


IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ON TOURIST'S PERCEPTION FOR THE SELECTION OF FOOD OUTLETS: A CASE OF DELHI NCR (INDIA)

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history:</p> <p>Received 03 April 2023</p> <p>Accepted 04 July 2023</p>	<p>Purpose: The aim of the study is to examine the impact of social media platforms on food tourist's perception towards selection of food outlets.</p>
<p>Keywords:</p> <p>Social Media; Food Outlets; Food Tourism; Social Media Platforms; Tourist's Perception; EWOM.</p>	<p>Theoretical framework: Social-media is plethora of information. When information is provided through social media, it also affects the choices and perception of the people. As customers are tend to influence through information, word of mouth, experiences, reviews and of course marketing technique which push the customer to buy the product. The marketing technique of social media promotion for tourist's products gains a wide range of customers as pictures and videos creates a presumption of the services they will get in future.</p>
	<p>Design/methodology/ approach: The study is an exploratory study for which researcher used a sample size of 90 tourists visiting Delhi NCR, India whose prime motive for travelling to Delhi is food tourism. T-Test has been used for the purpose of analysis.</p> <p>Findings: It has been observed that choices of tourist's are widely dependent on social media these days, thus, affecting the perception of the tourists towards the selection of food outlets.</p> <p>Research, practical, social implication: Being the relatively new topic in research academia, the research conducted would help researchers for understanding the choices based on the perception of the food tourists, to widen the food tourism market and help the local community understand how their authentic food can be an attraction for a tourist while providing them with social, cultural and economic benefits.</p> <p>Originality/value: The study is one of its kind which focuses on food tourism linking the relationship between the impact of social media on perception of food tourist while selecting the food outlet.</p> <p>Doi: https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2023.v8i7.2568</p>

IMPACTO DAS PLATAFORMAS DE MÍDIA SOCIAL NA PERCEPÇÃO DO TURISTA PARA A SELEÇÃO DE ESTABELECIMENTOS DE ALIMENTAÇÃO: UM CASO DE DELHI NCR (ÍNDIA)

RESUMO

Objetivo: o objetivo do estudo é examinar o impacto das plataformas de mídia social na percepção do turista em relação à seleção de estabelecimentos de alimentação.

Estrutura teórica: A mídia social é uma infinidade de informações. Quando as informações são fornecidas por meio da mídia social, elas também afetam as escolhas e a percepção das pessoas. Como os clientes tendem a se influenciar por meio de informações, propaganda boca a boca, experiências, resenhas e, é claro, técnicas de marketing que levam o cliente a comprar o produto. A técnica de marketing de promoção de mídia social para

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produtos turísticos conquista uma ampla gama de clientes, pois as fotos e os vídeos criam uma presunção dos serviços que eles receberão no futuro.

Projeto/metodologia/abordagem: O estudo é exploratório e, para isso, o pesquisador usou uma amostra de 90 turistas que visitam Délhi NCR, Índia, cujo principal motivo de viagem a Délhi é o turismo gastronômico. O teste T foi usado para fins de análise.

Resultados: Observou-se que as escolhas dos turistas dependem muito das mídias sociais nos dias de hoje, o que afeta a percepção dos turistas em relação à escolha dos pontos de venda de alimentos.

Implicações sociais, práticas e de pesquisa: Por ser um tópico relativamente novo no meio acadêmico, a pesquisa realizada ajudaria os pesquisadores a entender as escolhas com base na percepção dos turistas gastronômicos, a ampliar o mercado de turismo gastronômico e a ajudar a comunidade local a entender como sua comida autêntica pode ser uma atração para um turista e, ao mesmo tempo, proporcionar benefícios sociais, culturais e econômicos.

Originalidade/valor: O estudo é único em seu gênero e se concentra no turismo gastronômico, associando a relação entre o impacto da mídia social na percepção do turista gastronômico ao selecionar o ponto de venda de alimentos.

Palavras-chave: Mídia Social, Pontos de Venda de Alimentos, Turismo Gastronômico, Plataformas de Mídia Social, Percepção do Turista, EWOM.

IMPACTO DE LAS PLATAFORMAS DE MEDIOS SOCIALES EN LA PERCEPCIÓN DEL TURISTA PARA LA SELECCIÓN DE ESTABLECIMIENTOS DE COMIDA: UN CASO DE DELHI NCR (INDIA)

RESUMEN

Propósito: El propósito del estudio es examinar el impacto de las plataformas de medios sociales en la percepción del turista para la selección de establecimientos de comida.

Marco teórico: los medios sociales son una plétora de información. Cuando la información se proporciona a través de los medios sociales, también afecta a las elecciones y la percepción de las personas. Los clientes tienden a dejarse influir por la información, la publicidad boca a boca, las experiencias, las reseñas y, por supuesto, las técnicas de marketing que llevan al cliente a comprar el producto. La técnica de marketing de promoción de productos turísticos en las redes sociales conquista a un amplio abanico de clientes, ya que las fotos y los vídeos crean una presunción de los servicios que recibirán en el futuro.

Diseño/metodología/enfoque: El estudio es exploratorio y para ello el investigador utilizó una muestra de 90 turistas que visitan Delhi NCR, India, cuyo principal motivo para viajar a Delhi es el turismo gastronómico. Para el análisis se utilizó la prueba T.

Resultados: Se observó que las elecciones de los turistas dependen en gran medida de las redes sociales en la actualidad, lo que afecta a la percepción de los turistas en cuanto a la elección de los establecimientos de comida.

Repercusiones sociales, prácticas y para la investigación: Al tratarse de un tema relativamente nuevo en el mundo académico, la investigación realizada ayudaría a los investigadores a comprender las elecciones basadas en la percepción de los turistas gastronómicos, a ampliar el mercado del turismo gastronómico y a ayudar a la comunidad local a comprender cómo su comida auténtica puede ser un atractivo para un turista al tiempo que proporciona beneficios sociales, culturales y económicos.

Originalidad/valor: El estudio es único en su género y se centra en el turismo gastronómico, vinculando la relación entre el impacto de los medios sociales en la percepción del turista gastronómico a la hora de seleccionar un establecimiento de comida.

Palabras clave: Medios Sociales, Establecimientos de Comida, Turismo Gastronómico, Plataformas de Medios Sociales, Percepción del Turista, EWOM.

INTRODUCTION

The use of variety of marketing tools on social media to draw a huge number of tourists at a very low cost is known as social media marketing, a new technology that has boosted the tourism industry. The advantages of social media include large coverage of geographical areas, time saving, cost saving, awareness, connecting directly to the users, brand building, promotion,

information and the list goes on. Social media platforms highly influence the choices made by the users. Billions of people use social media these days and previous researches are evident that social media platforms highly influence the choices and decision making of the consumer. This study helps in understanding whether the same relationship is there in the case of food tourism or not.

The newest type of tourism, which is only a few decades old, is food tourism. Social media's use of cognitive images of food destinations influences tourists' decision-making. As a result, it's crucial to examine how food tourists think about the selection of food outlets while making decisions that are influenced by social media. Food is not just a commodity but it is way to sustain culture and heritage of certain social groups. Thus, it is very important that these traditional local foods, stories, folks, recipes and reasons behind every local food should be shared with large number of audiences. With the help of social media one can easily reach the large geographical areas in shorter duration of time with high possibility of reach. But the question arises whether the food related travel content shared over social media platforms really affects the decision making of food tourists? Does the feedback of the social media influencers shared over social media impacts the choices of the selection of the food outlets while travelling to a food destination? This study is one of its kind, contributing to the choices, perception and selections of the food tourists through social media platforms.

BACKGROUND

The use of technology and active use of web 2.0 has bought major changes to the world. This use of technology has also bought the changes in the attitude and perception of the people. According to the latest statistical report around 7.26 billion people own a smart phone. This contributes to around 91.6% of the world's population who owns and uses the smart phone world-wide (Statista, 2022). In India alone, around 1.38 billion people uses smart phones which is a huge number for a developing nation. As per the report the highest number of smart phone users are from China followed by United States of America. Most of the people who uses smart phone also uses the social media applications. To be specific, the statistics for the social media users is rapidly growing. There are around 3.78 billion active social media users around the world which is expected to grow 4.41 billion by 2025 (OBERLO, 2022). There were around 639 million active social media users in 2021 in India which is expected to grow by 1041 million approximately in future (Dixon, 2022). With such growth in social media users, companies and marketers have started evolving themselves in digital world and started

including digital marketing strategies along with traditional marketing for attracting the wide number of customers globally.

Social media platforms are Internet-based platforms that enable individuals to engage in opportunistic interactions and selective self-presentation with both large and niche audiences who value user-generated content and the notion of social engagement (Carr & Hayes, 2015). A wide variety of disciplines are used in social media management, including journalism, marketing, public relations, information systems, and strategic management, to mention a few (Montalvo, 2011). Due to the quick advancement of new technologies, the phenomenon of social media has captured the attention of many researchers on a global scale, who have made an effort to understand how it relates to the personality traits of people, particularly those that are associated with their travel habits. This wide use of social media applications also put a great impact on people's perception and attitude. This further influences the purchasing decisions of the buyers.

Social media is largely used for brand awareness these days. Various companies including travel industry promote their products over social media platforms so as to encourage the brand promotion (Montalvo, 2011). Some authors highlight the benefits of e-WOM, such as increased message credibility and speedier decision-making by consumers. In this sense, electronic Word of Mouth employed by product and service brands serves a dual purpose. On the one hand, it serves as an informational/social consequence by reinforcing or punishing customers who have acquired a brand. electronic word of mouth, on the other hand, is a predecessor that creates a favourable or unfavourable informational environment in the subsequent consumer buying possibility (Porto, Watanabe, AraújoBarrozo, & Júnior, 2021).

Travel and food content over social media platforms includes majorly pictures, blogs, vlogs, short and long videos. Travel industry like any other industry has adopted social media as one of the marketing techniques to attract potential customers and to retain the new one. The use of social media is widely used in all sectors of tourism. Undoubtedly, social media has attracted a large number of niche tourists. One of the niche tourisms is food tourism. Though food is an essential and no living being can survive without food, it is also part of our culture. Food represents the culture of a person. Thus, it also serves as a main motive to travel. Food tourism is an urge to consume a specific type of food, or the produce of a specific place, or even the dishes of a specific chef, must be the primary motive for such travel (Hall, Sharples, Mitchell, Macionis, & Cambourne, 2003). The gastronomic experience is crucial to the tourist industry. An enjoyable visit serves as a draw for visitors to return to the area. A satisfying

dining experience increases visitor satisfaction and influences their likelihood of returning (Kivela & Crotts, 2006).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Due to the vast quantity of information available on the Internet, which enables people to readily identify the products that are best suited to their demands and budget, modern tourists are quite demanding and have very specific requirements. The majority of visitors choose their trip destinations and other travel options via digital media. The study also revealed that the tourists frequently use the Internet to reserve or buy products for their vacation (Oklobdzija & Popesku, 2017). Although social media is still a relatively new concept, it has already shown that it is just as powerful as traditional marketing when it comes to entertainment, socialising along with marketing. Advertisers are actively integrating social media into their publicity campaigns in order to boost digital engagement. The effectiveness of such digital engagement systems as metrics of the level of engagement or the significance of engagement is typically measured using social media monitoring tools, that provide quantitative results, such as the number of likes, shares, comments (positive or negative comments), openings, views, followers, or clicks. It's a common belief that growth in these engagement metrics is a result of creative advertising execution using social media (Bermoy, et al., 2021).

Regardless of where visitors receive their travel inspiration, they frequently validate their initial notions via social media. Since tourists "obtain the approval" from social media well before making a decision, social media's role has a direct and immediate impact on choices of tourist. Often, it starts while travelling and sometimes, right in front of the good or service they are about to select. Social media then either supports or criticises this decision by advising travellers to back off or investigate other possibilities. This role appears just before the decision to either select or make a purchase, which is the final step in the decision-making process for tourists. Exploring destinations on social media before and while on vacation highlights social media's potential as a tourist guide. It was also discovered that social media was used to support or reject the travellers' final decisions regarding which attractions to visit. In previous study it was noticed, after reading feedback from previous visitors, tourist who was at the location modified his plans (Liu, Mehraliyev, Liu, & Schukert, 2020) . It has been highly noticed that tourist's choices are highly motivated on the basis of word of mouth and previous experiences of travellers who have already visited the destination. In both types of marketing, traditional or digital, word of mouth plays an extremely important role in influencing the purchasing decision

of the customer and can be termed as deciding factor in the choices made. EWOM or electronic word of mouth is the modern form of word of mouth which is used to influence and motivate the customers. EWOM can be spread through user generated content or sponsored videos on social media. This way a lot of potential tourists around the world are captured without any geographical constraints in shorter duration of time.

Previous research report suggests that food and beverage, travel industry and hotels and resorts are among top 14 industries on social media which engages people online on social media platforms (Quid N. , 2022). The significance attributed to the sharing of aesthetics of photos and the association of ideas was the respondents' choice, it was discovered that the significance of photos contributed to the feeling of belonging to an online travel community. As a result, the components of photos and photo sharing sites influence visitors' destination planning, and this finding expands on the ongoing research for online travel. Companies can attract potential customers using social media and user-generated content, manage their relationships with them and keep them by cultivating relationships with other members, and work to raise the authenticity of the comments and posts made (Kavoura & Stavrianeas, 2015). Adolescent students' use of social media via gadgets such as smartphones, laptops, and, to a lesser extent, desktop computers, in that order of choice, has become ubiquitous and a part of their everyday lives (Panchanathan & Raj, 2022). It has been discovered that social media attracts a lot of young people, who use it to plan trips using audio-visual content uploaded on friends' profiles, take trips on the site locally or internationally, check in/on their profiles while travelling to keep in touch with friends and share experiences, and then post experiences, impressions, or audio-visual content on their profiles once they've returned from their trip (Dionysopoulou & Mylonakis, 2013). Social media probably now plays a bigger part in the social and cultural processes involved in either magnifying or minimising public risk perception given how widespread it is in the marketplace of ideas (Rutsaert, et al., 2014). Short videos effectively communicate the destination's attractions, including its breath-taking landscapes, modern amenities, and delectable cuisines. This can also be used to advertise the location (Gupta, Sajnani, & Gowreesunker, 2022).

The Cambridge Dictionary defines perception as a belief or opinion that is frequently shared by many individuals and is based on how things appear. The perception of the consumer is built upon the knowledge he/she has about the products and services. Access to information is a crucial element in affecting consumer's perception. Consumers are more confident making purchases of products when they have wider awareness about certain product. As a result,

companies make every effort to market their products. A company must not only expose its product to consumers in order to impact consumer perception, but it must also differentiate its product from the competitor (Mack, 2019). Marketers have studied in depth about the buying behaviour and psychology of the consumers towards the purchase behaviour. The marketing techniques is all about understanding the need of the consumers and providing the product. But it has also been observed that with efficient marketing one can even sell those products which are not required at that time. This is because the marketers build consumer's perception to purchase the product. Digital marketing is the modern marketing technique or marketing 2.0 which helps in providing adequate information about the product or service and reach the consumer at low cost in short span of time. This is only possible because of the social media. Social media marketing boosts the sales of the product or service through user generated content or through company's sponsored videos. It has been observed in the previous research that online businesses now offer far more comprehensive services, such as shipping options and the ease of online affordability. Because the demand for interactive websites and online purchases has increased dramatically, this study was crucial in determining the relationship between the antecedents and dependent variables (Mastana, 2023).

The amount of information a blogger includes in the caption affects how quickly consumers choose a restaurant; the more information available, the quicker their decision is made. They interact with the posts mostly by giving them a like, asking a question in the comments, sending a direct message to the blogger, or even just saving it in Instagram's archive feature or taking a snapshot of it on their phone. Eventually, before choosing a particular restaurant, people go to page and read other reviews written by other bloggers to establish reliability (Waleed & Azzam, 2020). The Ravikumar J.S. investigated that the online customer reviews include consumer learning, consumer attitude, purchase intentions, brand reputation, and media influence affects the consumer's buying behaviour (J.S, Ghose, & Reddy, 2019). With attitude intact, perceived utility, perceived simplicity of use, perceived risk, and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) all had a direct impact on attitude and a subsequent indirect impact on intention. The creation of tourism marketing and communication strategies should put a strong emphasis on the internet context as the elements that have the potential to more effectively influence tourists' behaviour (Hua, Ramayah, Ping, & (Jacky), 2017). The results of the current study clearly show that online customer reviews have a beneficial impact and are directly related to consumer purchase behaviour (J.S, Ghose, & Reddy, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

Food tourism is relatively a new form of tourism which is just few years old. Though food is an essential part for living but not everyone travels with the motive of exploring destination through food. The aim of the study is to examine the impact of social media platforms on food tourist's perception towards selection of food outlets. To study the relationship between the impact of social media platforms and visiting food outlets on tourists' perception and to know about the perception of food tourists towards recommendations of social influencers regarding the food outlets are the main objectives of the study.

Both primary and secondary data from the various database have been used for the purpose of the study. The sample for the study is collected from the tourists who use social media. A questionnaire regarding travellers' perceptions of food-related travel videos on social media platforms served as the study's main technique for acquiring data. The primary data has been collected from 90 tourists whose main motive to visit Delhi NCR is exploring the food. For sample collection a close ended questionnaire was prepared and using the non-probability sampling the data was collected. The descriptive analysis and T-Test method of research, which deals with the identification of the independent and dependent variables, was employed by the researchers for this study. To analyse the result IBM SPSS has been used. A t test is a sort of statistical test used to compare two groups' means. It is one of the most common statistical hypothesis tests in pain research (Kim & Kim, 2015).

DATA ANALYSIS

Being a new genre of tourism, the study of impact of social media platforms on the perception of food tourists while selecting the food outlets is a relatively new study but the consumer perception and the buying behaviour of the consumers or tourists have a very old relationship.

To study the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable following hypothesis is being prepared:

H1: Visit to food outlets is dependent upon the feedback of the social media influencers.

H2: Choice of food outlets is dependent upon the social media platforms.

H3: Visit food outlets is dependent upon the frequency of watching food related travel content on social media platforms.

For the study the following tourist profile has been used. The table 1 gives the insight to the demographic profile of the tourists whose major motive to visit Delhi NCR is food tourism.

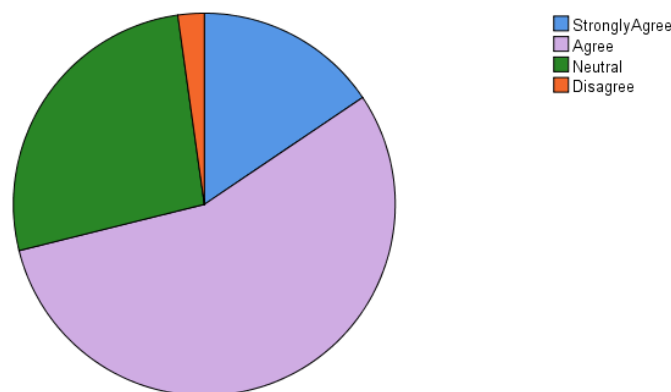
Table 1. Tourists profile

		Qualification				Total
		Senior secondary or below	Graduate	Masters	Ph.D.	
Age	<20 years	6	2	0	0	8
	21-30 years	0	8	8	4	20
	31-40 years	4	8	22	4	48
	41-50 years	0	2	14	0	16
	51 years & above	0	8	0	0	8
Total		10	28	44	8	90

Source: Prepared by authors (2023)

Frequency analysis of the data shows that 55.6% tourists have agreed that social media helps them choosing the food outlets. 26.6% were neutral about the statement which can conclude that they might or might not use social media platforms for the selection of the food outlets. 15.6% tourists have strongly agreed that they use social media while choosing the food outlets. Only 2.2% tourist responded that they disagree and do not use social media for the selection of food outlets. None of the tourist responded that they strongly disagree upon the use of social media for choosing food outlets. The analysis has been shown using Pie-chart in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Frequency analysis of use of social media for choosing food outlets

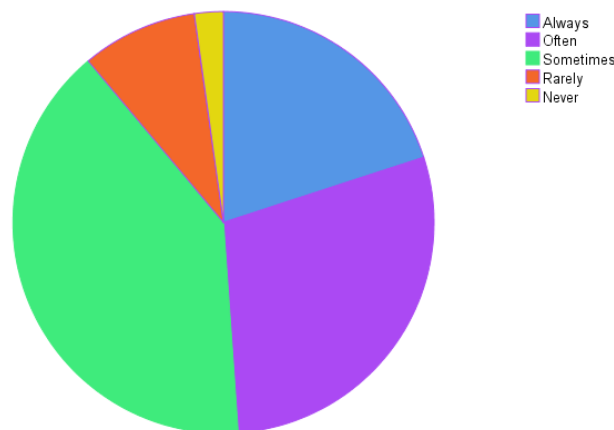


Source: Prepared by authors (2023)

The responses of the sample size were analysed using the frequency analysis. The results suggests that 20% of the tourists responded that the feedback of the social media influencer on

social media platforms always affect their food choices. 28.9% of the tourists responded that feedback of the social media influencers on social media platforms often affects the food choices. 40% of the tourists responded that the feedback of the social media influencers sometimes affects the food choices of the tourists. 8.9% tourists responded that feedback of the social media influencer rarely affects the food choices. However, only 2.2% tourists responded that social media influencers on social media never affect their food choices. Thus, the pattern of changing perception after the feedback of the influencer or user generated content affecting the food choices of the tourists can be observed as total 48.9% social media users or the tourists using social media have responded that the feedback of the influencers over social media always and often affects their food choices. This shows the higher probability of tourists choosing food outlets from influence of social media. The analysis has been showed in Figure 2 using Pie-chart.

Figure 2: Frequency analysis of feedback of social media influencers

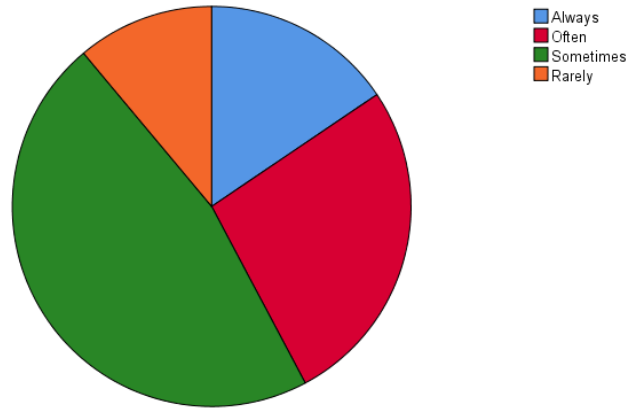


Source: Prepared by authors (2023)

The respondents were also asked about the frequency of their visit to food outlets recommended or shown on social media. The result of the respondents has been analysed using the frequency analysis of descriptive analysis. 15.6% tourists responded that they always visit the food outlets shown/ recommended on social media platforms. 26.7% tourists responded that they often visit to the food outlets shown/recommended on social media. 46.7% tourists responded that they sometimes visit to the food outlets shown/recommended on social media. This shows the positive impact and influence of the social media on the buying behaviour of the consumer or tourists. Only 11.1% tourists responded that they rarely visit to the food outlets shown/recommended on the social media. However, none of the tourists responded that never visit to the food outlets shown/ recommended on social media. These recommendations can be

termed as electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) as tourists are visiting to a particular food outlet after a positive word of mouth shared over social media platforms by the people who have already visited the food outlets. The analysis has been showed in Figure 3 using a Pie-chart.

Figure 3: Frequency analysis of visit to food outlets



Source: Prepared by authors (2023)

The tourists visit the food outlets based on the recommendations of the social media influencers on social media platforms. To study the relationship between visit to food outlets and feedback of the social media influencers (*H1*), choice of food outlets and social media platforms (*H2*), and visit to food outlets and frequency of watching food related travel content on social media (*H3*), T-Test is being performed. The result of the test is as follow (Table 2):

HI: Visit to food outlets is dependent upon the feedback of the social media influencers.

Table 2: T- Test

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Visit to food outlets	90	2.53	.889	.094
Feedback of influencers	90	2.44	.984	.104

Source: Prepared by authors (2023)

Table 2.1: T- Test

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	T	df			Lower	Upper
Visit to foodoutlets	27.022	89	.000	2.533	2.35	2.72
Feedback of influencers	23.561	89	.000	2.444	2.24	2.65

Source: Prepared by authors (2023)

Table 2 depicts the mean value of variable 1 visit to food outlets is 2.53 and variable 2 feedback of the influencers is 2.44. As per the test conducted the P value is .000 which implies that it is significant. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. The test conducted is statistically significant and $H1$ is accepted.

H2: Choice of food outlets is dependent upon the social media platforms.

Table 3: T- Test

One-Sample Statistics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Visit to food outlets	90	2.53	.889	.094
Social-media platforms	90	3.16	1.695	.179

Source: Prepared by authors (2023)

Table 3.1: T- Test

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0			Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)		Lower	Upper
Visit to food outlets	27.022	89	.000	2.533	2.35	2.72
Social media platforms	17.657	89	.000	3.156	2.80	3.51

Source: Prepared by authors (2023)

Table 3 depicts the mean value of variable 1 visit to food outlets is 2.53 and variable 2 feedback of the influencers is 3.16. As per the test conducted the P value is .000 which implies that it is significant. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. The test conducted is statistically significant and $H2$ is accepted.

H3: Visit food outlets is dependent upon the frequency of watching food related travel content on social media platforms.

Table 4: T- Test

One-Sample Statistics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Visit to food outlets	90	2.53	.889	.094
Frequency of watching food related travel content on social media	90	2.27	.909	.096

Source: Prepared by authors (2023)

Table 4.1: T- Test

One-Sample Test	Test Value = 0		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df			Lower	Upper
Visit to food outlets	27.022	89	.000	2.533	2.35	2.72
Frequency of watching food related travel content on social media	23.646	89	.000	2.267	2.08	2.46

Source: Prepared by authors (2023)

Table 4. suggests that the mean value of variable 1 visit to food outlets is 2.53 and variable 2 feedback of the influencers is 2.27. As per the test conducted the P value is .000 which implies that it is significant. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. The test conducted is statistically significant and H_3 is accepted.

FINDINGS & RESULTS

None of the tourist responded that they strongly disagree on using social media for choosing food outlets. Study shows 55.6% tourists have agreed that social media helps them choosing the food outlets. 88.9% respondents have agreed that feedback of the influencers over social media always, often and sometimes affects their food choices. Only 11.1% tourists responded that they rarely visit to the food outlets shown/recommended on the social media. Else all the respondents (89.9%) have always, often and sometimes visit the food outlets recommended over social media platforms. The study also suggests that, it can be observed from the results that the T-Test depicts the p value is .000 which implies it is significant and null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, H_1 , H_2 & H_3 is accepted. Furthermore, it can be analysed from the results of the test that visit to food outlets is dependent upon the feedback of the social media influencers (H_1), the choice of food outlets is dependent upon the social media platforms (H_2), and visit to food outlets is dependent upon the frequency of watching food related travel content on social media (H_3).

CONCLUSION

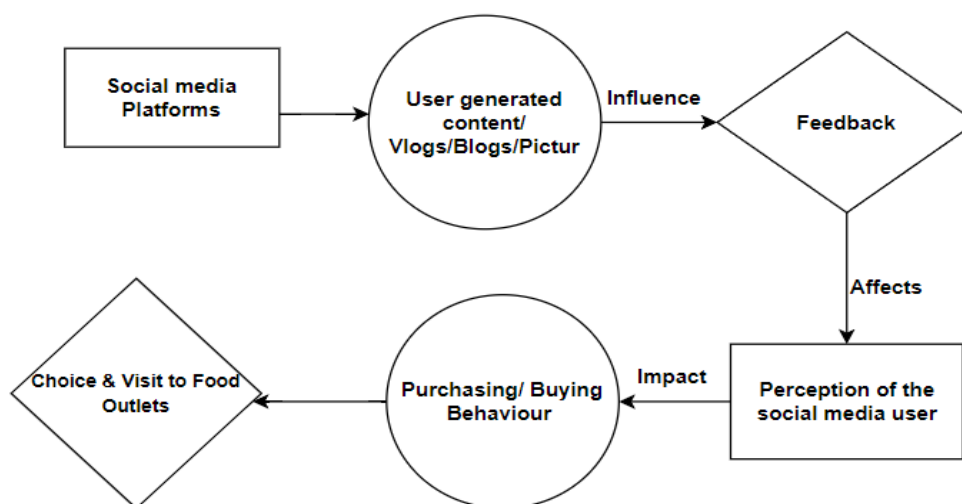
The analysis show that a significant number of tourists have accepted that they use recommendations of the social media influencers to select the food outlets. A significant number of tourist's have also agreed that they often visit to the food outlets recommended on social media platforms. The T- Test shows the significant results between dependent and independent variables. Feedback shared on social media platforms and visit to the food outlets,

influences the buying decision or buying behaviour through perception. This can be clearly observed that social media platforms influence and impacts the perception of the tourist's, further, affecting the buying behaviour while working as EWOM for the social media users. The more usage of social media platforms, more will be the impact on decision making. The study shows significant relationship between the choices made by the food tourist's while selecting the food outlets are highly influenced by the user generated content, vlogs, blogs, pictures shared by the social media influencers on social media platforms. (Prepared by Authors, 2023).

Study results showed that perceptions regarding tourists' travel decisions were significantly, favourably, and directly impacted by e-WOM among tourists (Hua, Ramayah, Ping, & (Jacky), 2017). In comparison to traditional word of mouth, the potential impact of e-WOM on customers' decision-making processes may even be stronger (Jeong & Jang, 2011). The research can assist business owners or entrepreneurs in enhancing their marketing tactics because social media marketing is the latest buzz in the commercial world (Bermoy, et al., 2021). This will also help in sustaining the food culture of different destinations through social media as food tourists would like to explore various variety of food and culture. Study will also help in sustaining the local culture, economic and social conditions of the society through promotion of food culture and spreading the word through e-WOM.

Based on the study, a conceptual framework is also prepared. The conceptual framework (Figure 4) is as follow:

Figure 4: Conceptual Framework



Source: Prepared by authors (2023)

The above conceptual framework suggests that social media platforms influence the selection of food outlets for food tourists by influencing the feedback which affects the perception of the social media user and ultimately, resulting in the decision making or impacting the buying behaviour of the tourist (prepared by authors, 2023).

The limitation of the study cannot be ignored. While the study was conducted it was very difficult to differentiate between the food tourist and normal tourists, as the prime motive of food tourist is to travel for exploring food but food is an essential part for tourist activity. The number of food tourists were observed very less. The results might differ from destination to destination. Delhi is the melting pot of India and being the capital of India, there multiple service providers or vendors. Buying behaviour would be different for the non-users of social media. The future scope of the suggested by researcher is that a comparative study can be conduct with a different destination. Social media marketing is in vogue, this research would be helpful for future researchers and marketers in suggesting the new marketing techniques.

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