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IMPACT OF INSTAGRAM REELS ON SELECTION OF TRAVEL DESTINATIONS AMONG GEN Z IN COIMBATORE, TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

In the current digital environment, Influencer Marketing has become one of the most potent methods for brands to engage with their desired audience. This approach entails partnering with influencers individuals who possess a substantial and active following on social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter to endorse products, services, or brand narratives.

In contrast to conventional advertising, influencer marketing capitalizes on the trust and authenticity that influencers have cultivated with their followers. Consumers tend to place greater trust in recommendations from relatable individuals they admire, rather than in direct advertisements from brands. This strategy enables businesses to enhance brand visibility, foster engagement, and increase sales in a more natural manner.

Influencer marketing manifests in various formats, including sponsored content, product evaluations, brand collaborations, and affiliate marketing. With the growth of social media, it has become an essential component of digital marketing, providing brands with a cost-effective and targeted means of reaching prospective customers.

KEYWORDS: *Influencer Marketing, Digital Marketing, Social Media, Brand Engagement, Consumer Trust, Authenticity, Affiliate Marketing, Content Creators, Audience Targeting, Online Advertising, Brand Collaboration, Social Media Platforms.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Instagram is a widely recognized social media platform that focuses on the sharing of photos and videos. Established in October 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, it was subsequently acquired by Facebook (now known as Meta) in 2012. The platform enables users to upload and edit images or short videos, apply various filters, and share their content with followers or designated groups.

Instagram provides a range of features designed to facilitate engagement between users and businesses. Through posts, users can share photos or videos on their profiles, incorporating captions, hash tags, and user tags to expand their reach. Stories, which are temporary and last for 24 hours, combine photos, videos, text, and interactive elements such as polls, questions, and quizzes to engage followers in real-time.

II. REVIEW OF LITRATURE

1. **Choi, M and Choi, Y and Lee, H (2023)** GEN Z TRAVELLERS IN INSTAGRAM MARKETPLACE: TRUST, INFLUENCER TYPE, POST TYPE AND PURCHASE INTENTION, This study explores how Gen Z's trust in Instagram affects their trust in tour sellers and purchase intentions. It finds that virtual influencers in sponsored posts increase trust, which influences purchase intentions, highlighting the marketing power of virtual influencers.
2. **Dr B Prasanna Soundari (March – April 2019)** BRAND PERSONALITY OF COIMBATORE: TOURISTS INSIGHTS AS A TOOL FOR DESTINATION BRANDING, "Incredible India" and "Enchanting Tamil Nadu" are key tourism taglines, with Tamil Nadu benefiting from India's brand. Coimbatore, a rapidly growing city known for textiles and healthcare, is positioning itself for tourism growth. This study, based on a sample of 448 tourists, identifies Coimbatore's tourism personality as convivial through descriptive research and means score analysis.
3. **Zivkovic, Anamaria (2021)**, INFLUENCING TRAVEL DECISIONS: IMPACT OF MICROINFLUENCERS ON GEN-Z IN CROATIA, This study explores the impact of micro-influencers on

Generation Z in Croatia. The findings offer insights for businesses considering micro-influencer marketing in Croatia.

4. **MerilIbrahemGhaly (2023),** THE INFLUENCE OF USER-GENERATED CONTENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA TRAVEL INFLUENCERS CREDIBILITY ON THE VISIT INTENTION OF GENERATION Z, Research shows that user-generated content (UGC) and social media influencers (SMIs) influence Generation Z's travel decisions. The study suggests that tourism managers should work with trusted influencers and encourage authentic customer reviews while professionally addressing negative content.
5. **Prkacin, Antonela, (2023),** THE IMPACT OF MACRO INFLUENCERS IN TRAVEL DECISION MAKING PROCESS FOR GENERATION Z, This study examines the impact of social media influencers on Generation Z's travel decisions at RIT Croatia. Findings show Gen Z follows influencers for their knowledge, honesty, and experience, traveling to gain new experiences and explore cultures. The study suggests further research on the role of Instagram in influencing Gen Z's travel choices.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate whether Instagram Reels significantly affect Gen Z's travel choices over traditional sources of travel information.
2. To explore whether Gen Z is more likely to plan vacations based on social media trends or traditional travel methods.
3. To explore how travel influencers' recommendations (such as flights, road trips, or nearby destinations) impact the convenience of reaching specific locations for Gen Z.

IV. SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

1. Focuses on the impact of Instagram Reels on the travel destination choices of Gen Z individuals.
2. Analyzes how visually appealing content, influencer travel reels, and viral trends influence travel decisions.
3. Examines behavioral aspects such as travel inspiration, destination awareness, and social media engagement.
4. Aims to provide insights for travel marketers, content creators, and tourism boards on using Instagram Reels for promotional strategies.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a detailed blue print used to guide a research study towards its objective. The process of designing a research study involves many interrelated decisions. The most significant decision is the choice of research approach, because it determines how the information will be obtained. The choice of the research approach depends on the nature of the research that one wants to do.

The present study is descriptive research based on the survey method. The methods adopted in the choice of sample, selection of respondents, collection of data and tools of analysis are briefly discussed in this part.

AREA OF THE STUDY

The geographical area of the study chosen for this research is Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The populations of the study are the people who are living in Coimbatore district and are watching Instagram reels for the selection of travel destination.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A convenience sample is a sample where the respondents are selected, in part or in whole, at the convenience of the researcher. The researcher makes no attempt, or only a limited attempt, to ensure that this sample is an accurate representation of some larger group or population.

SAMPLE SIZE

Since the entire population cannot be taken for the study, the size of the sample was restricted to 183 respondents.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

- H_1: There is a significant association between age group and the frequency of watching travel-related Instagram Reels.

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- H_2: There is a significant association exists between marital status and feeling inspired to travel after watching Instagram Reels.
- H_3: There is significant association between occupation and frequency of travel by influencer's suggestion.
- H_4: There is significant relationship between Income group has with the type of destinations preferred after watching Instagram Reels
- H_5: There is Significant association exists between gender and preferred vehicle for travel after watching Instagram Reels.
- H_6: There is a significant association between frequency of Instagram use and the likelihood of considering a destination after seeing it on Reels.
- H_7: There is a significant relationship between the level of trust in influencers on Instagram Reels for travel recommendations and the frequency of traveling based on influencer suggestions.
- H_8: There is a significant association between gender and being inspired by Instagram Reels to visit offbeat or lesser-known destinations.

DATA COLLECTION

There are several ways of collecting the appropriate data. While deciding about the method of data collection to be used for the study, the researcher should keep in mind, that there are two types of data viz primary & secondary data.

1. PRIMARY DATA

Primary data are those which are collected a fresh and for the first time and thus happen to be original in character. Primary data for the study has been collected through questionnaire and personal interview from the respondents.

2. SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data on the other hand are those which have already been collected by someone else and which have already been passed through the statistical process. In this study secondary data are collected from the online articles, journals, text books, etc.

TOOLS USED FOR DATA ANALYSIS

Data is collected through structured questionnaire by way of circulating the questionnaire to the respondents. The collected data is tabulated and coded, using simple percentage method and statistical methods the data were analyzed and interpretation was given. Appropriate charts were used to present the data pictorially.

The following tools were used to draw inference of the study.

- **Percentage Analysis**

This is a Univariate analysis where the percentage of a particular factor with different categories is calculated, in order to help one get fair idea regarding the sample and thereby that of the population. The number of responses of each category is summarized to percentage format for the convenience to use other statistical tools namely pie chart and bar diagrams.

Percentage = ((a portion)/ (the whole)) *100.

Statistical Techniques

Using SPSS statistical analysis software, the following tests were conducted to test the hypothesis.

- **Chi-Square Test**

Chi-Square test can be used to determine if categorical data shows dependency or the two\ classifications are independent.

$$2 = \sum \{(Oi - Ei)\ 2 / Ei\}$$

Applying Yates correction:

$$2 = \sum \{(|O\ i - E\ i\ | - 0.5)\ 2 / E\ i\}$$

- **Correlation Test**

Correlation research is a type of non-experimental research method in which a researcher measures two variables and understands and assesses the statistical relationship between them with no influence from any extraneous variable. In statistical analysis, distinguishing between categorical data and numerical data is essential, as categorical data involves distinct categories or labels, while numerical data consists of measurable quantities.

1. Positive correlation: A positive relationship between two variables is when an increase in one variable leads to a rise in the other variable. A decrease in one variable will see a reduction in the other variable. For example, the amount of money a person has might positively correlate with the number of cars the person owns.

2. Negative correlation: A negative correlation is quite literally the opposite of a positive relationship. If there is an increase in one variable, the second variable will show a decrease, and vice versa.

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3**. No correlation:** There is no correlation between the two variables in this third type. A change in one variable may not necessarily see a difference in the other variable.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Chi-Square Test-1

H_0: There is no significant association between age group and the frequency of watching travel-related Instagram Reels.

H_1: There is a significant association between age group and the frequency of watching travel-related Instagram Reels.

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.350	12	.406
Likelihood Ratio	10.478	12	.313
N of Valid Cases	183		

Calculated $\chi 2$ Value: 9.350
Degree of freedom: 12
Signification level: .406

Interpretation

The Pearson Chi-Square test results ($\chi^2 = 9.350$, df = 12, p = 0.406) do not reject the null hypothesis (H_0), showing no statistically significant connection between the variables. Any observed differences are probably the result of chance, according to the high p-value. This finding is also supported by the Likelihood Ratio test (p = 0.313). The analysis's sample size of 183 genuine cases makes it dependable. Based on the data, we therefore draw the conclusion that the factors are probably independent of one another and that there is no significant association between them.

Chi-Square Test-2

H_0: There is no significant association between occupation and frequency of travel by influencer's suggestion.

H_1: There is a significant association between occupation and frequency of travel by influencer's suggestion.

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.345	12	.673
Likelihood Ratio	2.341	12	.673
N of Valid Cases	183		

Calculated $\chi 2$ Value: 2.345
Degree of freedom: 12
Signification level: .673

Interpretation

The Pearson Chi-Square test results ($\chi^2 = 2.345$, df = 12, p = 0.673) do not reject the null hypothesis (H_0), showing no statistically significant connection between the variables. Since the p-value is far more than the 0.05 cutoff, any changes are probably the result of chance. This conclusion is supported by the identical p-value (0.673) obtained from the Likelihood Ratio test. With 183 genuine cases, the results are trustworthy, and we draw the conclusion that there is probably no significant correlation between the variables and that they are independent.

Chi-Square Test-3

H_0: There is no significant association exists between gender and preferred vehicle for travel after watching Instagram Reels.

H_1: There is a significant association exists between gender and preferred vehicle for travel after watching Instagram Reels.

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.326	12	.344
Likelihood Ratio	3.779	12	.286
N of Valid Cases	183		

Calculated $\chi 2$ Value: 3.326
Degree of freedom: 12
Signification level: .344

Interpretation

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The Pearson Chi-Square test results ($\chi^2 = 3.326$, df = 12, p = 0.344) do not reject the null hypothesis (H_0), showing no statistically significant connection between the variables. The p-value indicates that any differences found are not significant because it is significantly higher than the 0.05 cutoff. The same finding is supported by the Likelihood Ratio test (p = 0.286). The results are regarded as credible because there are 183 legitimate examples. Consequently, it can be said that there is probably no substantial relationship between the variables and that they are independent.

VII. FINDINGS

Gen Z Professionals Lead Usage

Respondents aged 27–29, mostly working professionals, are the most active in using Instagram Reels for travel planning. Frequent platform use (57% multiple times daily) shows a strong engagement level, making Instagram a vital tool for discovering travel destinations among this group.

Content Type Drives Inspiration

Adventure (94%) and scenic views (92%) are top motivators for travel decisions. The majority plan trips based on Reels (67%) and feel inspired to travel after viewing them (73%), emphasizing the power of visual, engaging content in influencing travel choices.

Trust and Budget Matter

82% trust influencer recommendations, and 50% often travel based on them. Budget travel influencers are most preferred, showing financial consciousness. Credibility and affordability play a key role in how users respond to travel content on Instagram.

Trust in Influencers Drives Travel Frequency

A significant Chi-square result (p = 0.000) indicates a strong association between trust in influencers and how often respondents travel based on their suggestions. This confirms that users who trust influencers are more likely to act on their recommendations, showing a clear dependency between trust and travel behavior. It reinforces the critical role of credibility in influencer marketing effectiveness.

Trust Linked to Travel Behavior

A significant positive correlation (p = 0.000) was found between trust in influencers and travel frequency based on their suggestions. This shows that as trust in influencers increases, so does the likelihood of traveling based on their recommendations. It underlines the persuasive power of trusted content creators in shaping real-world actions.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

1. It's crucial to post Reels during periods of high activity (such early mornings or late evenings) to optimize reach and engagement, as 57% of respondents use Instagram frequently throughout the day. This will guarantee that your content is seen by as many people as possible.
2. Travel brands should concentrate on producing visually appealing and shareable material that highlights locations, activities, and experiences in an engaging way, as 79% of respondents stated that Instagram Reels affect their travel selections.
3. Travel firms should work with reliable influencers whose following match their target audience in order to increase brand visibility and foster trust, as 82% of respondents said they trust influencers for travel advice.
4. The promotion of adventure tourism, such as trekking, water sports, and hiking, through Instagram Reels should be a top priority for travel marketers in order to draw in adventurous tourists, as 66% of respondents said they are more likely to visit adventure destinations after visiting them.
5. Given the strong correlation between Instagram Reels and trip planning, travel firms ought to create campaigns that leverage interactive posts and captivating Reels to walk consumers through the whole planning process, from finding a destination to making a reservation.

IX. CONCLUSION

The data analysis shows that Instagram Reels and social media influencers have a considerable impact on travel decisions among the surveyed population. Most of the respondents are young, have jobs, and use Instagram frequently the majority of them do so several times a day. Compared to more conventional sources like family recommendations and travel agents, Instagram content particularly Reels stands out as the primary influence on trip selections. The most engaging content kinds include adventure sports, picturesque scenery, and popular challenges, and most respondents say they are at least somewhat willing to travel to places shown in Reels. This

implies that social media content that is visually appealing and captivating is essential to contemporary travel inspiration and preparation.

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