

A Research on Influence of Social Media Communications on Selection of Hotels Among Domestic Tourists in Tamil Nadu

R. Kannan

ABSTRACT--- *In the context of tourism, tourists are generally using social media for getting information, putting their contents and messages and sharing their stay related experiences in hotels, connecting with other tourists across various tourism destinations and exploring new choices of hotels in tourist places. Half of domestic tourists realize that the level of social media communications about hotels is high and significant difference is prevailing among profile of domestic tourists and their view on social media communications about hotels. Ratings of hotels by others, review of others about hotels, experience of others about hotels, user generated contents about hotels, services and products of hotels and location of hotels provided by social media communications have positive and significant influence on selection of hotels among domestic tourists. To improve selection of hotels among domestic tourists, social media should share picture of hotels and must give complete details on services and products of hotels.*

Key Words — Domestic Tourists, Hotels, Social Media Communications

1. INTRODUCTION

In present times, an increasing level of awareness among consumers, efficient sharing of information and critical evaluation of contents and messages in social media platforms, create it possible for tourism destination and hotels to be assessed by consumers in a fast and less expensive ways. Consumers use social media for obtaining information and making decision for their tour plans and selection of hotels (Browning and Sparks, 2013). Because of intangible in nature, products and services of hotels create buying decision more emotional and difficult to duplicate (Kwon et al 2011). Information on social media networking about hotels is playing a significant role in selection of hotels among consumers and at the same time, social media have larger potential to influence other consumers to choose a particular hotel among alternatives through reviews, messages, contents and experience of users (Ayeh et al 2012).

When social media are mainly used to help consumers for encouragement, restrictive options and confirming decisions (Gretzel and Yoo, 2008), reviews and messages on hotels are used to create a consideration for probable selections. In this assessment practice, hotel selections are often influenced by positive and negative posts of consumers in social media platforms and affect brand image of hotels. In the context of tourism, tourists are generally using social media for getting information, putting their contents and

messages and sharing their stay related experiences in hotels, connecting with other tourists across various tourism destinations and exploring new choices of hotels in tourist places. Hence, it necessitates studying influence of social media communications on selection of hotels among domestic tourists in Tamil Nadu.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chan and Guillet (2011) found that products, services, offers, discounts and user generated contents, reviews and messages of consumers about hotels on social media were influencing choice and availing of services of hotels among consumers. Fotis et al (2012) concluded that reviews, comments, messages, user generated contents on social media about hotels were significantly influencing selection of hotels among consumers.

Leung et al (2013) revealed that social media communications had significant impact on travel plans of consumers and most of online consumers choose hotels on the basis of information available in social media platforms. They showed that most of hotels focused on reviews, online ratings and messages of consumers and they were not connected with these aspects with bookings of hotels by consumers. Besides, hotels utilized social media for promoting their services, products and brand names of hotels among consumers.

Duffy (2015) indicated that information on social media affected selection of hotels among travelers. Messages, reviews and suggestions of friend and other travelers on social media had positive influence on selecting and using services of hotels. They found that websites, social media communication and travel websites were influencing choice of hotels among young consumers and travelers.

Terttunen (2017) concluded that women consumers used Instagram for searing and obtaining information about tourist places and hotels and other social media communications were also affecting their choice of hotels. They revealed that travelers used social media communications and other information for their travel plans and selection of hotels. Besides, photographs, comments, contents and reviews in social media were influencing tourism related activities and choice of hotels among consumers.

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Dr. R. Kannan, Professor, Centre for Tourism and Hotel Management, Madurai Kamaraj University, Palkalai Nagar, Madurai. Pin Code – 625 021, Tamil Nadu State, India.

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3. METHODOLOGY

Tamil Nadu state is selected for the present study. Simple random sampling method is used to choose domestic tourists and questionnaire method is employed to collect data from 350 domestic tourists. Percentages are computed to study profile of domestic tourists and mean and standard deviation are worked out to understand view of domestic tourists on social media communications about hotels. t-test and F-test are applied to dissect difference among profile of domestic tourists and their view on social media communications about hotels. Multiple regression analysis is carried out to study influence of social media communications on selection of hotels among domestic tourists.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 PROFILE OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS

The profile of domestic tourists is given in Table-1. The results make clear that 60.57 per cent of them are males, whilst, 39.43 per cent of them are females and 40.86 per cent of them belong to age category of 31– 40 years, whilst, 14.28 per cent of them belong to age category of 16 – 20 years. The results demonstrate that 34.29 per cent of them have under graduation, whilst, 17.71 per cent of them have higher secondary and 36.29 per cent of them have monthly income of Rs.30,001 – Rs.40,000, whilst, 6.57 per cent of them have monthly income of above Rs.50,000 and 77.71 per cent of them are married, whilst, 22.29 per cent of them are unmarried.

Table-1. Profile of Domestic Tourists

Profile	Number of Domestic Tourists	Percentage
Gender		
Male	212	60.57
Female	138	39.43
Age Category		
16 – 20 Years	50	14.28
21 – 30 Years	101	28.86
31 – 40 Years	143	40.86
41 – 50 Years	56	16.00
Education		
Higher Secondary	62	17.71
Diploma	73	20.86
Under Graduation	120	34.29
Post Graduation	95	27.14
Monthly Income		
Below Rs.20,000	52	14.86
Rs.20,001 – Rs.30,000	109	31.14
Rs.30,001 – Rs.40,000	127	36.29
Rs.40,001 – Rs.50,000	39	11.14
Above Rs.50,000	23	6.57
Marital Status		
Married	272	77.71
Unmarried	78	22.29

4.2. VIEW OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT HOTELS

The view of domestic tourists on social media communications about hotels is given in Table-2.

Table-2. View of Domestic Tourists on Social Media Communications about Hotels

Social Media Communications about Hotels	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social media give information on location of hotels	3.98	0.91
Social media shares picture of hotels	3.35	1.05
Social media present review of others about hotels	3.92	0.96
Social media provide user generated contents about hotels	3.96	0.94
Social media shares experience of others about hotels	3.88	1.03
Social media give complete details on services and products of hotels	3.30	1.08
Social media provide ratings of hotels by others	3.90	0.99

The domestic tourists are agreed with social media give information on location of hotels, social media present review of others about hotels, social media provide user generated contents about hotels, social media shares experience of others about hotels and social media provide ratings of hotels by others, whilst, social media shares picture of hotels and social media give complete details on services and products of hotels.

4.3. PROFILE OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT HOTELS

The distribution of domestic tourists based on social media communications about hotels is given in Table-3. The social media communications about hotels is separated into low, moderate and high levels based on Mean ± SD. Mean is 26.69 and SD is 3.97.

Table-3. Distribution of Domestic Tourists Based on Social Media Communications about Hotels

Level of Social Media Communications about Hotels	Number of Domestic Tourists	Percentage
Low	56	16.00
Moderate	120	34.29
High	174	49.71
Total	350	100.00

Amongst 350 domestic tourists, 49.71 per cent of them realized that the level of social media communications about hotels is high, whilst, 16.00 per cent of them realized that it is low.

4.3.1. Gender and Social Media Communications about Hotels

The relation amongst gender of domestic tourists and social media communications about hotels is given in Table-4.



Table-4. Gender and Social Media Communications about Hotels

Gender	Level of Social Media Communications about Hotels			Total	t-Value	Sig.
	Low	Moderate	High			
Male	35 (16.51)	66 (31.13)	111 (52.36)	212 (60.57)	5.328	.000
Female	21 (15.22)	54 (39.13)	63 (45.65)	138 (39.43)		
Total	56 (16.00)	120 (34.29)	174 (49.71)	350 (100.00)	-	-
Eta Squared				.023		

(The figures in the parentheses are per cent to total)

Amongst 212 domestic tourists who are males, 52.36 per cent of them realized that the level of social media communications about hotels is high, whilst, 16.51 per cent of them realized that it is low. Amongst 138 domestic tourists who are females, 45.65 per cent of them realized that the level of social media communications about hotels is high, whilst, 15.22 per cent of them realized that it is low.

The t-value is 5.328 and it is significant at one per cent level explaining that significant difference is there in social media communications about hotels among gender

of domestic tourists. As a result, null hypothesis is not accepted. The eta squared value is 0.023 disclosing that the effect size is small and it reveals that the actual difference in mean values between groups is small.

4.3.2. Age Category and Social Media Communications about Hotels

The relation amongst age category of domestic tourists and social media communications about hotels is given in Table-5.

Table-5. Age Category and Social Media Communications about Hotels

Age Category	Level of Social Media Communications about Hotels			Total	F-Value	Sig.
	Low	Moderate	High			
16 – 20 Years	10 (20.00)	18 (36.00)	22 (44.00)	50 (14.28)	6.740	.000
21 – 30 Years	13 (12.87)	29 (28.71)	59 (58.42)	101 (28.86)		
31 – 40 Years	20 (13.99)	49 (34.26)	74 (51.75)	143 (40.86)		
41 – 50 Years	13 (23.21)	24 (42.86)	19 (33.93)	56 (16.00)		
Total	56 (16.00)	120 (34.29)	174 (49.71)	350 (100.00)	-	-
Eta Squared				.036		

(The figures in the parentheses are per cent to total)

Amongst 50 domestic tourists who come under age category of 16 – 20 years, 44.00 per cent of them realized that the level of social media communications about hotels is high, whilst, 20.00 per cent of them realized that it is low. Amongst 101 domestic tourists who come under age category of 21 – 30 years, 58.42 per cent of them realized that the level of social media communications about hotels is high, whilst, 12.87 per cent of them realized that it is low.

Amongst 143 domestic tourists who come under age category of 31 – 40 years, 51.75 per cent of them realized that the level of social media communications about hotels is high, whilst, 13.99 per cent of them realized that it is low. Amongst 56 domestic tourists who come under age category of 41 – 50 years, 33.93 per cent of them realized that the level of social media communications

about hotels is high, whilst, 23.21 per cent of them realized that it is low.

The F-value is 6.740 and it is significant at one per cent level explaining that significant difference is there in social media communications about hotels among age category of domestic tourists. As a result, null hypothesis is not accepted. The eta squared value is 0.036 disclosing that the effect size is small and it reveals that the actual difference in mean values between groups is small.

4.3.3. Education and Social Media Communications about Hotels

The relation amongst education of domestic tourists and social media communications about hotels is given in Table-6.

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Table-6. Education and Social Media Communications about Hotels

Education	Level of Social Media Communications about Hotels			Total	F-Value	Sig.
	Low	Moderate	High			
Higher Secondary	6 (9.68)	23 (37.10)	33 (53.22)	62 (17.71)	7.150	.000
Diploma	3 (4.11)	26 (35.62)	44 (60.27)	73 (20.86)		
Under Graduation	14 (11.67)	37 (30.83)	69 (57.50)	120 (34.29)		
Post Graduation	33 (34.74)	34 (35.79)	28 (29.47)	95 (27.14)		
Total	56 (16.00)	120 (34.29)	174 (49.71)	350 (100.00)	-	-
Eta Squared	.041					

(The figures in the parentheses are per cent to total)

Amongst 62 domestic tourists who possess higher secondary, 53.22 per cent of them realized that the level of social media communications about hotels is high, whilst, 9.68 per cent of them realized that it is low. Amongst 73 domestic tourists who possess diploma, 60.27 per cent of them realized that the level of social media communications about hotels is high, whilst, 4.11 per cent of them realized that it is low.

Amongst 120 domestic tourists who possess under graduation, 57.50 per cent of them realized that the level of social media communications about hotels is high, whilst, 11.67 per cent of them realized that it is low. Amongst 95 domestic tourists who possess post graduation, 29.47 per cent of them realized that the level

of social media communications about hotels is high, whilst, 34.74 per cent of them realized that it is low.

The F-value is 7.150 and it is significant at one per cent level explaining that significant difference is there in social media communications about hotels among education of domestic tourists. As a result, null hypothesis is not accepted. The eta squared value is 0.041 disclosing that the effect size is small and it reveals that the actual difference in mean values between groups is small.

4.3.4. Monthly Income and Social Media Communications about Hotels

The relation amongst monthly income of domestic tourists and social media communications about hotels is given in Table-7.

Table-7. Monthly Income and Social Media Communications about Hotels

Monthly Income	Level of Social Media Communications about Hotels			Total	F-Value	Sig.
	Low	Moderate	High			
Below Rs.20,000	11 (21.15)	19 (36.54)	22 (42.31)	52 (14.86)	5.438	.000
Rs.20,001 – Rs.30,000	13 (11.93)	42 (38.53)	54 (49.54)	109 (31.14)		
Rs.30,001 – Rs.40,000	18 (14.17)	39 (30.71)	70 (55.12)	127 (36.29)		
Rs.40,001 – Rs.50,000	7 (17.95)	11 (28.20)	21 (53.85)	39 (11.14)		
Above Rs.50,000	7 (30.44)	9 (39.12)	7 (30.44)	23 (6.57)		
Total	56 (16.00)	120 (34.29)	174 (49.71)	350 (100.00)	-	-
Eta Squared	.030					

(The figures in the parentheses are per cent to total)

Amongst 52 domestic tourists who earn monthly income of below Rs.20,000, 42.31 per cent of them realized that the level of social media communications about hotels is high, whilst, 21.15 per cent of them realized that it is low. Amongst 109 domestic tourists who earn monthly income of Rs.20,001 – Rs.30,000, 49.54 per cent of them realized that the level of social

media communications about hotels is high, whilst, 11.93 per cent of them realized that it is low. Amongst 127

domestic tourists who earn monthly income of Rs.30,001 – Rs.40,000, 55.12 per cent of them realized that the level of social media communications about hotels is high, whilst, 14.17 per cent of them realized that it is low.

Amongst 39 domestic tourists who earn monthly income of Rs.40,001 – Rs.50,000, 53.85 per cent of them realized that the level of social media communications about hotels is high, whilst, 17.95 per cent of them realized that it is low. Amongst 23 domestic tourists who earn monthly income of above Rs.50,000, 30.44 per cent of them realized that the level of social media communications about hotels is high, whilst, 30.44 per cent of them realized that it is low.

The F-value is 5.438 and it is significant at one per cent level explaining that significant difference is there in social media communications about hotels among monthly income of domestic tourists. As a result, null hypothesis is not accepted. The eta squared value is 0.030 disclosing that the effect size is small and it reveals that the actual difference in mean values between groups is small.

4.3.5. Marital Status and Social Media Communications about Hotels

The relation amongst marital status of domestic tourists and social media communications about hotels is given in Table-8.

Table-8. Marital Status and Social Media Communications about Hotels

Marital Status	Level of Social Media Communications about Hotels			Total	t-Value	Sig.
	Low	Moderate	High			
Married	41 (15.07)	95 (34.93)	136 (50.00)	272 (77.71)	4.780	.000
Unmarried	15 (19.23)	25 (32.05)	38 (48.72)	78 (22.29)		
Total	56 (16.00)	120 (34.29)	174 (49.71)	350 (100.00)	-	-
Eta Squared	.017					

(The figures in the parentheses are per cent to total)

Amongst 272 domestic tourists who are married, 50.00 per cent of them realized that the level of social media communications about hotels is high, whilst, 15.07 per cent of them realized that it is low. Amongst 78 domestic tourists who are unmarried, 48.72 per cent of them realized that the level of social media communications about hotels is high, whilst, 19.23 per cent of them realized that it is low.

The t-value is 4.780 and it is significant at one per cent level explaining that significant difference is there in social media communications about hotels among marital status of domestic tourists. As a result, null hypothesis is not accepted. The eta squared value is 0.017 disclosing

that the effect size is small and it reveals that the actual difference in mean values between groups is small.

4.4. INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS ON SELECTION OF HOTELS AMONG DOMESTIC TOURISTS

To study influence of social media communications on selection of hotels among domestic tourists, multiple regression analysis is used and the results are given in Table-9. R² is 0.69 and adjusted R² is 0.67 and these values make obvious the regression model has good fit and 67.00 per cent of variation in dependent variable is shared by independent variables. F-value of 21.734 is significant at one per cent level and it exhibits that the regression model is significant.

Table-9. Influence of Social Media Communications on Selection of Hotels among Domestic Tourists

Social Media Communications about Hotels	Regression Co-efficients	t-Value	Sig.
Intercept	1.305**	11.198	.000
Location of hotels (X ₁)	.240**	7.714	.000
Picture of hotels (X ₂)	.113	1.812	.071
Review of others about hotels (X ₃)	.334**	8.936	.000
User generated contents about hotels (X ₄)	.286**	8.440	.000
Experience of others about hotels (X ₅)	.312**	8.725	.000
Services and products of hotels (X ₆)	.265**	8.108	.000
Ratings of hotels by others (X ₇)	.358**	9.142	.000
R ²	0.69	-	-
Adjusted R ²	0.67	-	-
F	21.734	-	.000

** Significant at 1 % level

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The results explicate that ratings of hotels by others, review of others about hotels, experience of others about hotels, user generated contents about hotels, services and products of hotels and location of hotels provided by social media communications are positively and significantly influencing selection of hotels among domestic tourists at one per cent level. As an outcome, the null hypothesis is not accepted.

5. CONCLUSION

The above analysis elucidate that half of domestic tourists realize that the level of social media communications about hotels is high and significant difference is prevailing among profile of domestic tourists and their view on social media communications about hotels. Ratings of hotels by others, review of others about hotels, experience of others about hotels, user generated contents about hotels, services and products of hotels and location of hotels provided by social media communications have positive and significant influence on selection of hotels among domestic tourists. To improve selection of hotels among domestic tourists, social media should share picture of hotels and must give complete details on services and products of hotels.

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