A social experiment to study the relative impact of the media on the perception building for a leisure destination

Amit Verma,
Amity University Dubai

Aradhana Balodi Bhardwaj
Amity University Dubai

Mohit Vij
Skyline University College

Abstract

The social media is considered to be the major influencer in impacting the millennials generation. The industry is well equipped with the trend of planning their marketing in the allied way to prosper among the young generation. The paper is an attempt to identify the relative impact of the media on the perception building of millennials for a leisure destination. There are several studies conducted on the impact of the media and how it can assist the business. However, this study is a critical analysis of relative media and inscribing the actual effect of media on an image development among the millennials. This is to assess the impact of the media campaigns to find out its influence on millennials perceptions and also to identify the parameters to choose the appropriate content by industry experts. In this research, the focus will be on two different sets of pictures for same destination which will be presented to three different group of millennials (male, female and mixed) and record their perceptions through a survey. This research would be able to showcase the effect of images in constructing a perception with the slight deviations due to old perceptions, attitude and social background. This study will be useful for the industry to analyze the importance of selection of right content at the same time it will realize the users about the influence of social media in their long term perception building of a destination and further decision making.

Keywords: Social Media, Leisure Destination, Perception building, Decision Making.

Introduction

The media considered to be the strongest social method of communication in today's world. The associated terms with media are the social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) Radio, Print and video which is well understood to each individual in the era of technology. The media in any of its form has been affecting the society and demonstrated the possible dimensions to occupy the complete canvas of life. The desire to travel and experience the tourism is one of the basic instincts in all humans. Before and later to the setup of society, the tourism is well spread in the human race and globe. However, the motivation to travel and medium that influence the motivation has been discussed in several studies, yet the quality of photograph, content selection and presentation skills techniques are not very well known by the people who are getting affected. The features that are highlighted to enhance the emotions by triggering the likely to be preferred set of actions (emotions, locations, traits) may not be the true at all times or at all for the destination.

The imagescape is very well understood term in tourism studies and is defined as the perception concluded in the mind of a person for a particular country city or location where he has never visited but holds an imaginary picture of emotions and surrounding that has been created with his visionary auditory and intellectual knowledge collected from different channel of communications, without any voluntary keenness to find information about the city. In this paper, we are attempting to find out the relative impact of media on the perception building to examine and explain the fact that an image tagged to the country can either destroy it imagescape or build a false image in the mind of a prospective tourist. Hence, the capability to share the right content and willful image creation of the Destination management companies could also be questioned as if they are not identifying the possibility of creation of new or other image that can also be beneficial, can be understood as the opportunity cost associated with the brand building of only

clean or silent beaches. The study will open new dimensions and approaches to the tourism industry with the really impactful media.

Literature Review

The global growth of Tourism
The tourism has been the confirming it's top most position in escalating the growth and development of the GDP across the countries (UNWTO, 2019). The growth of tourism brings everyone together in the growth through its multiplier effect, the Middle East itself led the growth by 10% in 2018 and UNWTO predicts the growth of tourist arrivals by 3- 4 more percentage in the coming year. (UNWTO, 2019). As per the report of WTTC, the travel Tourism sector has contributed to the 11.1% of the UAE economy through 164.7 billion AED (US$ 44.8 billion) in 2018. The country has got benefitted with the employment through the sector with 9.6% (612,000) of total employment(UNWTO, 2019).

Global Economy Contribution From Travel & Tourism 2006-2017

Year	Direct Contribution in Trillion US$	Total contribution in Trillion US$
2006	1.91	6.3
2007	1.99	6.32
2008	1.94	6.33
2009	1.89	6.08
2010	1.93	6.24
2011	1.99	6.44
2012	2.06	6.63
2013	2.16	6.99
2014	2.36	7.58
2015	2.23	7.17
2016	2.31	7.61
2017	2.57	8.27

Figure1: [Global Contribution in Economy of World- Source: ("Travel & tourism," 2019).]

The growth trend shown worldwide for the global economy has been rising except minor dips throughout years 2006 to 2017 in total and direct contribution. ("Travel & tourism," 2019).
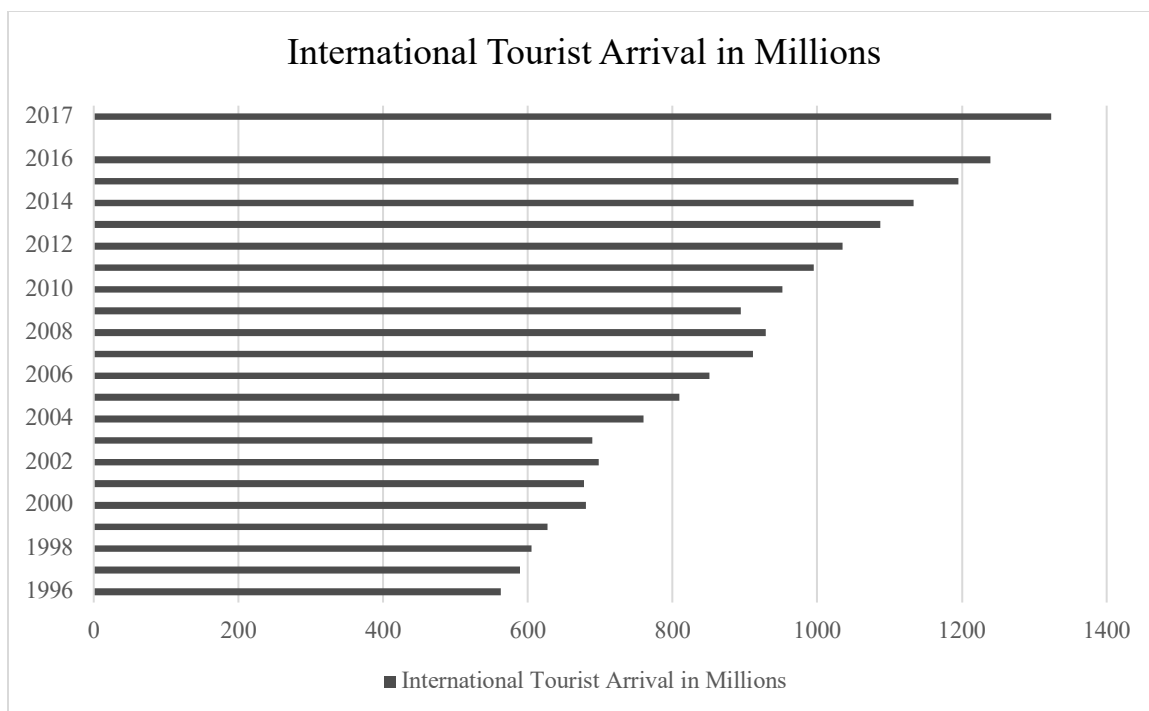
Figure 2: [Trends of International Tourist Arrivals 1996- 2017 Source: ("Travel & tourism," 2019)**]**

The growth of tourism is vital due to international tourist arrivals worldwide and estimated to reach 1.32 billion. The graph depicts the continuous growth throughout years except few global economic adversities. The growth of International tourist is remarkable and has impacted the Global economy positively. This growth has provided multifold benefit to the industry and to the stakeholders. The worldwide advancement of the economy happened with the utmost contribution of tourist's interests for the particular destination and its awareness, accessibility and availability through the destination managers. These managers contributed a lot by projecting the appropriate image of the destination and providing the feasible travel plans to the interested tourists abroad. The international tourist who are majorly responsible for the global growth of GDP mostly been affected through the media supplied by the destination managers, tourist and holiday consultants.

Importance of Media communication in the growth of Tourism
The media communication has been the pioneer in building the brands success and is prevailing in its latest forms till date. The traditional marketing techniques are signage, billboards, flyers, print ads and telemarketing is losing the charm with the fast paced internet technology and further to internet the personalized marketing as per the analysis of each user preferences. However, throughout the traditional and recent development the usage of the same has not be changed to influence the consumer. The information and technology has been the primary reason to direct the consumer behavior always. Almost all types (blog, Vlog, Social network, discussion forum and Reviews etc.) of media is used in Tourism related communication purposes (Maiorescu, 2014). The social media has been becoming an crucial passage of endorsing the destination and services. (Ravindran & Nagamalar, 2019).

There are many recent tools used through the internet like different portal, social networking sites, blogs, google search engine optimization and webinars etc. These and many more methods impact the choice making of the customer and let him realize the fact which is shown in the content as realist image of the destination. The media acts as an advocate and a proof in front of the decision maker either through reviews, pictures videos or the blog. Beside the convenience and the easier communication the information technology has increased the competitive environment among the destination and their managers (Camillo, 2015). This has gave a vital importance to the reviews, pictures and all other content that is published which empowers one to form, share and commend a destination. It is only possible once the marketer is equipped to reach to the intimacy and engagement with the consumer by using the media as an incorporated strategy to bring out the experience in to front position (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011). The study proves that the intercultural virtualization is most significant occupational environment for tourism(Semiz Çelik, 2019). The media remains the major tool to enhance the awareness and shaping tourist preferences, images and objectives for the destination whereas the insufficient information may decay the possibilities of the tourism (Krupskyi & Temchur, 2018).

Impact of media in decision making
The social media has been recognized as the major tool for marketing(Živković, Gajić, & Brdar, 2014) The impact of all these communication do not depend on the connectivity and the ease of sharing and enhancing the network and transparency. The greater impact or the actual impact is due to the content that has been strategized and executed accordingly. The content is the prime and initial catalyst to create or dissolve the perception of the destination in the mind of a consumer. The quality of content can easily be proportional to the impact generated. The manager's top to bottom or bottom to top approach keeps tracing the content that may stimulate the experience or desire to experience the destination. The study concludes that the social media marketing activity proliferates the interest and reliability of consumer (Todua, 2017).

At the same time the consumer, who is getting affected through the media content considers the fact of only searching and tracing the content provided on the different media besides posting mostly after visiting the destination with its good and bad experiences. The overall content is the long lived, dreamt discussed or the presumed experience on the media. With the importance of content throughout, the creation, packaging and distribution as per the user interface requirements becomes the focus area for the destination manager. (Brisbourne, 2006). The Social influence is generates the needs that leads to the information search and evaluation of alternatives before the actual purchase and after the visit the reviews again help other user's perception building. As stated the study conducted on the social influence proves that the social influence affect the decision making at all phases of decision making and strongest at the evaluation phase (Akar, Yüksel, & Bulut, 2015). The impact has been highlighted through the virtual reality platforms on the social media that influences the tourist thoughts of experience and immediate purchase. (The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania et al., 2018). The major benefit of the social media to the industry is that the destination reputation, tourist reviews about the destination, word of mouth and advertising all can be managed through this single tool (Zeng, 2013). The study confirms the impacts of media on tourist decision is not yet been analyzed fully but this plays a important role in image building. (Khodadadi, 2013).

Objective
1. To justify that the dream destination is an emotional aspect but not well researched destination.
2. To justify that the dream destination are well known destinations names only.
3. To justify the impact of media in perception building that affects the liking if the name of destination is not disclosed in Likert chart.

Methodology
The research has been conducted to identify the impact of user's perception about a destination before the actual evaluation phase of the alternatives for the dream destination through survey and face to face interview method. The dream destination for most of would be tourist s is not well researched or studied of, however, it is mostly a sum of aggregated conclusion overheard or seen in an unconscious approach. The destination which is a dream destination is usually never visited before and is expected to result in the equivalent satisfaction of experience thought by user, that at times help to limit the options to evaluate. In this study we have initially asked them to fill their demographic details and name of the dream destination and later provided them a set of images with less popular destination (China, Bangladesh, Bali)) to the group of millennials and asked them to guess the name of the destinations and rank them on the Likert chart. This is used to analyze that all the countries names remain as the dream destination has been well discussed and potentially marketed. Moreover the Likert chart and ranks of less discussed countries contradict the guess made.

Results and Analysis:
The analysis states it clearly that the dream destination quoted by maximum number of respondents were the most discussed places and the guess made for the pictures where as well the well-known countries who are considered as the top 25 tourist destinations of the world. However, there are 15% of the respondents who guessed the right places as the survey specified that around 18.8% of the respondent have already visited their dream destinations. The images used for the Likert chart on survey were from the countries (Burma, China, Indonesia, Myanmar and Vietnam) for which 91 % of respondents have liked the places in the highest order.

Table 1
Sample of responses through the google survey conducted on the sample of 107 millennials.

S No.	Dream Destination	Guessed Destination
1	Canada	Maldives
2	Los Angeles	Thailand
3	Georgia	Canary island
4	Canada,	Philippines
5	Singapore	Baku
6	Philippines	Philippines
7	Seychelles	Moana
8	South Korea,	Thailand
9	Japan	Philippines
10	Sweden	Philippines
11	Italy	Maldives

| S No.	Dream Destination	Guessed Destination
12	Switzerland	Zurich
13	Hong Kong	Bahamas
14	Vegas	Baku
15	Turkey	Maldives
16	UK	Hawai
17	Paris	Maldives
18	Maldives	Philippines

All the respondents dream destination and guessed destinations are mostly the well-known and discussed names of the countries.

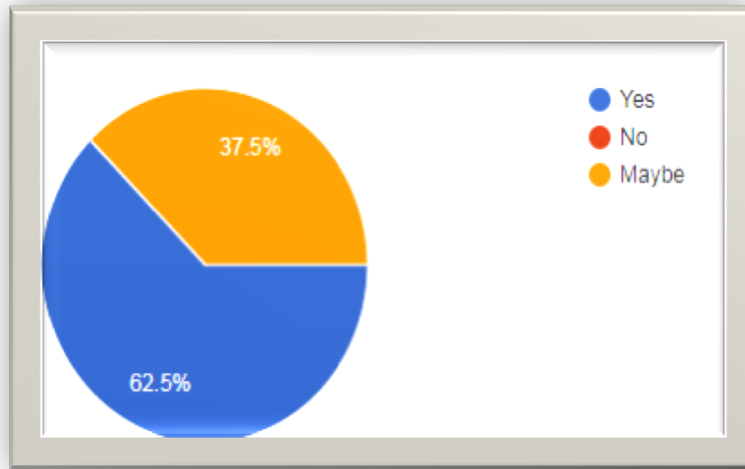**Table 2**
List of the countries for the presented pictures

S No.	Countries
1	Germany
2	Cappadocia Turkey
3	Japan
4	Philippines
5	Norway

 The presented pictures of countries are very well known destinations and are listed by the respondents as the dream destinations but no significant guesses for the right destination.

The total 107 number of respondent were of the age group of 18-25. The 56.3% of respondents agreed that they take the assistance of media for the planning and decision making and 6.3% denied the support and remaining 37.5% were not sure about it.
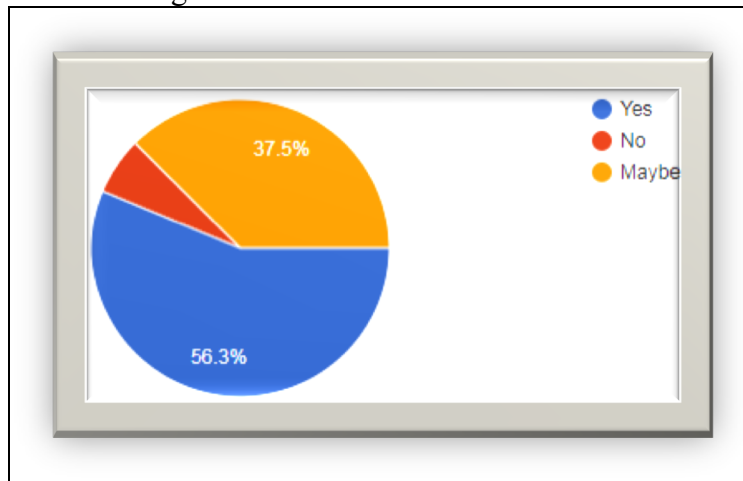
The 62.5% of respondents agreed that media and pictures videos affects their decisions and the remaining 37.5% were not sure about the impact but zero respondents denied the impact.

The 81.3% of respondents have not visited their dream destination whereas 18. 8% have already been to their dream destination.
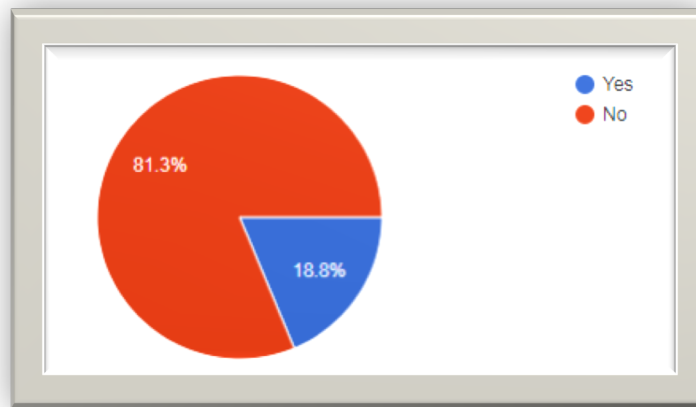

Table 3: Results obtained from Likert Chart

S No.	Country	Likert Chart
1	Burma	**Neutral**
2	China	**Positive**
3	Indonesia	**Positive**
4	Myanmar	**Positive**
5	Vietnam	**Positive**

Maximum responses against the images of the less discussed countries remained positive in Likert chart.

Limitation of Study:
The study is being conducted among the university students from different nationality and background that gives a good exposure and variance to the results. However, the respondents from the particular country where able to recognize their own countries for examples student

from Philippines. This generates the possibilities of conducting a research among the same nationality for more accurate responses.

Significance of Study

The study has brought out many patterned thoughts in to the existence and continues to novel the impact of media in the imagescape building of any destination. The study proves that the good presentation of a destination affects the choices and dream destinations as well.

Conclusion

The study is conclusive to state that the tourist who presume that this is their dream destination most of the time do not hold the right set of information which is instantly available on the internet unless they are willing to travel and evaluating the options. Furthermore, the viewers are influenced by the image of the destination name and the picture which leads them to develop a vague perception. As in the questionnaire no one filed China or Burma or Vietnam as their dream destinations, however almost all of them liked the images on the Likert chart. The study needs to be conducted in a bigger sample size and with a restricted controlled environment setting to perceive the responses of the non-verbal actions also. The study conveys the importance of the image developed in the mind of tourist of the name of the destination and then the pictures that loosen or intensifies the imagescape.

Reference

Akar, E., Yüksel, H. F., & Bulut, Z. A. (2015). The Impact of Social Influence on the Decision-Making Process of Sports Consumers on Facebook. Journal of Internet Applications and Management, 6(2), 5–27. https://doi.org/10.5505/iuyd.2015.40412

Brisbourne, N. (2006, November 29). More on the future of TV. Retrieved May 15, 2019, from THE EQUITY KICKER website: http://www.theequitykicker.com/2006/11/29/more-on-the-future-of-tv/

Camillo, A. A. (Ed.). (2015). Handbook of Research on Global Hospitality and Tourism Management: https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-4666-8606-9

Hanna, R., Rohm, A., & Crittenden, V. L. (2011). We're all connected: The power of the social media ecosystem. Business Horizons, 54(3), 265–273. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2011.01.007

Khodadadi, M. (2013). THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN THE FORMATION OF DESTINATION IMAGES. 8.

Krupskyi, O., & Temchur, K. (2018). Media tourism in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone as a new tourist phenomenon. Journal of Geology, Geography and Geoecology, 27(2), 261–273. https://doi.org/10.15421/111850

Maiorescu, I. (2014). THE DUALITY OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN TOURISM. Amfiteatru Economic, (8), 11.

Ravindran, D. D., & Nagamalar, M. (2019). Social Media Sources (SMS) Influence on Tourism Choice Decisions. Eurasian Journal of Analytical Chemistry, 7.

Semiz Çelik, D. (2019). The Effect of Cultural Interaction on Social Media on Tourism and Travel. The Journal of International Scientific Researches, 33–40. https://doi.org/10.23834/isrjournal.493161

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania, Sarbu, R., Dina, R., The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania, Alecu, F., & The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania. (2018). Social Media Advertising Trends in Tourism. Www.Amfiteatrueconomic.Ro, 20(S12), 1016. https://doi.org/10.24818/EA/2018/S12/1016

Todua. (2017). TheRoleofSocialMediaMarketinginTourism.pdf.

Travel & tourism: global economic impact 2017 | Statistic. (2019). Retrieved May 15, 2019, from Statista website: https://www.statista.com/statistics/233223/travel-and-tourism--total-economic-contribution-worldwide/

UNWTO, W. (2019). ITAR 1.4 billion 2 yrs Ahead of predication | World Tourism Organization UNWTO. Retrieved May 15, 2019, from https://www2.unwto.org/press-release/2019-01-21/international-tourist-arrivals-reach-14-billion-two-years-ahead-forecasts

Zeng, B. (2013). Social Media in Tourism. Journal of Tourism & Hospitality, 02(02). https://doi.org/10.4172/2167-0269.1000e125

Živković, R., Gajić, J., & Brdar, I. (2014). The Impact of Social Media on Tourism. Proceedings of the 1st International Scientific Conference - Sinteza 2014, 758–761. https://doi.org/10.15308/sinteza-2014-758-761