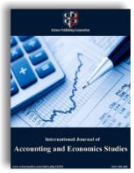
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# Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Engagement Towards Tourism Decision Making in Tamilnadu

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**Abstract**

One of the most promising sectors of the global economy is travel and tourism, which heavily relies on information. The manner which passengers use this information to guide their travel decisions has changed in recent years. One of the factors that led to this shift was the widespread use of information and communication technology, particularly in the travel and tourism sector. Social media's rise as a Web 2.0 communication tool is mostly linked to it. Investigating how people utilize social media to organize their travels, particularly as seen by Indian tourists, was the aim of this study.
The study's theoretical foundations include the ideas of social media information consumption and consumer behavior, particularly the theory of travel-related purchasing behavior. Members of the target travel community were surveyed to collect data. The members of this community were selected based on the findings of the observation of the interactions and communication that took place in the various areas of the community. The study's key finding is that travelers use information to complete all of their duties and that social media is a useful source of information that aids in decision-making about their trips at every stage. The study's conclusion included a number of suggestions for the travel industry to implement customer-focused marketing tactics as well as for the range of academic and theoretical work that uses social media in the model of the travel decision-making process.

***Keywords***: *Social Media; Communication; Information; Tourism; Decision Making; Travel.*

## 1. Introduction

New channels of communication were made possible by technical developments at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. Social media rapidly developed because of the swift discovery that the greatest invention, the Internet, offers exceptional socialisation potential, bringing people from all over the world together. A lot of individuals are attempting to reinvent themselves in the new realm that the Internet has created. Social networks are becoming more and more integrated into our daily lives. According to the Global Web Index, digital users typically spend two hours a day on messaging apps and social media. Social media affects every aspect of human life, including leisure and travel. Facebook has more than 18 million members in Poland and more than 2.5 billion users worldwide, illustrating the scope of this phenomenon. According to study data, 2.9 billion individuals use Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Messenger, or other firm products monthly. Users frequently don't realise how much of an influence they have on choices. Examining this impact's effects on tourism and leisure-related concerns is even more crucial (Joseph et al 2024).
The article concentrates on one aspect of this effect, specifically the tourism destination preference of Generation Y (a.k.a. the Millennium generation, which is the generation that follows Generation X). The literature on the topic was analyzed, and the generational typology was screened in the first section of the paper. It was considered what characteristics certain generations have in common. Additionally, it was demonstrated that social media plays a significant role in gathering information when selecting a travel location. The article's second section contains the survey findings. Their objectives included finding out how popular social media (SM) is among Y generation members, how they use SM to research potential travel destinations, what influences their opinion of how attractive a destination is, and why they share content on SM (Azhar et al, 2023).
The Travel 2.0 concept emerged because of the travel and tourist industry's adoption of technology. This concept's primary focus is on the contemporary problems facing the travel and tourism industry as a result of new, more information-savvy consumers who can readily obtain firsthand customer experiences. In the tourism industry, peer-to-peer communications and business are taking the place of business-to-consumer communications and business. The rise of both online and offline traveller communities on various social media platforms, including blogs, forums, and Facebook groups, is actual proof of these problems. This medium is a location where people gather to read, write, and collaborate, as stated by Berners-Lee.

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Both the number of members joining and the overall existence of groups based on shared interests, particularly those related to travel and tourism in India, demonstrated an upward tendency. Traveler community is a collection of individuals who have established travel agencies for their financial gain and occasionally share a passion for travel. Some individuals, for instance, purchase an airplane and then prepare for their members to go on it. The "new travelers" have been a significant influence in forming the brand experience since they have acquired natural traits that are quite like those of the traveller community. Even when traveling with a specific group or community, travellers who display these characteristics are frequently viewed as individuals rather than as a community or group. Consistent with this perspective, Wellman explained that judgments on tourism are made on an individual basis rather than in groups (Khaki and Khan 2024).
"Backpacker India" has expanded to become one of the biggest travel communities in India since September 2009. Over the past three months, the website has got up to 557.354 visits, with around 47.842 users spread over India and a few other countries. Travelers can join this online community to interact with other users, collaborate, and share information. Discussion boards and blogs are excellent venues for completing these kinds of activities. Through the BackpackerIndia.com website, travelers can share information about travel activities, tourist attractions, accommodation, and transportation. Over the past five years, research and scientific investigations have been conducted in several nations, including Austria, Portugal, New Zealand, the United States, Greece, and Spain.
All these publications demonstrate how the connected issue has grown to be one of the world's most significant and fascinating research topics. Given this tendency, a study was conducted to determine how Indian travel community members use social media to make travel-related decisions. This project aims to produce a broader understanding of information and communication technologies and travel behavior.
Tourism is the key to the social-economic development of Tamil Nadu. The Ministry of Tourism (2023) reported that Tamil Nadu had the highest figure of domestic tourist arrivals (115.33 million) and the second position in the number of foreign tourists during 2022, in India. The state features a great cultural heritage and religious monuments, tourism along the coastline, and a flourishing medical tourism industry, which means that both local and international tourists are willing to visit it.
The tourism sector significantly contributes to the state's economy. The contributions of tourism towards the Gross State Domestic Product (GDP) are estimated to be about 7.5 percent, and it also employs 1.2 million people directly and indirectly. Digitalization, investing in the tourism industry infrastructure, and enhancements of the quality of services will help the government increase this contribution to 10 percent of GSDP by 2030, with the focus on post-pandemic recoveries and sustainable growth.
In the era of these changes, one of the most powerful tools that can change the face of travel behavior is Social Media Marketing (SMM). Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube represent social media that tourism providers can use to raise brand awareness, market their destinations, and connect with potential travelers directly at a reasonable cost. In 2023, there are more than 470 million active social media users in India with many possibilities of the success of digital campaigns (Yi Xuang 2024).
In spite of the increased significance of the use of digital tools, there exists minimal research which investigates the ways in which social media experiences may convert into the real tourism decision-making mostly at regional level such as Tamil Nadu. Additionally, there has been little research that has linked this involvement with economic impacts that can be quantified (i.e., more tourism traffic, more spending by tourists, or more profits by tourism enterprises).
To fill this gap, the present study aims to examine how social media marketing strategies affect consumer interest and the following travel choice in Tamil Nadu. Further, it delves into the economic importance of digital engagement, such as the financial and unemployment stimulus generated by it, as well as the regional growth of an economy.

## 2. Literature review

Social interactions may now be had online, particularly for younger people. It completely changed the nature of relationships between people, greatly impacting both their intensity and quality of dealing with so-called digital natives in an era of rapidly dispersing information technology. They frequently regard virtual and actual space as being the same. This section does not discuss skill in utilizing the Internet; rather, it focuses on how the medium is used. The 1980s are the traditional division date. "Digital natives" are people who were born in this era and beyond, whereas "digital immigrants" are those who were born before. Additional research has also included digital immigrants, including. Other writers who have written on this phenomenon have studied digital natives, though. Because of their proficiency with internet resources, Generation Y is frequently referred to as the "wired generation" in literary works (Vasumathi and Ambrose 2024).
The spread of Web 2.0 websites is the task they face on behalf of the information society. There are many generation group classifications in the relevant literature. Lyons, Schweitzer, and Eddy presented one possible categorization.

### 2.1. Use of social media

Two tourism-related studies that concentrate on comprehending the function of social media in communication and crisis management are (16) and The Pew Research Center Global. Therefore, it was unexpected that, in contrast to the other age groups, foreign visitors between the ages of 41 and 50 said they would be more likely to use social media for information in the event of a problem while traveling. However, in the event of an emergency when traveling, young African American passengers were more likely to use social media.
Therefore, depending on the traveler subpopulation, there may be different connections between age and the chance of using social media to seek information in the event of a crisis while traveling; more study is needed to account for these age disparities. Researchers have also discovered that passengers' information-seeking activities are influenced by their prior international travel experiences. In the context of storm evacuations, the impact of prior travel experience on visitors' information-search activities was validated. According to a study, visitors who have never been there before are less likely to rely on social media for storm evacuation advice (Priyanga and Ashokkumar 2023).
According to the study, visitors who have never been there could not know much about it or may not have many friends or family there, which would discourage them from using social media. Tourists' perceptions of danger might affect their decisions, such as whether to visit a particular place. Information gathered can also affect perceptions of threat. The idea of protective motive, which holds that information received influences risk evaluations, is supported by this finding. However, travelers' preferences for information search may also be influenced by their perceptions of risk.
If someone feels that lowering a danger is vital, they may take protective measures, such as conducting in-depth information searches. Furthermore, it has been suggested that travellers who believe there is a high degree of danger should attempt to reduce risk and ambiguity by conducting thorough information searches. However, most studies on risk information search behaviors have been done before departure rather than during travel (Velu Anuradha, 2025).

## 2.2. Tourist decision making

Additionally, when defining tourism concepts, they must consider the behavior of their target audience. One activity that they choose on their own is travel, particularly leisure and vacation travel. Therefore, it can be claimed that one of the main topics of interest in the tourism industry is customer behavior. As more companies use marketing methods, there is an increase in consumer behavior research. From the beginning to the present, the study of consumer behavior has been impacted by a variety of scientific perspectives. Research into complementary subjects that can offer a more comprehensive explanation of the concepts involved in consumer behavior is encouraged by the complexity of consumer behavior. Several scientific disciplines are pertinent to the study of consumer behavior, including sociology, anthropology, psychology, and economics. The study of how individuals, groups, or organizations select, decide, use, and discard a product, service, experience, or idea to meet consumer demand while considering the process's impact on society as a whole is known as customer behavior. Customer behavior research focuses on the decision-making processes of customers. It can be seen from the perspective of research on the behavior of service users. Based on this, research indicates that consumers are the ones who make the choices (Kumaran et al 2022).

From the consumer's point of view, the purchase is the outcome of the customer having an issue, which the customer subsequently resolves through a logical process. According to this viewpoint, a buyer unquestionably goes through several processes while making a purchase. The process consists of the following steps: problem identification, search, alternative evaluation, selection, and post-purchase assessment. The perspective's foundation is made up of several economic aspects as well as cognitive and psychological experiences, using information via social media specifically happens in a sort of interaction (Kumari 2022).

The introduction of social media marketing (SMM) has reshaped the arena of destination promotion in the travel industry in the sense that the communication between destinations and prospects of tourist activity has become personal, direct, and interactive. The question arising, therefore, is the extent to which various components of SMM that include influencer content, pictorial storytelling, user-generated content, and emotional appeal change tourism behavior. Nevertheless, new literature underlines that it is important to comprehend such influences in particular economic and cultural settings.

In the study by Joseph, Vasundhara, and Thomas (2024), the importance of user-generated content and visual narratives in the journey of tourism decision-making in South India was examined. They found that emotionally engaging information on websites such as Instagram and YouTube will enhance trust, destination interest, and of course, there will be positive effects on travel intentions. This focuses more on the possibility of SMM not only as an outreach tool but also as an economic impact tool, like an increase in tourist traffic and local income.

The study of Azhar, Husain, Hamid, and Rahman (2023) explored the matters of SMM effects of online travel purchases, considering the mediating effect of brand trust and brand loyalty in the post-pandemic context. In their research done using a PLS-SEM model and Indian respondents, they discovered that trust and loyalty have a significant positive effect applying the engagement of online in converting into travel booking. Such mediators are culturally constructed behaviors in the Indian tourism economy, where the spending decisions are impacted by social proof and credibility.

Moreover, Khaki and Khan (2024) have examined the correlation between SMM and the performance of the hotels around Kashmir. The result of their investigation indicated that the degree to which they have a social media presence mediated the relationship between the consumer relationship management (CRM) capability and better hotel metrics, like occupancy rates and the revenue per available room (RevPAR). This paper offers empirical data on the economic rate of investment (ROI) that comes with the use of SMM strategies within tourism infrastructural frameworks.

The way users process social media tourism also depends on generational differences. Researchers employed to conduct airport commercialization found out in a study published in the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management in 2024 that Millennials are more sensitive to influencer credibility, and Gen Z pursues authenticity and emotional relatability. Such disparities influence the reception and interpretation of marketing messages which indicates that tourism brands have to align their online efforts to cultural and demographic expectations (Anonymous, 2024).

Although these researchers make valuable contributions to the knowledge of SMM in tourism, they have not paid much attention to regional level analysis, especially in economically sound but culturally diverse states such as Tamil Nadu. Furthermore, the combination of the economic indicators, including the tourism-produced revenue, employment rates, and digital ROI, is a still-blossoming sphere of study.

## 2.3. Conceptual framework

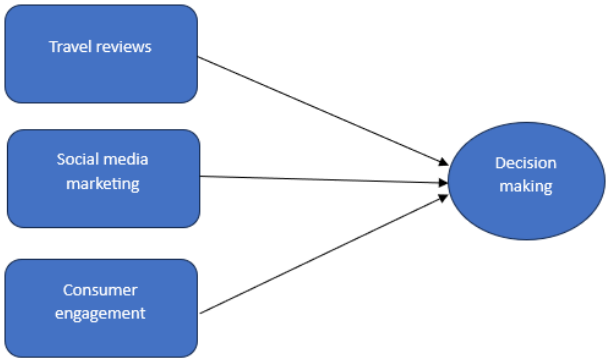



**Fig. 1:** Conceptual Framework.

This conceptual framework depicts (Figure 1) how three main factors, which include travel reviews, social media marketing, and consumer involvement, affect the decision-making related to tourism. Travel reviews are the opinions posted by users on such websites as TripAdvisor or Google and are composed of the personal experiences, user-generated ratings, and feedback regarding a range of places of interest or destinations that are valuable sources of information and factors contributing to the creation of perception among travellers and diminishing their uncertainty. Destination promotions, influencer campaigns and branded content posted through the social media via Instagram, YouTube and Facebook platforms are critical in fostering awareness and innervating interest in travelling. In the meantime, the consumer experience is given by the online behavior where this experience is in the form of likes, comments, shares, and involvement in the tourism

communities, which create emotional connections and trust between the visitor and destination. These three components are important antecedents that help shape and determine the ultimate decision that tourists will make especially regarding choosing destinations, hotels and other experiences.

## 3. Methodology

The information required for assessing the latent constructs in the created model was gathered using the structured survey questionnaire approach. There were two sections to the questionnaire. The demographic data, which was intended to reflect the traits of the respondents, is contained in Part A. The respondents' gender, age, income, degree of education, number of transactions, and frequency of service use were to be ascertained. The questions in Part B of the suggested research model focus on one dependent variable, one dependent variable, consumer involvement, tourism decision-making, and five separate digital market interactions. The Likert scale has five points, ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree." The initial version of the questionnaire was written in English for ease of understanding. As a multivariate analysis was conducted, using 393 respondents to complete the study is statistically desirable in terms of making the regression and structural equation analyses. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table states that a population of more than 1, 000, 000 can be sampled by 384 with a confidence of 95 percent and 5 percent margin of error hence 393 is an ample and more sound sample. Also, the G*Power 3.1 software checked the adequacy based on the detection of medium effect size ($f2 = 0.15$) with power of 0.80 and alpha of 0.05, which indicated that a sample size of 119 will be sufficient- so a sample size of 393 has very good statistical power.

The research was based on a purposive sampling strategy adopted without probabilities, where participants were selected based on their past experiences of using social media either to inform or book a travel in the last year. This strategy was rather well-chosen as the active users of social media are involved in the decision-making process in the domain of tourism. The structured online questionnaire provided the data that was disseminated through social media and travel forums to ensure that the sample was appropriate to the study.

## 4. Analysis

393 datasets were analysed; the first section of the analysis included descriptive datasets with simple percentages, and the second half involved variable analysis utilising SEM and CFA statistical analysis techniques.

**Table 1:** Sample Adequacy Test

| | |
|---|---|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy | .832 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx Chi-Square | 8572.564 |
| DF | 393 |
| Sig. | .000 |

For many replies, a KMO (Table 1) value of more than 0.6 is considered ideal as it indicates sample adequacy. Based on the number of answers, the analysis's KMO value is 0.832 and $p<0.001$, which is an excellent result. The test's Bartlett's Test of Sphericity findings, which showed adequate clarity, showed that exploratory factor analysis is a helpful technique for analysing the researcher perception scale items.

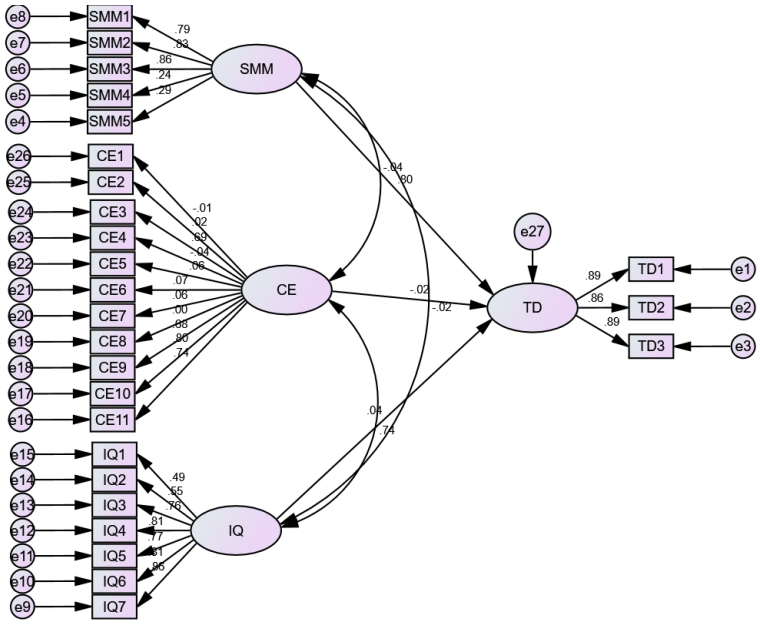



**Fig. 2:** Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

The diagram (figure 2) of the structural equation model (SEM) represents the set of hypothetical relationships between four latent constructs (Social Media Marketing (SMM), Consumer Engagement (CE), Information Quality (IQ), and Tourism Decision-making (TD). Each latent variable is measured by multiple observed indicators. The model indicates that its observed variables positively and highly predict SMM (i.e., SMM1 to SMM5 with loadings of between 24 to .86). IQ also measures well, with both high loadings (e.g., IQ4.81, IQ7.96) and a purportedly high latent construct.

The essence of the model formulates the influence of SMM, CE, and IQ on tourism decision-making (TD). It is worth mentioning that the direct influence of SMM on TD (path coefficient = .80) is enormous and positive, which indicates that the presence of an efficient social media strategy can have a major contribution to the process of making travel decisions. The CE and the IQ paths, however, are quite low

(-.02 and -.74, respectively) and indicate non-significant or even reverse relationships. Moreover, CE is a weaker construct in the said model because it has lower and inconsistent item loadings (ranging between -.04 and .90). The measurement model further shows high reliability scores of TD, whereby the three indicators (TD1-TD3) are strongly loading (.86 to .89) to create certainty that latent construct is strongly measured.

Overall, the model confirms the main hypothesis that social media marketing has positive effects on tourism decision-making, and the importance of consumer engagement and information quality still needs more research, which may relate to measurement difficulties or context.

Result (Default model)
Minimum was achieved
Chi-square = 2811.060
Degrees of freedom = 393
Probability level = .000

**Table 2:** Model Fit Data

| Model | CMIN | CMIN/DF | GFI | AGFI | PGFI | CFI | PCFI | RMSEA | PCLOSE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | 2139.34 | 1.52 | .901 | .904 | .675 | .967 | .769 | .060 | .047 |
| Saturated model | .000 | - | 1.000 | - | - | 1.000 | .000 | - | - |
| Independence model | 6033.06 | 20.110 | .376 | .272 | .322 | .000 | .000 | .302 | .000 |

The structural model showed a good global fit of the observed data, with various fit indices indicating such a case. Refer to Table 2 for the results. The ratio of the chi-square to the degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF) that represents the goodness of fit was 1.52, but this falls well short of the standard figure of 2.0, meaning that there is a good fit. Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI). Both these were above the cutoff number 0.90, which is recommended as 0.90; hence, these were found to be 901 and.904, respectively. Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was very high, i.e., .967, implying an excellent fit as compared to a null model. Also, the value of the Parsimony-Adjusted CFI (PCFI) was .769, and the Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI) was .675, both satisfactory results to show that the model is parsimonious. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 060, which sits under the levels of close fit, and the PCLOSE value of.047 indicates that the approximation of the model is marginally acceptable but still within tolerable amounts. The cumulative evidences of these indices on both counts of errors and regression coefficients show that the structural specification assumed in the study has an adequate fit to the data, which validates the hypothesized model.

**Table 3:** Hypothesis Results

| No | Hypothesis | Result |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Decisions made by tourists and social media marketing are related. | Accepted |
| 2 | Traveler decision-making and the accuracy of travel reviews' information are correlated. | Accepted |
| 3 | Decisions made by tourists and consumer involvement are correlated. | Accepted |

The hypothesis table (Table 3) above explains clearly that the hypotheses are accepted for the study.

## 5. Discussion

This study makes two important contributions to the body of information regarding the factors influencing travellers' inclination to use social media in the event of a crisis while traveling. First, it was found that people with greater travel experience were more likely to use social media to seek information in the event of a difficulty while traveling, as opposed to people from other nations.

This could be the case since more seasoned travellers are probably going to travel more frequently in the future and, as a result, they would believe that their chances of running into a problem while travelling are higher. Furthermore, the idea is put up that those who have travelled more frequently in the past may have a deeper familiarity with the location, leading to a deeper level of knowledge about it. For example, those who have visited the US more frequently could know more about the nation and the resources for knowledge that are accessible there (Palanisamy and Raj 2022).

Consequently, prior foreign travel experience may be closely associated with knowledge when evaluating risk information search behaviours. People with greater knowledge are likely to seek information more effectively since they are aware of the proper channels and strategies to utilise. Accordingly, it is hypothesised that people with more travel experience could be better familiar with the resources accessible to them while looking for crisis information at their location. However, in the case of a crisis while travelling, those who have never been there before might not have the necessary expertise to locate crisis information on social media. Furthermore, while travelling abroad, travellers with greater prior experience can be more aware that social media provides crisis information in their home language (Kar et al, 2021).

Given that travellers' perceptions of danger drove their use of social media to seek information during a crisis, future research should examine this relationship between travellers from other countries and ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, depending on their origin or ethnicity, travellers may be less or more likely to use social media to search for information in the event of a problem while traveling. By researching the risk perceptions of different visitor subpopulations, tourism organizations may more effectively create customized communications to debunk myths in several crucial markets. It's critical to consider how different visitor samples perceive the validity and utility of social media (Vinoth et al, 2024).

With this knowledge, the tourist industry will have a better understanding of why travellers might or might not use social media to seek crisis communication. Furthermore, studies should compare the factors that influence social media use with other information sources in case of a crisis while traveling, as the factors that influence tourists' inclination to seek information from the local police may differ from those that influence social media use. This could provide further insight into the setting of crisis messaging (Sennimalai et al, 2025).

The tourist sector cannot overlook the growing significance of social media in crisis communication in this era of digital technology. But it's crucial to remember that, even while social media is utilised in times of emergency, travellers may also rely on other resources. As a result, travel agencies must disseminate crisis information across a range of media platforms (such as websites, press releases, social media, and conventional media). Furthermore, the goals for which various people utilise communication channels vary. Tourism organizations must focus on the differences and similarities between the channels and their respective users to engage tourists in the affected destination. Customized messaging may then be created for each channel to target certain tourist demographics. Future studies must concentrate on

better understanding the unique roles that social media play in tourist crisis management and communication for both the tourism sector and visitors, as crises continue to worsen and the importance of social media becomes more apparent. Management will be able to use this information to provide more focused communications to visitors and stakeholders to protect them (Mukhtar et al, 2023).

The phrase "Travel 2.0" describes how the travel and tourism industry has evolved because of technical breakthroughs, especially in the area of information and communication technologies. Philip Wolf's term originates from a Web 2.0 application used in the travel and tourism industry. Easy access to a range of experiences that previous customers have had is provided by the Travel 2.0 concept, which is predicated on the idea that the tourism industry is and will encounter "new customers," or customers with more power and information literacy (Kalaimani, 2024).

In addition to providing affordable, easy access to a variety of communities and information sources, the internet empowers new users. Every internet user has access to tools for personalization, and customers expect that marketers will be able to see and honour their preferences. New visitors become more controllable and significant players when experiences and brands are created and established. Specifically, new visitors have three key responsibilities in understanding how tourists behave today and in the future: (1) they are the first to use technology, (2) they work together to create memorable experiences, and (3) they communicate stories.

The results of the given research show not only the effectiveness of the impact of social media marketing on involving consumers but also present the economic significance of this method in the tourism industry. The increased interaction through online mediums may increase tourist traffic, which would have a direct impact on the income, jobs, and development of the peripheral services. This will be especially important to Tamil Nadu, whose economy derives much of its regional economic activity from tourism. Increased online presence and emotional encounter with potential customers increase the probability of tourism operators noting a down-to-earth financial profit, i.e., more bookings, better customer retention, and better Return on Investment (ROI) of social media marketing efforts (Suganya and Bawa 2024).

The study concludes once again that social media marketing plays an essential role in the process of tourism decision-making, and it impacts the wider economic aspects as well. Other than attracting consumers, SMM has the potential to bring about more revenue, job creation, and infrastructural development, especially in tourism-dependent parts of Tamil Nadu. In integrating digital marketing strategies and economic and policy considerations, the stakeholders will be able to unleash the long-term value and guarantee long-term sustainability within the tourism sector.

- Implications of the study

In this research paper, a number of implications for tourism marketers, policy-makers, and regional development authorities are highlighted. First, it highlights the necessity of considering social media as one of the economic enablers rather than a promotional tool that delivers any results that could be measured. These insights can help tourism departments design digital plans in a way that would be analogous to the financial performance rates, like campaign ROI, the amount of money allocated to tourists, and their conversion rates.

Second, the research suggests the deployment of policy-level actions, including capacity-building initiatives that should be applied to tourism MSMEs so that they will learn more about digital marketing, the allocation of the state budget to promote tourism since it is done on a tech-based level, and the creation of a network of partnerships between the government and the business community so that the latter could learn how to promote tourism with the help of data-driven content. Such initiatives may assist in achieving the greatest economic payoff on investment in tourism marketing and facilitate an integrated growth of the regions (Al-Hurji and Bhosle 2025)

### 5.1. Policy recommendations

- Establish a State-Level Digital Tourism Promotion Board

To implement social media marketing strategies at the state and district levels, the Government of Tamil Nadu must establish a special Digital Tourism Promotion Board that will design, undertake, and oversee social media marketing strategies at the state and district levels. This entity will be able to cooperate with local operators, tourism startups, and influencers to design culturally specific digital campaigns.

- Introduce ROI-Based Budgeting for Government Tourism Campaigns

The policy makers are to stipulate the use of ROI metrics, namely, reach, engagement rate, click-through rate, and booking conversions on government-funded tourism promotions. This will make digital spending responsible, performance-based based and economically viable.

- Provide Digital Marketing Training for MSME Tourism Operators

Introduce the government-sponsored capacity-building activities related to digital tools, the creation of content, and social media analytics of small and medium tourism enterprises (hotels, guides, transport services). This will minimize digital inequality and make them visible in online markets.

- Launch a Digital Destination Tamil Nadu Initiative

Employing the assets of immersive content (360 photos, videos, virtual tours), multilingual social media campaigns, and destination storytelling, the state can support the development of an integrated digital tourism identity. This plan must aim at advertising these under-traveled destinations to evenly spread tourism influx and stimulate rural economies through tourism.

- Offer Incentives for Social Media-Based Tourism Startups

Create tax rebates, incubation, or seed funding of startups that are innovating in AI-based trip planning, influencer-marketing platforms, or tourism-based social apps. Promotion of tech-savvy tourism entrepreneurship will create a sense of competitiveness as well as appeal to the young generations of tourists.

- Mandate Social Media Analytics Reporting for Tourism Projects

It should be mandatory that tourism development projects, as well as private operators taking up government schemes, report monthly with data on the social media reach and feedback comments. It is a data-driven model, which can be useful in terms of refining policy and enhancing service quality.

- Promote Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Digital Tourism

Support partnerships with tourism boards and non-public digital companies or content creators in the development of collaborative campaigns. These PPPs will allow for magnifying the impact without losing on quality of content and ensuring consistency of messaging.

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## Author contribution

S. Santhi Complete paperwork
Dr Rajakumari proofreading and editing works

## Ethics approval

The research was carried out ethically by the author.

## Abbreviation

Not applicable

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