The Role of Social Media in Determining Tourists' Choices of Nepalese Destinations

Srijana Khadka, Ajaya Kumar Khadka

Tribhuvan University, Nepal

ajaya.khadka@ncc.tu.edu (Corresponding author)

Abstract. The objective of this study was to estimate and evaluate the factors on social media that influence travelers' decisions regarding vacation destinations. Data from 400 participants were analyzed using a non-probability, purposive sampling design. The research design employed descriptive and causal-comparative methods to assess correlation and regression. The findings of this study revealed that social media information about destinations and word of mouth significantly influences tourists' choices. Consequently, the study has recommended that destination marketers and other stakeholders in the tourism sector prioritize disseminating valuable and captivating information to influence visitors' decisions. These social signs help travelers make decisions in Nepal. Tourism companies, corporations, and individuals may sell Nepalese travel destinations and communicate with potential tourists on social media. Overall, this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge on the impact of social media within the tourism sector, enabling the refinement of marketing strategies tailored to specific destinations. However, further research is necessary to delve into the specifics of this influence, such as exploring the preferences of different demographic groups based on marital status when selecting vacation spots.

Keywords: Business, Internet, Online Platforms, Service Industry

1. Introduction

The Internet has become a go-to resource for helping people make decisions. Authorities in several popular tourist destinations have confirmed this widespread visibility (Paul et al., 2019). The expanded reach of social media has altered the global tourism industry. Chu and Luckanavanich (2018) found that users of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube affected each other's decisions in the highly data-driven global tourism business. From learning about products to researching trips, social media has affected every part of our lives. As a result of its far-reaching influence, it ranks among the Internet's top communication resources (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Social media is utilized for business Schaupp and Belanger (2014) and to assist individuals in making better choices in their free time (Nyambuga, 2014). Calabrese et al. (2021) suggested that the degree to which businesses contribute to sustainable development goals differs greatly depending on their innovative strategies. To investigate the role that information sharing plays in the context of organizational learning and service innovation, a significant number of researchers have turned their attention to the tourism industry (Rao et al., 2018). Specifically, they want to determine how knowledge sharing may become a competitive advantage for businesses. Hence, innovation contributes to expanding the tourism sector.

One sector that has felt the effects of social media to a notable degree is the tourism industry. The tourism sector has had some fascinating developments during the last few years. Even though the bulk of social media platforms didn't take off until the last decade, that hasn't stopped them from becoming indispensable tools for destination marketers, managers, and customers when gathering and sharing information. Information may be obtained in many different places, such as tags on a post, videos, comments, marketplace evaluations, blogs, and notes (Chung & Koo, 2015; Hamid et al., 2016). According to previous findings, more and more individuals are leaving feedback on evaluations they've read online. The Asia-Pacific region has surpassed North America and Europe as significant tourism destinations in terms of the number of tourists and the total amount they spend (Leung & Baloglu, 2013).

The general public is now able to comprehend and acquire an in-depth understanding of places thanks to the proliferation of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, as well as individual blogs, which have made it possible for individuals to discover about the unusual items that social media user's value. These websites provide hotels and other tourist attractions with a significant increase in visibility and the competitive potential to expand their businesses further (Tarannum, 2020). Passengers and travel agencies in Nepal have begun using social media channels like Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. Some customers have even purchased tickets online using these platforms (Sthapit & Khadka, 2016). Despite the rising relevance of technology in promoting tourism activities in many areas throughout the globe, there has been very little research and study conducted in Nepal to identify how tourist spots utilize social media to reach out to consumers, and this is despite the fact that Nepal is a popular tourist destination. The tourism sector is becoming increasingly competitive, and service providers in the industry are using Internet technologies to achieve and maintain their competitive edge. Many Facebook users post about their travels and consider online reviews before booking. Facebook is very effective for the travel sector's word-of-mouth marketing since most users trust their friends and family.

Social media has changed how people plan, secure, and experience travel and tourism operators use it to communicate with travelers and promote their businesses. The tourist business must adapt to new technology and social media developments to be competitive in the market. These conditions show that further study is needed to understand how travelers use social media to connect with tourist organizations and their products and services to choose better destinations. Focus on national tourism organizations (NTOs) that handle tourism nationally. You must stay current on trends and methods to maximize social media's value. Stakeholders in the tourism sector may improve consumer engagement, brand image, and competitiveness in a rapidly changing digital market by understanding how NTOs use social media.

The effectiveness of social media marketing for Nepali tourist organizations has been the subject of research. According to Kunwar et al. (2022), social media features may significantly affect vacation spots. Conversely, there is no correlation between how people felt about social media's dependability, correctness, and utility and their choice of vacation spot. Social media may or may not be helpful for marketing travel and tourism enterprises in Nepal, depending on the quality of the organization's usage of the platform. Travel companies may be benefited significantly from using social media as a marketing strategy since it allows them to reach a wider audience, build brand awareness and loyalty, foster two-way conversations with clients, and provide instant access to customer service. In addition, companies may use social media to reach a specific audience and evaluate the reaction using analytics-based targeted advertisements. Thanks to social media, tourism businesses can now create content that interests those they want to attract. The upshot might be increased customers, leads, and revenue for businesses. Using a virtual platform effectively may set a travel and tourism company apart from the competition and lead to growth and success.

Despite Nepal being a popular tourist destination, there is a lack of comprehensive research on how tourist spots utilize social media to engage with consumers. Understanding the strategies and effectiveness of social media usage in Nepal's tourism industry is essential for its growth and competitiveness. The existing literature has not adequately explored the role and impact of national tourism organizations in utilizing social media to promote tourism nationally. NTOs play a crucial role in destination marketing and must understand how to effectively use social media to connect with travelers and enhance their brand image. With these gaps, it will analyze the strategies employed, the content shared, and the overall effectiveness of social media in promoting tourist destinations in Nepal.

This research has a comprehensive literature assessment of the current knowledge on this effect. In addition, this research aimed to demonstrate clear connections between how people in Nepal utilize social media sites like Facebook and Instagram to decide where to go. Therefore, this research seeks to ascertain the potential for Nepalese tourism by analyzing how material shared on social media and by travel companies affects vacationers' final decisions. The main aim of the research includes:
   a.   To explore the aspects of social media that influence tourist destination selection decisions.
   b.   To analyze the impact of social media word-of-mouth on tourist destination selection decisions.

This research examined how social media affects vacationers' decision-making processes. Service providers, such as hotels, motels, transportation companies, and retailers of travel gear and devices, might benefit from understanding visitor behavior, interests, and desires. In the long run, the study is helpful for the tourism industry and the economy as a whole by allowing providers to meet the needs of their customers better.

Nepal is a famous tourist destination due to its natural beauty, unique culture, and adventurous activities. However, Nepal faces intense competition from other regional tourist sites, and knowing how social media influences travelers' choices might help promote the tourism business and attract more visitors. The study may help service sector firms and governments enhance tourism with efficient marketing techniques. Tourism organizations may adjust their marketing to attract prospective guests by knowing how travelers use social media to make choices. Policymakers may utilize the study's results to boost Nepal's tourist economy.

2. Literature Review

The rapid acceleration of information technology disseminating knowledge through the Internet has profoundly affected the tourism and hospitality sectors. Unbelievably, social media has contributed significantly to this growth. There were 1.2 billion out-of-country tourists in the preceding seven years. Europe had the most tourists (615 million) and destinations (310) (World Tourism Organization, 2018). This figure has risen well above the national average of 4%. Increases in international immigration were

most pronounced in Asia, the Pacific, and Africa. A record-breaking 1.2 billion international tourists visited the Asia-Pacific region in 2016. This figure rose 7% in 2017 to reach a total of 1.322 billion, and it is expected to climb by another 4-5% in 2018 (World Tourism Organization, 2018).

With the development of the Internet and computing technologies in the 1990s came the term "social media" (Cao & Hong, 2011). It first gained widespread notice and fame in 2008. Two media types emerge depending on the temporal frame (Jang & Feng, 2007). One of the primary functions of social media is to facilitate two-way communication between individuals and consumers, brands, opinion leaders and followers, and advertisers and their intended audience. Consumers' attitudes and actions have been profoundly influenced by the prevalence of social media in our daily lives (Rasul et al., 2020). In recent years, social media platforms have increased their potential for commercial use.

The growth of internet platforms and social networking sites has dramatically affected the spread of tourism all over the globe because of the pull effect of clients using these sites. To better manage their relationships with customers, businesses of all sizes may benefit from mining social media for data on consumer preferences and habits (Yazdanifard & Yee, 2014). According to Bilgihan et al. (2014), social networking websites enabling customers to interact with providers or other customers significantly influence how customers' decisions are made today. Considering an essential marketing and strategic decision-making tool for companies operating in the tourist sector, According to Umarov (2023), the whole idea of tourism has been revolutionized by e-commerce. E-commerce has been a boon to company growth for both customers and manufacturers. The interaction between many companies and the people they are trying to sell to has been profoundly transformed by the rise of social media.

The travel and hotel industries have had to adapt their marketing strategies in light of the proliferation of the Internet and social media's rise in popularity. It's natural for people to have opinions and preconceptions about a place based on their experiences with user-generated content (UGC) about that location (Narangajavana et al., 2017). One in every five people who travel for leisure purposes uses social media to research destinations, plan trips, and acquire ideas for a variety of travel-related topics, including hotels (23%), vacation activities (22%), attractions (21%), and restaurants (17%). The social networking sites travelers use are social media apps (Karim, 2019). According to Pavon-Jordan (2019), using social media, including traveling, considerably influences our day-to-day lives. Vacationers commonly used platforms for social networking in the process of making significant decisions about their trips. As a result, those who work in the tourism industry should focus a lot of their attention on various social media sites.

Kaurav and Gursoy (2022) found that the information shown and communicated in various conventional and non-conventional venues impacts how travelers pick their destinations and make judgments. Many travelers routinely read about the experiences of others who have recently traveled to reduce the likelihood of facing any risk or danger during their journey. Consequently, tourist destinations should use social media to facilitate more detailed trip planning (Tham et al., 2020) because individuals use social media platforms. In recent years, there has been a rise in the number of people using social media in Nepal. According to Kemp's (2020) research, 10 million individuals in Nepal are projected to use social networking sites. In the study conducted by Sthapit and Khadka (2016), social media usage is getting more popular, as indicated by the growth in the number of visitors and customers using social media sites such as Facebook, Google+, and YouTube. Excessive use and dependability are proven by the rise in visitors and consumers using social media sites. Before visiting Nepal's tourist attractions, most visitors research their options on social networking websites, looking for information and feedback from previous visitors. In recent years, visitors have steadily increased, attributed to the proliferation of new technologies and websites that provide information and allow users to post their opinions.

Werenowska and Rzepka (2020) revealed the impact of social media on the lives of members of

Generation Y. If they know that social media may distort reality, they tend to accept the information posted there because most vacations' central purpose is to share ideas about the locations visited. Social media considerably influences how people choose hotels and reservations (Gupta, 2019). In addition, customers might benefit from using social media to learn more about products and services, evaluate their alternatives, and make choices. This illustrates that selecting a hotel using social media has more benefits than negatives, although there are difficulties associated with the practice. The findings indicate the effect of situational social media influence on hotel choice, considering the content source, the degree of trust and accuracy in the material, and other criteria.

Yuan et al. (2022) discovered that there were substantial relationships between the effect of social media, the degree of trust, and changes in travel plans that were planned. Destination marketers and the tourism sector need to pay attention to and react to the demands of social media users and prospective tourist markets. Engagement can be accomplished by gaining knowledge about how users may be segmented across different platforms or applications and by launching marketing campaigns on social media platforms to attract more tourists.

Sultan et al. (2021) found that user-generated and tour operator-generated content positively affects travelers' perceptions of their destination and helps them choose a sustainable destination. The latter's influence is more substantial. Travelers' social media usage has shaped the destination image via cognitive and dynamic images. Rasul et al. (2020) found that several Asia-Pacific (APAC) countries employ social media for tourist marketing, contributing to knowledge and practice in this field. However, other regional nations have yet to utilize it extensively. Travel intermediaries use social media to discuss products and prices, which clients most often seek out and react to, which has steadily increased (Sthapit & Khadka, 2016). Intermediaries and consumers favoring Facebook and other short message services (SMS) influenced most customers' travel product purchases. SMS recall of desired product information, opinions, and reviews affects consumers the most. Kunwar et al. (2022) evaluated social media impressions and identified significant functionalities. Social media perceptions did not alter tourist destinations' dependability, accuracy, or value.

This research suggests that social media marketing may promote Nepali tourism. By advertising their locations and services on social media, Nepalese tourism organizations and businesses may improve visitor visits and brand awareness. Previous reviews show the independent-dependent connection. The chart summarizes the study's independent and dependent variables: social media and tourism destination choices.
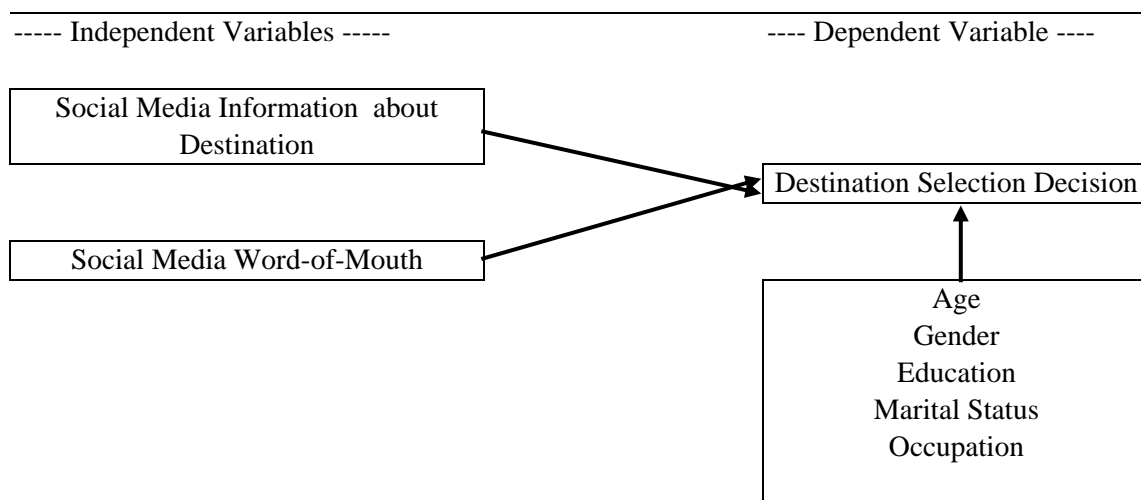
----- Independent Variables -----   ---- Dependent Variable ----

Figure 1 Research Framework

The following are some assumptions that support the research:

H1: There is a significant relationship between social media information about destinations and tourist destination selection decisions.

H2: There is a significant relationship between social media word-of-mouth and tourist destination selection decisions.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design
This study used a descriptive and causal research methodology to understand the issues. This study examined the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The research examined how social media affects tourism destination choices in Nepal.

3.2. Population and Sampling
The demographic of this research consists of people who are either tourists or travelers inside Nepal. Due to the practicability of conducting a population count, most of Nepal's population resides in Kathmandu Valley and the province of Bagmati. As a result, the survey only counts people who live in Bagmati Province and the Kathmandu Valley. The study employed non-probability sampling (i.e., purposive) techniques and collected 400 tourist responses.

3.3. Instrumentation
The study relied on a questionnaire survey to collect primary data. Data collection included questionnaires with Likert scales and other demographic profile questions, with respondents selected from the province of Bagmati. The questionnaire inquired the participants about their personal information and how much weight they give to different factors when deciding where to vacation. In addition to assuring respondents, anonymity was protected, and goals were outlined. The study used five-point Likert-scale questions to understand how people use social media for travel planning and research. A prospective traveler's decision-making process starts when they become conscious of a need (to shop, experience a new environment, be entertained, etc.). A future traveler will begin looking at tourist destination options where they may meet a need if that need is strong enough or has been changed into a want (Djeri et al., 2007). The parts of the decision-making process (need awareness, search for information, the estimate of alternatives, a decision about buying a tourist product or service, and feedback after purchase) are used in this research to evaluate tourists' destination choices. The study's dependent variable was assessed using five modified statements. Paul et al. (2019) employed a set of nine and six statements to quantify social media word of mouth and information about the location as independent variables.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure
Printed and digital forms were used to gather data, with both options being disseminated through various direct-approach channels, including social media, email, direct mail, and telephone. Travelers were asked about their demographics, the influence of social media recommendations, and the role of social media in their destination research and decision-making. These factors were measured on a Likert scale for use in the study. On a scale from 1 to 5 (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree).

3.5. Respondent Profile
This part categorizes the data based on demographics, allowing critical conclusions to be made from

the 400 respondents analyzed for the research. The respondents comprise tourists and tourists traveling across Nepal.

Table 1: Respondents Profile

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender:		
Male	212	53.0
Female	188	47.0
Total	400	100
Age Group:		
18-25 yrs.	112	28.0
26-40 yrs.	203	50.7
40-50 yrs.	77	19.3
Above 51 yrs.	8	2.0
Total	400	100
Education Status:		
Up to +2/Intermediate	59	14.8
Bachelors	139	34.8
Masters or above	202	50.5
Total	400	100
Marital Status:		
Married	160	40.0
Unmarried	240	60.0
Total	400	100
Occupation:		
Student	120	30.0
Service	139	34.8
Business	122	30.5
Others	19	4.8
Total	400	100

In this study, out of the total surveyed data, the research had a higher proportion of male respondents. Hence, most respondents fall in the economically active age group. The three categories of educational credentials among respondents are intermediate (+2), bachelor's, and master's or above. Also, most respondents have attained a master's degree in education. From the data, it can be concluded that the respondents were well educated, so their opinions were based on their learning and experience to make data collection more reliable; results present that the majority of respondents are unmarried. The occupation of the respondents shows that service sector employees have a majority.

3.6.Data Screening
The questionnaire was distributed to the desired respondents to examine the instrument's dependability in measuring the variable to accomplish the goals. Numerous improvements were made to the questionnaire following the test to increase its usefulness and reliability.

Table 2: Reliability Test Resul*t*

Variable	Items	Cronbach Alpha
Social Media Information about Destination	5	.606
Social Media Word-of-Mouth	9	.804
Destination Selection	6	.670

Cronbach's alphas were calculated for each instrument. The reliability analysis findings are displayed in Table 2. All the independent variables (Social Media word of mouth and destination information) and the dependent variable (Destination selection) have Cronbach's alpha better than 0.6, indicating that the measurement is reliable (Yana et al., 2015). It demonstrated that the data collected from respondents for the survey is trustworthy, considering the study's conclusions. This accurate information aids us in achieving the study's aims.

3.7.Data Analysis Plan

Data collected through direct techniques, printed paper surveys, and electronic methods were all analyzed to determine the different features and replies to the questionnaires. For recording and organizing the data, Microsoft Excel was used. SPSS used to convert the textual input into numeric form and provide different results. Statistical methods were used to analyze the data. The results of the research endeavor and its conclusion were determined by analyzing the processed data. The process of data analysis employs the following methods and resources.

- Demographic profile of the respondent
- Data reliability
- One-way ANOVA test
- Pearson correlation to explore the correlation between the independent and dependent variables of the study
- Regression analysis

The data has been acquired from multiple sources, processed, analyzed, and evaluated to make a conclusive logical conclusion and rule out other interpretations.

4. Research Results

In this part, primary data was presented and analyzed in a structured manner. Several statistical and regression models were used in the analysis introduced in the preceding sections.

Association of Gender, Age, Education Status, Martial Status and Occupation with Destination Selection of Tourist

This part of the analysis has focused on examining destination selection across different groups of education levels. One-way ANOVA has been used in this section.

Table 3: One-way ANOVA Test

One Way ANOVA (Group)	Sum of Squares	Df	F	Sig.
Gender and Destination Selection				
Between Groups	10.507	1	27.926	.000
Within Groups	149.745	398		
Age and Destination Selection				
Between Groups	6.475	3	5.558	.001

Within Groups	153.777	396		
Education Status and Destination Selection				
Between Groups	36.259	2	58.047	.000
Within Groups	123.993	397		
Marital Status and Destination Selection				
Between Groups	8.688	1	22.814	.000
Within Groups	151.564	398		
Occupation and Destination Selection				
Between Groups	44.139	3	50.178	.000
Within Groups	116.114	396		
Total		399		

Table 3 reveals a substantial difference in the tourist destination decisions made by men and women. As a result, there seems to be a vast difference between the gender, providing ample proof that tourists of various gender share different decisions toward destination selection. The demographic age had a significant role in determining travel plans. In addition, the data proves that tourists of various ages share significantly different decisions toward destination selection. Statistical evidence shows that the education population significantly differs in destination decisions. There is a significant difference in destination selection based on marital status as a married status group(s) showed a different preference for destinations than the others. Decisions toward destination selection significantly differ according to the tourist occupation.

Pearson's Correlation Test
According to Weinreich (1996), a moderate association exists when r is between 0.35 and 0.68, and a high degree of correlation exists if r is greater than or equal to 0.68**.** Table 4 reveals the study results regarding the correlations.

Table 4: Correlation Result

	Social Media Information about Destination	Social Media Word of Mouth
Destination Selection	.726[**]	.626[**]

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 depicts a significant and positive association of Destination Selection with Social Media Information about the Destination and Social Media Word of Mouth.

Regression Analysis
This section discovered the connection between variables.

Table 5: Regression Model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.733	.537	.534	.43244

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Word-of-Mouth, Social Media Information about Destination

Table 5 shows that the predictors (social media word of mouth and social media information about the

destination) account for 53.7% of the variability in destination selection.

Table 6: ANOVA Table

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	86.012	2	43.006	229.973	.000[b]
	Residual	74.241	397	.187		
	Total	160.252	399			

a. Dependent Variable: Destination selection
b. Predictors: (Constant), Social media word of mouth, Social media information about the destination

Table 6 shows data confirming the regression model's approval. The F-ratio reflects an improvement in the prediction of the variable by fitting the model after accounting for the model's accuracy (ICPS, 2016). Therefore, a model is more significant as per the efficient F-ratio.

Table 7: Regression Analysis

Model		Coefficients				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.029	.123		8.395	.000
	Social Media Information about Destination	.610	.055	.609	11.154	.000
	Social Media Word of Mouth	.134	.048	.151	2.772	.006

a. Dependent Variable: Destination selection

Table 7 shows that Social Media Information about Destination and Social Media Word of Mouth significantly impact destination selection. Hence, study hypotheses (H1 and H2) were supported and accepted. Furthermore, Social Media Information about Destination has more influence on Destination selection ($\beta = 0.609$; p-value = 0.000) than Social Media Word of Mouth ($\beta = 0.151$; p-value= 0.006).

5. Discussions

The term "Social Media Information about Destination" describes the many types of content, such as reviews, images, videos, and travel guides, that can be found on various social media sites regarding a particular vacation spot. Similar findings are seen in Gupta (2019) and Sultan et al. (2021); this is because social media has become a potent instrument for conveying information, and individuals are more likely to depend on the advice of their peers when deciding where to vacation. The significance of these results for the tourist sector lies in the light they shed on the influence of social media on vacation plans. Consumers' attitudes influenced by the prevalence of social media in our daily lives (Rasul et al., 2020) are also agreeable to current findings. Destination marketers may use social media effectively to spread the word about their locations and generate buzz among potential visitors; it's similar to Karim (2019); the social networking site used most often by travelers is Facebook.

Tourists may also collaborate with influencers and other social media users to distribute material and drum up interest in their destinations. However, as Yuan et al. (2022) research demonstrated, it might not necessarily be based on trust but on psychological manipulation using graphics technology

or information, which the current findings support. As a bonus, companies can utilize social media analytics tools to track the success of their social media marketing initiatives and make educated choices about how to allocate resources. In sum, the significance of social media as a marketing and communication tool for the tourist sector is shown by the strong impact of social media word of mouth and social media information about destinations on destination selection. Effective use of social media by destination marketers allows them to communicate with more people and significantly impacts their vacation choices.

According to the research, destination marketers should use Facebook to reach and engage prospective guests. Destination marketers may build interest, spread information, and create buzz on social media. The report suggests destination marketers may work with influencers and other social media users to promote their locations. Marketers must be transparent and create trust with their audience to avoid relying entirely on visual manipulation or unsubstantiated information. Social media analytics may help evaluate marketing campaigns. Destination marketers may allocate resources and optimize interaction and reach by monitoring social media campaign results. The study highlights the importance of social media word-of-mouth and destination information on travelers' destination choices. This underlines the social effect on travel choices and the necessity to study how social media affects tourism consumer behavior. The research concerns social media content trust and trustworthiness. The results imply that not all social media material is trustworthy. This emphasizes the necessity of knowing social media trust characteristics and how destination marketers can develop credibility to improve communication. Social media is becoming more critical in tourism marketing and communication. Destination marketers must adapt to the digital age and use social media to reach their target demographic. Social media's growing role in tourism may help us understand how travelers, places, and marketers interact.

The practical and theoretical implications above help destination marketers better their social media strategy, increase customer interaction and compete in the tourist industry's digital ecosystem. They also help explain how social media affects travel decisions and how trust and credibility affect social media content.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, independently operating social media features significantly impact the decision of where to travel. The influence of social media on travelers' final destination choices is both positive and statistically significant. The opinions of others on social media have a favorable and statistically significant effect on where vacationers end up going. Every traveler does their best to plan by gathering data from various online and offline resources. Tourists rely heavily on social media information and word of mouth when deciding where and what to do during their vacation. Most people today rely on social media to learn about deals and events and to interact with and coordinate with a company's service providers. With social media, tourists may contact travel agencies and tour organizers cheaply and from anywhere. The tourism business has benefited from the increased visibility brought about by social media. Through social media, travel agencies may learn about customers' experiences, address concerns, and enhance their offerings. As a result, social media has contributed to destination decisions.

Understanding how social media influences travelers' destination choices in Nepal is beneficial information for tourism stakeholders. It supports and expands upon theories of social impact, such as the social learning theory. According to the social learning theory, visitors to social media platforms are exposed to various social signals, including user-generated content, reviews, suggestions, and interactions with other users. These social cues provide travelers with valuable information and influence their travel decisions in Nepal. Using social media channels intelligently, tourism organizations, businesses, and individuals can effectively market Nepalese travel destinations and

interact with prospective tourists. In this way, it is crucial to acknowledge that social media influences travel decisions in the same manner as personal preferences, offline recommendations, accessibility, and safety concerns.

7. Limitations of the Study

The study ignored other significant aspects in favor of concentrating exclusively on the function of social media. Numerous elements, including personal tastes, suggestions from friends and family, travel guides, and internet travel firms, have an impact on tourists' decisions. By ignoring these elements, we may be unable to comprehend how tourists make decisions fully. Additionally, the study included a particular sample of travelers who regularly utilize social media. As not all travelers may be evenly represented in the study, this could introduce sample bias. Diverse demographic groups, nations, and travel goals can all use social media differently and have a diverse impact on travel decisions. The research should acknowledge generalizability constraints and offer insights unique to the population under consideration. To further explore the dynamic interaction between social media and tourists' choices, future research should overcome the limitations found in this study.

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