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A STUDY ON TOURIST AWARENESS AND INFLUENCE ABOUT ONLINE TRAVEL REVIEWS IN COIMBATORE CITY

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ABSTRACT
The rapid development of digital technology and the widespread use of the internet have significantly transformed the tourism industry. Online travel platforms allow tourists to access information and share their travel experiences through reviews and ratings. These online travel reviews play a crucial role in influencing the travel decisions of potential tourists. The present study aims to examine the level of tourist awareness and the influence of online travel reviews among travelers in Coimbatore city. The research also explores the factors that affect tourists' perception and trust toward online travel review platforms. The study is based on primary data collected from 113 respondents using a convenience sampling technique. The findings reveal that most tourists are aware of online travel review platforms and frequently rely on them while planning their trips.

KEYWORDS: *Online Travel Reviews, Tourist Awareness, Digital Tourism, Travel Decision Making, Consumer Behaviour.*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world and plays a vital role in economic development. With the rapid growth of digital technology and internet accessibility, the tourism industry has experienced significant transformation. Today, tourists increasingly rely on online platforms to obtain information about destinations, hotels, restaurants, and other travel services.

Online travel reviews have become an important source of information for travelers. These reviews are usually posted by previous visitors who share their experiences, opinions, ratings, and feedback about various travel services. Such information helps potential tourists evaluate the quality and reliability of tourism products and services before making their travel decisions.

Online travel review platforms such as travel websites, social media platforms, and mobile applications enable tourists to compare different travel options and choose the best services based on customer experiences. Positive reviews can encourage tourists to visit a particular destination, while negative reviews may discourage them from choosing certain services.

However, despite the growing popularity of online travel reviews, some tourists may question their reliability due to fake or misleading reviews. Therefore, it is important to understand the level of awareness and the extent to which online travel reviews influence tourists' decisions. This study focuses on analyzing tourist awareness and the influence of online travel reviews in Coimbatore city.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The increasing use of digital platforms has made online travel reviews an important factor in the tourism decision-making process. Tourists often depend on reviews and ratings shared by other travelers to evaluate travel services and destinations. However, not all tourists may be fully aware of the benefits and limitations of online travel reviews.

In some cases, tourists may encounter issues such as fake reviews, biased opinions, lack of reliable information, and difficulty in identifying trustworthy review sources. These challenges can affect the credibility of online travel platforms and influence tourists' perceptions and decisions.

Therefore, it is necessary to study the level of tourist awareness and the influence of online travel reviews on their travel decisions. This research aims to analyze the awareness, perception, and influence of online travel reviews among tourists in Coimbatore city.

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Year	Title	Author	Research Methodology	Findings
2023	Impact of Online Reviews on Tourism Decision Making	Sharma & Gupta	Survey research method	Online reviews significantly influence tourist booking decisions.
2022	Tourist Perception towards Online Travel Platforms	Kumar et al.	Questionnaire-based survey	Most tourists rely on online reviews before selecting hotels and destinations.
2021	Consumer Behaviour in Digital Tourism	Rahman et al.	Statistical analysis	Digital reviews strongly affect consumer trust and travel choices.
2019	Influence of Social Media on Tourism	Bhatia & Singh	Descriptive research	Social media and online reviews play a major role in tourism promotion.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the level of tourist awareness about online travel reviews.
- To analyze the influence of online travel reviews on tourist decision-making.
- To identify factors affecting tourists' trust in online travel reviews.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Area of Study: Coimbatore City

Sampling Technique: Convenience Sampling Technique

Sample Size: 130 Respondents

Period of Study: December 2025 – February 2026

Source of Data

The study is based on both **primary and secondary data**. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires, while secondary data were collected from journals, websites, and books.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 1: Demographic Profile (n = 130)

Personal Factor	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Age	Below 18 years	15	11.5
	18 – 25 years	60	46.2
	26 – 35 years	30	23.1
	Above 35 years	25	19.2
	Total	130	100
Gender	Male	74	56.9
	Female	56	43.1
	Total	130	100
Educational Qualification	School Level	16	12.3
	Undergraduate	60	46.2
	Postgraduate	30	23.1
	Professional Degree	24	18.5
	Total	130	100
Occupation	Student	50	38.5
	Private Employee	26	20.0
	Government Employee	20	15.4
	Business / Self-employed	22	16.9
	Others	12	9.2
	Total	130	100

INTERPRETATION

Age:

The majority of respondents (46.2%) belong to the 18–25 years age group, indicating that young travelers are the most active users

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of online travel reviews. About 23.1% of respondents are between 26–35 years, while 19.2% are above 35 years. Only 11.5% are below 18 years.

Gender
Out of 130 respondents, 56.9% are male and 43.1% are female, showing that male respondents slightly outnumber female respondents in the survey.

Educational Qualification
Most respondents are undergraduates (46.2%), followed by postgraduates (23.1%) and professional degree holders (18.5%). Only 12.3% have school-level education, indicating that the majority of respondents are relatively well educated.

Occupation
The largest group of respondents are students (38.5%), followed by private employees (20%), business/self-employed (16.9%), and government employees (15. 4%). About 9.2% fall into other occupational categories.

CROSS TABULATION

Gender and Level of Trust in Online Travel Reviews

Table 2: Cross Tabulation – Gender and Trust in Online Travel Reviews (n = 130)

Gender of Respondents	Level of Trust in Online Travel Reviews			Total
	High Trust	Moderate Trust	Low Trust	
Male	No.	34	27	13
	%	45.9%	36.5%	17.6%
Female	No.	22	23	11
	%	39.3%	41.1%	19.6%
Total	No.	56	50	24
	%	43.1%	38.5%	18.4%

INTERPRETATION

The table shows that 43.1% of respondents have high trust in online travel reviews, while 38.5% have moderate trust and 18.4% have low trust. Among male respondents, 45.9% show high trust, whereas 41.1% of female respondents show moderate trust. This indicates that tourists generally rely on online travel reviews while planning their trips.

HYPOTHESIS

Null Hypothesis (H_0)
There is no significant relationship between gender and the level of trust in online travel reviews among the respondents.

CHI-SQUARE TESTS

Table 3: Chi-Square Tests – Gender and Trust in Online Travel Reviews

Test	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	0.842	2	0.656
Likelihood Ratio	0.855	2	0.652
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.126	1	0.722
N of Valid Cases	130		

INTERPRETATION

From the significance value of 0.656, it is clear that there is no significant relationship between gender and the level of trust in online travel reviews among respondents. Since the significance value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that online travel reviews play an important role in influencing tourists' travel decisions. Most respondents are aware of online travel review platforms and rely on them to gather information about destinations, hotels, and travel services. These reviews help tourists make informed decisions by comparing different travel options.

However, some respondents still express concerns about the authenticity and credibility of online reviews, especially due to the presence of fake or misleading feedback. The statistical analysis indicates that gender does not significantly affect the level of trust in online travel reviews, suggesting that both male and female tourists rely on these platforms in a similar way.

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