardized data collection and frequent examination of text and images rather than numbers and statistics [11]. The 15 foreign tourists chosen as respondents were picked from a large number of visitors, primarily international tourists traveling in groups or alone. Participants interested in participating in the research will be asked preliminary quick interview

questions to assess if they fall within the scope of the study. The 15 persons who come inside the scope of the inquiry will be questioned. Another alternative was to post leaflets on notice boards and distribute them to anyone who might be interested in participating in the research. The third strategy was to find interested respondents on tourism hotspots through word of mouth and social connections [11].

RESULT

Three significant patterns emerged from the transcribed and coded data from the interviews, which were recognized and classified. All of these themes will be presented and discussed further below by analyzing the opinions, perceptions, and feelings of the respondents who were interviewed at the Tashkent international airport in the following ways: 1) traveling motivation and social media influence, 2) relevant information and social media usage, and 3) Consultation of travel company websites.

1. Traveling motivation and social media influence – the trip preparation process is separated into three stages. During the pre-trip stage, potential travelers admit their want to go; they hunt for travel-related information and consider possibilities. When traveling, tourists make different purchasing decisions. Finally, after their journey, visitors evaluate their experiences by posting them on WOM or social media [12]. However, their most visible time of action or utilization of a particular platform remains visible. According to interview findings, respondents said that traveling allows them to learn about different civilizations, explore new places, and meet interesting individuals. Encourage participants to enjoy being in an uncommon setting and learning about its history and culture. It's also an opportunity for tourists to expand themselves by trying something new or pushing their limitations. Traveling allows visitors to acquire perspective on life, appreciate what they have at home, and become more receptive to different ways of living. Yes, social networking has greatly aided tourists in discovering accommodations, the best local eateries, and arranging their trips.

2. Relevant information and social media usage – most of the respondents believe that media information is not fully trustable, respondents relied on blogging platforms and networks such as Word Press. Brands may be promoted by blogging by mentioning them in a relevant blog or by writing a whole blog focusing on that brand. In any case, it aids in research of Uzbekistan and draws respondents notice to this site. However, social media cannot be trusted as a source of information. Sure, there is trustworthy information on social media. There

is, however, a lot of disinformation. And there is no way to verify it on social media. Take a stroll through TikTok and TripInfo. There are trustworthy physicians who provide useful information, as well as quacks. It is up to you to assess. Unfortunately, it appears that the majority of individuals are too ignorant to do so efficiently. Buyer beware. If you rely on social media as your major source of news or information, I doubt your ability to analyze anything correctly. Some other believe that social media is modern source if information's.

3. Consultation of travel company websites – nowadays travel companies also using social media for commerce, to promote and sell by using their own websites like TripAdvisor, Travigo, Booking.com, AirBnB, tourists favorite app for finding nearby and good restaurants, hotel reviews, things-to-do tips, carrentals.com know offorfindingcheapest carrentals, converter plus (international travelers frequently need currency and metric conversion help), hotels.com (good for finding hotel deals and their reward program is awesome), and Yandex, Uber and Taxi.Com (only available in some cities, but great in cities). Respondent believe that travel components like TripAdvisor, where individuals publish their reviews of destinations, hotels, restaurants, activities, and so on. Before making any final judgments, I rely on the experience and feedback of others. People frequently provide images to back up their claims, which is incredibly useful. If I understand it properly, a travel website may just stress the most favorable parts of a location, and this must be seen for what it is – an attempt to bring you there regardless of what it delivers said most of the interview respondents.

DISCUSSION

People's use of social media has become a habit in their everyday life. As they browse social media platforms, users are exposed to a vast number of images and postings outlining particular features, traits, or other aspects of a certain area. These materials may inspire people to add a certain location or venue to their 'wish list' for future trips. These materials may 'pop up' and influence customers' travel decisions when they are planning their next vacation or trip. This function of social media is known as a need generator since it may increase initial awareness of a location as well as create an interest or want that entices people to visit. The impact is indirect since social media only increases the desire to visit, but other factors such as available money and time, as well as a lack of better alternatives, may affect passengers' final selections. In addition, this work has minimal direct influence on travel choices [13, 14, 15]. According to the interview results, the majority of respondents believed that social media provides the

most up-to-date information in the most convenient way. For example, if you follow us on social media, you may hear about the latest travel news, vacation deals, offers, and airfare costs. Our social media channels provide travel inspiration as well as amazing images and videos of incredible locations to excite your interest in traveling! Several studies have looked into travelers' intentions to use social media, as well as the use and influence of social media on travel information searches, attitudes, purchasing intentions and travel decisions. Whatever puts a location to a person's 'want list,' material posted on social media may remind the viewer of a destination and stimulate his/her need and desire to come there in the future. This may occur at any time while users are browsing social media for a variety of reasons, and it cannot be considered conscious engagement. According to the findings of the current study, the majority of participants stated that travel business websites and social media platforms contain comments from other travelers, allowing you to make an educated decision about where to stay or what activities to engage in while on vacation [13, 14, 15].

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper is the first empirical study to examine qualitatively the functions of social media in tourist decision-making, including the selection of six trip components. According to study that a small number of social media research focus on real behavior. Similarly, research that focus on both pre-trip and on-trip activities are uncommon. A handful of theoretical contributions stand out. To begin, four social media roles are presented; two have direct and two have indirect effects on visitor selections. In general, social media has an indirect influence in the selection of a trip location, acting as a need generator and a supporter. In practice, this study gives significant insights for many tourism sectors by studying visitor decision-making processes and the involvement of social media in those processes. According to our findings, social media have no significant effect in travelers' decisions on which airlines to utilize. Most people will buy tickets as long as the pricing are acceptable. The majority of respondents in this survey are Asian. The tiny sample size of Western visitors is insufficient for a valid cross-cultural study. Future cross-cultural study is recommended to have a better understanding of potential disparities. It is reasonable to believe that a growth in the usage of social media during journeys may also be witnessed among Western visitors. Following that, scale development studies might be carried out to propose measurement items connected with each of the four functions proposed by the current

study. As a result, the impacts of social media roles on travel decisions may be studied quantitatively. Based on a study of the research, it is clear that social media sites do play an essential role in tourism. Social media continues to play an important role in everything from information search to trip planning and location selection. According to the literature study, the most common stages in which travelers utilize social media sites are the information search stage (pre-trip stage) and the experience sharing stage (after trip stage). Sites like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and

TripAdvisor are the most popular among travelers for trip planning, and Instagram is quickly becoming a prominent social networking site for trip planning and location selection. It is essential that tourism marketers understand the behavior of visitors in these online spaces in order to make strategic decisions when developing social media marketing campaigns. The study simply reviewed past literature; future studies might look at data from the supply side to see if tourists utilize social media sites to seek for tourism locations and related travel activities.

References



1. Agbi, A. O. (2019). *social media platforms and travel destination choices*. *Geography and Economic History*, 1–30.
2. Agyapong, E. (2022). *Social Media Impact on Tourism Destination Decision: Evidence from International Students in China*. *Open Journal of Applied Sciences*, 1–26.
3. Jayasinghe, J. (2021). *Impact of Social Media Benefits on Tourists Travel Choice*. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 1–9.
4. Chiang, I. (2019). *Exploring the benefits of social media marketing for brands and communities*. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce Studies*, 10(2), 113–140. doi:10.7903/ijecs.1547
5. Chiang, I. P., Wong, R., & Huang, C. H. (2019). *Exploring the benefits of social media marketing for brands and communities*. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce Studies*, 10(2), 113–140. doi:10.7903/ijecs.1547
6. Das, S., & Lall, G. (2016). *Traditional marketing VS digital marketing: An analysis*. *International Journal of Commerce and Management Research*, 2(8), 5141.
7. Data Reportal. (2020). *Digital 2020: Bangladesh*. Retrieved from: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-bangladesh>
8. Sahoo, D. S. S., & B.G., M. M. (2017). *Role of Social Media in Promoting Tourism Business - A Study on Tourism Promoting in Odisha*. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 23(9), 272–281.
9. Liu, X. (2020). *The roles of social media in tourists' choices of travel components*. *Tourist Studies*, 1-22.
10. Matikiti-Manyever, R. (2019). *The role of social media sites in trip planning and destination decision-making processes*. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 1-10.
11. Merabet1, A. (2020). *Tourist Destination Choice and Social Media*. *American International Journal of Business Management*, 1–8.
12. Muminova, G. (2016). *Social Media as a tool of Innovative Marketing: The case of Uzbekistan*. *Senior scientific researcher, TSEU*, 1–11.
13. Paul, H. S. (2019). *Influence of Social Media on Tourists' Destination Selection Decision*. *Scholars Bulletin*, 1–7.
14. SHYLE, D. I. (2015). *Social Media and its Impact on Decision Making for Trip*. *European Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 1–8.
15. Yuan, Y. (2022). *The effect of social media on travel planning process by Chinese tourists: the way forward to tourism futures*. *Journal of tourism futures*, 1–20.