

Original Research

Social Media's Impact on Bangladesh Tourism: Decisions, Promotion, Interaction

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Abstract

Industries, especially the tourist sector, are significantly impacted by social media, making them particularly vulnerable to its impacts. The growth of Bangladesh's tourism industry has been significantly aided by social media. This developed into a critical marketing and strategic decision-making tool for firms in the tourism sector. The rapid growth of the Internet has made it feasible for information and communication technology (ICT) to proliferate, which has contributed to an increase in the number of individuals utilizing social media. An investigation of the elements influencing the growth of the tourism sector was conducted with 1,050 respondents, including a range of experts. The study reveals that social media is to blame for the rapid expansion of Bangladesh's tourism industry. In this poll, 95% of respondents claimed that social media had a significant impact on the growth of Bangladesh's tourism sector. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Threads, and social blogs are the finest resources for travel-related information. As a result, there has been a bigger influx of visitors into the industry. Authorities, travel agencies, advertising agencies, and tourism firms may use social media as a competitive tool to promote sites, find tourist spots, and improve services. The study faces challenges in data quality, ethics, time constraints, metrics, external factors, platform representation, marketing methods, social media, and content analysis subjectivity. Future research should examine social media's promotion of Bangladesh's cultural heritage, local stakeholder engagement, content influence, niche tourism impact, policy, and technological adoption, all while analyzing power dynamics and trends.

Keywords: social media, Bangladesh, Tourism Industry, Impacts of ICT

Introduction

Tourism is a vital sector in Bangladesh's economy, contributing significantly to GDP and providing employment opportunities. The transformation of the industry is partly driven by social media, which significantly influences travel decisions. The country's natural beauty and unique six- seasons make it a promising destination for both domestic and international visitors. The Asian Development Bank predicts a 5.3% increase in Bangladesh's GDP in 2023, with the travel and tourism industry expected to generate \$1,853,000 million in revenue. The market volume is expected to reach \$2,499.000 million by 2027, with revenue expected to grow at a 7.76% annual rate (CAGR 2023-2027). Social media can be used as a marketing tool to advertise tourist attractions and disseminate information about hotels and transportation. The government's strategy for 2021 includes promoting the travel and tourism sector through social media. The industry's contribution to the world's GDP fell by 2.8 percentage points in 2022, but is expected to grow by 6.5% annually to BDT 1252.8 billion by 2025.

Social media plays a strategic role in enhancing marketing for Bangladesh's tourism industry by discovering new markets and attracting travelers to emerging destinations. The table below highlights Bangladesh's most popular tourist spots.

Bangladesh's agricultural sector, once contributing 60% of GDP, has declined over the past decade as efforts focus on poverty alleviation and food security. The RMG industry, employing 4 million people, contributed 12.26% of GDP and 83.9% of exports in FY 2017-18. Despite its natural beauty and potential, Bangladesh's tourism sector lacks government focus. In 2014, the Travel & Tourism industry generated BDT 296.6 billion, with projections to grow by 6.1% annually, reaching BDT 566.3 billion (2.0% of GDP) by 2025. Employment in the sector is expected to grow 2.9% yearly, reaching 2.0% of total jobs by 2025. [23].

Table1: Popular Bangladeshi Tourist Attractions

Division	Tourist Attractions place in Bangladesh
Chittagong	St. Martin's Island, Cox's Bazar, Lalmai, Himchori and Inani Beaches, Parki Beach, Moinamoti, and Shalbon Bihar, Patenga Sea Beach, Foy's Lake, War Cemetery, Chittagong Hill Tracks (Khagrachari, Rangamati, Bandarban, and Kaptai), Boga Lake, Sajek Vally, Nilgiri, Nilachal, and Hanging Bridge etc..
Sylhet	Khadimnagar National Park, The Central Muslim Sahitya Sangsad, Srimongal Tea Garden, Madhabkunda Waterfall, Satchari National Park, Bisanakandi, Hum Hum Waterfall, Lawacherra Rain Forest, Lawachara National Park, Tanguar Haor, Osmani Museum, Sree mangal Bird Park, Adventure World Amusement Park, Jaflong, Ratargul, Borakbeel, Rema Kalenga Reserved etc.
Dhaka	National Museum, National Zoo, Ramna Park, Ahsan Manzil, Lalbagh Fort, Shaheed Minar, Modhupur National Park, Jatiyo Smriti Soudho, Hatirjeel, Pora Bari, Dakeshwari Temple, Jatiya SangshadBahavan. Tangail: Jamuna Bridge, Modhupur Temple, Tangail D.C. Park and Karatia DhanbariJamidar Bari etc.
Khulna	Rabindranath Tagore's ShilaidahaKuthibari, the Sixty Dome Mosque, Kamrul Islam Siddiqui Park, the Sundarban, Hiron Point, Shahid Hadis Park, the Genocide-Torture Archive & Museum, the Khan Jahan Ali Bridge, the Khulna Museum, the Mozaffer Garden Zoo, and the Raja Sitaram Palace are only a few of the places mentioned etc.
Rajshahi	Rabindranath Tagore's ShilaidahaKuthibari, NatoreRajbari,Mahasthangarh Museum, Uttara Gonovobon, Mahasthangarh, Mohanto State, Varendra Research Museum, Choto Sona Mosque, Somapura Mahavihara, Padma Garden, Shah Makhдум Mosque, Hard Point, Kamrul Islam Siddiqui Park, Jamuna Ananda Park, and Tohakhana Complex etc..
Rangpur	Kantaji's Temple, Swapnopuri Mini Zoo, Rangpur Zoo, Shopnopuri Man-Made Amusement Park, Jolkar Moar, Sayedpur Railway Junction, Tajhat Palace, Parbatipur Shohid Minar, and Nawabganj National Park are a few of the places to visit in the city etc.
Barisal	Lebur Char, Fatrar Char, Gangamati Reserved Forest, Sonar Char, Jhau Forest, Durga Sagar, Kuakata Sea Beach, Kuakata Buddhist Temple, Guthia Mosque etc.

The growth of the tourism industry can contribute to poverty reduction, social welfare, and economic growth, especially in rural regions and disadvantaged countries. Social media plays a crucial role in the expanding travel and tourism industry in Bangladesh, as it influences traveler choices and provides suggestions for tourism industry organizations to enhance their offerings and boost customer satisfaction.

Objective of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore the many effects of social media on Bangladesh's tourism sector. Specifically, the study will look at how social media influences traveler decision-making, how it promotes destinations, and how travelers interact with different social media platforms.

Literature Review

This literature review aims to provide an overview of existing research on how social media is impacting the tourism industry in Bangladesh. Focuses on enhancing tourism services, upgrading facilities, reducing costs, and improving infrastructure to attract a greater number of domestic and international tourists [1]. National tourism policy objectives in Bangladesh focus on promoting ecotourism, preserving cultural values, and supporting local

communities [2]. However, challenges in revenue and foreign visitors persist [3]. The influence of word-of-mouth on travel success, especially through positive sharing on social media like Twitter and Facebook [4]. The current state of the tourism industry, suggesting policy recommendations to overcome identified obstacles [5]. Underscores tourism's diverse contributions to Bangladesh's economy, including GDP, job creation, infrastructure development, and poverty reduction [6]. The economic, social, cultural, and political significance of tourism, suggesting that increasing its contribution to GDP to 5% could create jobs. They also note that one-fifth of leisure travellers use social media for trip planning, focusing on hotels, attractions, and dining [7, 8]. The world's tourist industry is significantly impacted by social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, according to [9]. Facebook triumphs over all other social media platforms. 52% of Facebook users claimed that their friends' vacation photos have an impact on their own travel arrangements. According to research, more than 74% of tourists use the website to exchange evaluations about their experiences with others. 98% of passengers said that Trip Advisor reviews are reliable and useful. Online reviews are considered to be the second most reliable type of promotion by more than 70% of individuals. As a result, travel and tourist businesses may advertise their deals on these websites. Social media has both beneficial and bad effects on the tourist industry, according to [10]. Young people's travel selections have been significantly influenced by the opinions, experiences, and comments of other users on social media. Nowadays, a lot of tourism-related firms successfully use social media. The visitors may write remarks right away because there are so many social media network sites, including websites for online reservations. In order to protect their brand reputation, businesses might provide remedies as soon as they get involved in the process. Firms may utilize social media as a successful advertising strategy since customers usually leave positive reviews on social media [10]. Tourism firms should thus be aware of this new power of advertising and use social media as a new communication and competitive advertising weapon in order to provide the best service to tourists. According to the survey's results, social media may boost the competitiveness of travel-related enterprises, agencies, lodging facilities, and transportation providers. The role of social media in encouraging travel is highlighted [10]. He continued by saying that the growing use of social media as a new marketing tool in the tourism industry is a result of the development of internet technology. According to his research, social media has a mixed effect on the travel and tourism sector. The younger generation's travel preferences are greatly influenced by the views and firsthand stories of other users on social media. Bangladesh's foreign profits and tourist arrivals are on the rise. If tourist enterprises use effective advertising strategies and raise the budget allocated for this purpose, this tendency might be elevated to a greater degree. For this goal, the nation must also hire innovative individuals, and the caliber of the advertising materials must also be improved [11].

Social media has had a substantial impact on the travel and tourism industry [12]. Travelers utilize social media as a tool to study pertinent travel information, plan their trips, and discuss their experiences with locations, lodging options, dining establishments, and modes of transportation. The well-known travel website TripAdvisor has significantly changed the tourism industry. 50 million people visit it each month and are actively seeking for travel advice from this reputable source. With more than 200 million reviews and comments posted on TripAdvisor to date and more than 800 million active users posting updates and sharing photos on Facebook, social media has taken over the industry. Tourism firms must adapt to customer technology needs. Social branding is growing in travel and hospitality industries, improving communication. Tourism marketing ensures visitors access to best services and converts potential tourists into actual ones, boosting demand and expanding the sector [13]. The significant impact of social media on travel, with users sharing experiences and opinions on lodging, dining, agencies, and airlines [14]. Dunloe Hotel identified five trends: inbound marketing, SEO, customer care, mobile apps, and online reputation management, emphasizing the importance of monitoring these channels. Social media's impact on tourism and hospitality industries, transforming marketing strategies through vacation planning, social sharing, customer service, attracting travel agents, and loyalty programs, highlighting the internet's expansion [5]. The importance of social media in Bangladeshi tourism marketing, with 95% of students valuing it and 45% using it for travel research. Top social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube, enabling businesses like tour operators and travel agencies to compete [16]. Brazil's millennials 85% use social media for trip planning, with 43% forgoing travel if followers cannot view posts. Travelers continue to use social media, with 74% using it when away. Social media has become essential for tourist businesses, with Instagram having the highest engagement rate. Paid ads are the preferred marketing strategy for travel marketers. Bangladesh is expected to have 50.3 million active social media users in 2022, with a 10.1% annual growth rate from

2021-2022. This represents 29.7% of the population. The country has 49.31 million Facebook users, 0.93% growth rate, with men making up 67.65% and women 32.35 percent. Instagram users have 4.9 million growth rates, with men making up 68.34% and women 31.66%. TikTok users are growing at a rate of %, and LinkedIn users have 5.66 million growth rates. The impact of social media on trip decision-making, focusing on the most used platforms during trip planning. The study reveals a widespread integration of social media sites, particularly during the information search stage and post-trip experience sharing. Social media sites have become credible sources of information, second only to recommendations from family and friends. The study emphasizes the importance of tourism businesses establishing a robust presence on social media and ensuring accurate content about attractions and services [16]. The relationship between social media marketing (SMM) activities and brand equity (BE) in the Bangladeshi banking sector. The research, based on data from 289 customers, found that brand love fully mediates the connection between SMM activities and BE, while brand trust is a partial mediator. The study emphasizes the need for cross-cultural studies to generalize the findings. It provides practical guidance for bank marketers, emphasizing the importance of managing SMM activities to capture consumer interest and prevent switching behavior. The study also emphasizes the role of authentic brand-related information in building strong brand trust [17].

The role of social media marketing in the tourism and hospitality industry, focusing on Bangladesh. They highlight the transformative impact of social networking in the Web 2.0 era, emphasizing the evolution of marketing tactics and the shift from traditional approaches to fostering customer relationships. The study uses qualitative methods to illustrate the intricacies of social media marketing in Bangladesh, drawing on various literature sources to educate academics, researchers, policymakers, and government officials [18]. The impact of social media on tourists' decision-making in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The research identifies social media attributes that significantly influence tourists' choices and highlights the positive influence of these attributes on repeat visits. The study uses convenience sampling and questionnaire surveys with various analytical techniques [19]. The findings highlight the significant influence of social media on tourists' decisions, suggesting implications for the tourism industry and government authorities. The research can inform policies and practices by the civil aviation and tourism ministry, focusing on the role of social media in attracting tourists. The significant role of social media in travellers' journeys, planning, and opportunities for tourism enterprises. The research, involving 388 participants, found a positive effect of social media on tourists' decision-making processes when selecting destinations. The study recommends strategic integration of social media factors for brand loyalty, customer satisfaction, and situational dynamics in tourism, particularly in Bangladesh, for better understanding visitor behaviours and policymaking [20].

Social Media as a Marketing Tool

One prominent theme in the literature is the effectiveness of social media platforms as marketing tools for Bangladesh's tourism industry. Research has highlighted the role of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube in reaching potential tourists, both domestic and international. These platforms have become essential channels for marketing Bangladesh's diverse attractions, cultural heritage, and natural beauty [19].

User-Generated Content (UGC) and Destination Image

A significant body of literature has explored how user-generated content (UGC) on social media influences the image and perception of Bangladesh as a tourist destination. Studies have found that UGC, including travel blogs, photos, and videos, significantly shapes tourists' expectations and decisions. Tourists increasingly rely on peer-generated content to plan their trips, emphasizing the role of UGC in destination marketing [2].

Local Stakeholder Engagement

Research has investigated the engagement of local stakeholders, including tour operators, hotels, and cultural institutions, on social media platforms. Actively participating in social media has been shown to contribute to attracting tourists and enhancing the overall tourism experience. Collaborations between local businesses and social media influencers have emerged as a powerful promotional [21].

Niche Tourism Development

Social media has facilitated the development of niche tourism segments in Bangladesh, such as eco-tourism and cultural tourism. Researchers have emphasized the targeted marketing made possible by social media platforms in

promoting these segments. The emergence of niche tourism has diversified the tourist landscape and attracted specialized travelers [22].

Impact on Policy and Strategy

Several studies have focused on how tourism policies and strategies in Bangladesh are adapting to the digital era. Social media trends and insights have prompted adjustments in marketing strategies and infrastructure development. The government and tourism authorities are increasingly recognizing the importance of aligning policies with the digital demands of modern tourists [19, 20].

Technological Adoption

The adoption of technology within the tourism industry in Bangladesh has been a subject of research interest. Social media's influence has driven the adoption of online booking platforms, virtual reality experiences, and digital guides. This technological evolution is enhancing the tourist experience and streamlining tourism services [1].

Socio-Economic Impact

Scholars have examined the socio-economic impact of social media-driven tourism. This impact includes generating employment opportunities, supporting local businesses, and improving infrastructure in tourist destinations. Social media is seen as a catalyst for economic development in Bangladesh's tourism sector [20].

Research Gaps

The study on the impact of social media on Bangladesh's tourist business is limited, despite global attention on its influence. There is a lack of research on how social media platforms are assisting or impeding the growth of the sector. This knowledge gap highlights the need for a comprehensive exploration of social media integration in the banking sector, focusing on brand equity strategies. The tourism sector should also examine how social media influences decision-making across different segments, including cultural, adventure, and eco-tourism. A longitudinal study to track social media marketing evolution in the tourism sector and a comparative analysis across different geographical regions is also needed. These findings will significantly contribute to the evolving landscape of social media impact research in diverse sectors and global contexts.

Materials and Methods

This research is quantitative in nature, involving the collection of data from larger respondent samples and the use of numerical analysis. It employs a descriptive research design, emphasizing the presentation of information with figures and statistics. Data comes from both primary and secondary sources, with primary sources providing reliable data related to the topic and secondary sources offering historical context. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used for participant selection. Primary data was collected through an online survey using self-administered questionnaires via Google Forms, focusing on respondents' socio-economic profiles and their opinions about social media's impact on tourist promotion.

Survey Area Respondents to this poll come from all throughout Rajshahi and Rangpur in Bangladesh.

Survey Population Under the author's guidance, students and employees from Dhaka University, Begum Rokeya University and Rajshahi University, Department of Marketing alumni association performed a survey on several professions.

Data Collection Methods Primary data were acquired in 2023 via a questionnaire survey. Secondary data were gathered through the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and a literature review.

Sampling techniques 1050 individuals, including students, teachers, business owners, and employees from the commercial and public sectors, took part in the survey. They are between the ages of 15 and 60. In this investigation, non-probability sampling was used. To choose respondents who would be available for the survey when it was required, the convenience sampling method was utilized.

The vital information is acquired via questionnaire surveys. This poll comprised open-ended, closed-ended, Likert scale, and multiple-choice questions. Data analysis has been done quantitatively. Various graphical chart was used to satisfy the major objectives. Highlights of some data were presented in tables.

Application of study

The study's findings can be applied in both academic and professional settings. Research findings can be used for future study and industry advantages by public and private tourist authorities, travel companies, advertising agencies, enterprises participating in the tourism sector, academics, and researchers. Findings can be used by the government to build plans and policies for the industry's development.

Results and Discussion

The study explores the motivations behind travel, revealing that social media influences travel decisions. People's opinions and comments on social media are crucial for finding essential travel information on destinations, lodging, restaurants, and transportation. Social media websites like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Threads and Instagram provide access to information on tourist attractions, hotels, transportation, and artifacts, aiding in selecting destinations and planning travel plans.

Social media websites like Facebook and Instagram are influential sources of inspiration for tourists to book trips. These platforms are used by corporate enterprises for strategic decision-making and competitive marketing. This study examines the impact of social media on Bangladesh's tourist business growth through survey questions. **The Preference for Travelling Among People:** When asked if they enjoy travelling and where they go, 95.45% of respondents responded positively, and 90.98% indicated they go outside of Dhaka town.

The Travel Frequency: When asked how frequently they travel, respondents stated that they do it once a month, once every six months, and once a year, respectively. 17.45% of those surveyed claimed to travel each week. As a result, about 27% of respondents make weekly or monthly trips.

Approximate Number of Trips Per Year: When asked to estimate the number of trips per year, 50.98% of respondents said that there are often 5 or less trips per year. However, 29.68%, 13%, and 3.17% of respondents stated that they travel 5–10-, 10-15-, and 15-20-times year, respectively. According to 3.17% of respondents, this occurs more than 20 times each year.

Length of Each Trip: According to 50.92% and 33.58% of respondents, respectively, 2-5 days and 5-10 days are the most common trip lengths. 11.85% of respondents claimed they only travel for a day, while 3.64% claimed they travel for more than ten days.

Travelling Partner: When respondents were asked who they travelled with the most, the majority (35.47%) said they travelled with friends, followed by 30.60% who said they travelled with relatives. 13.96% of respondents said they go on workplace or university tours with coworkers or classmates, while 11.53% said they go with family. Only 8.43% of those surveyed indicated they enjoy travelling alone.

Preferred types of Transportation: When asked what kind of transportation they prefer, 39.43% of respondents said that they take buses. Train travel was cited by 33.30% of respondents. Travel by car, aircraft, boat, or ship was cited by 14.53%, 10.09%, and 2.65% of respondents, respectively.

Amount Spent on Each Trip: About 41.17% of respondents said they spent less than TK 10,000 on each trip when asked how much they spent on each trip. However, a sizable portion of respondents (30.25%) claimed to spend between 10,000 and 15,000 TK. Additionally, 17.26% and 11.32% of respondents said that they spend between TK 15,000 and TK 25,000 and TK 25,000 or more on each trip, respectively.

The Sites People Prefer to Visit: The majority of respondents (55%) prefer to visit natural areas, and 26% of respondents indicated historical locations. 9% of respondents prefer archaeological sites, while 9% prefer artificial or man-made locations. The percentage distribution of respondents' preferred locations to visit is shown in the following graph:

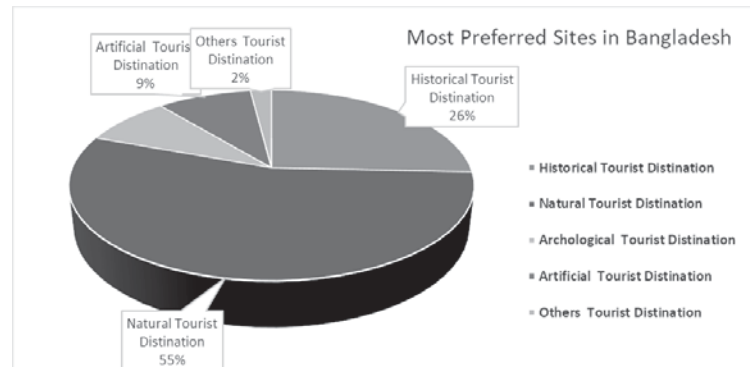


Figure1: Most Popular Tourist Attractions

Divisions with the Greatest Tourist Inflow: The respondents rank and order their responses according to the division they go through the most. Chittagong division was listed as the trip destination of the greatest percentage of persons (35.50%), followed by Dhaka division (11%) and Sylhet division (23%). The number of visitors visiting the rest of the divisions, like as Barisal, Rajshahi, Khulna, Rangpur, and Mymensingh, is rising due to their historical significance. The eight divisions that respondents go to the most are represented in the following graph:

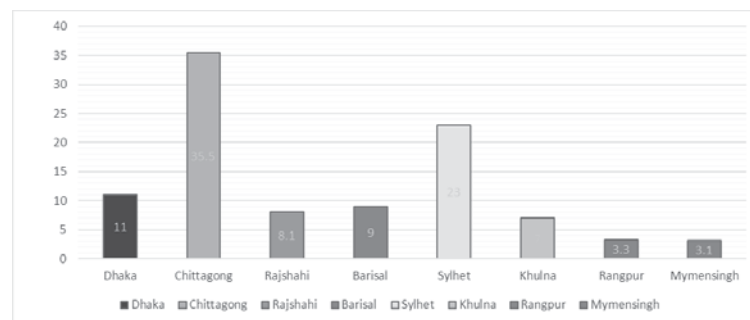


Figure2: Divisions with the Highest Tourist Inflow

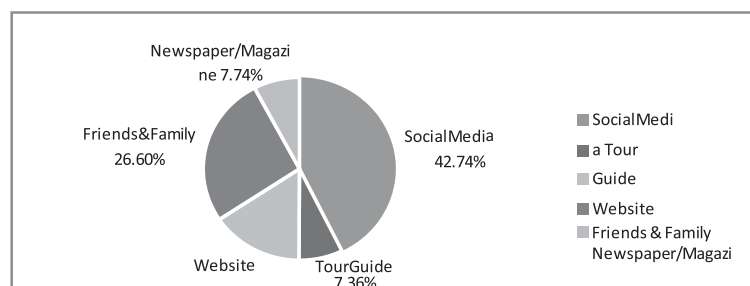


Figure3: Media Applied to Travel Information Search

Information Sources for Travel Planning: In response to the question on the sources they utilize for information, 42.74% of respondents stated that they use social media because friends post reviews and travel experiences there. Consultation with friends or family, websites, newspapers or magazines, and tour guides were cited by 26.60%, 15.57%, 7.74%, and 7.36% of respondents, respectively. The distribution of media used to seek for travel-related information is depicted in the graph in above.

The most labour-intensive age group: In this poll, students aged 15 to 25 make up 50% of respondents. The age groups of 25–35 and 35–45 is represented by 28% and 16% of respondents, respectively. Only 2% and 2% of the responders are under 15 and over 55 years old, respectively. Young folks make up the majority of the travelling age group in this poll. The percentage distribution for the main travelling age group is shown in the following pie chart.

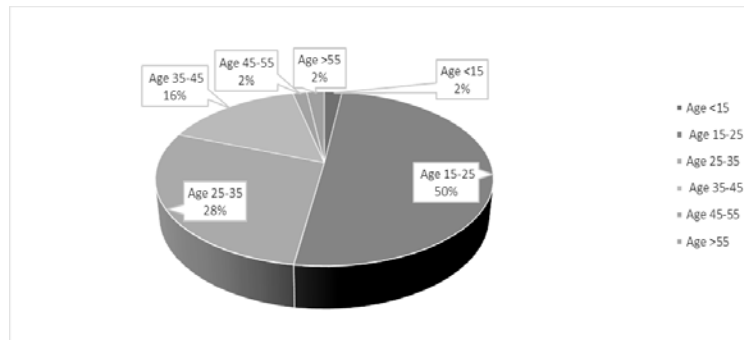


Figure 4: Mostly Travelled Age Group

Social media subscription devices: Smartphone usage for social media subscriptions is most common among respondents (69.43%), followed by laptop use (16.79%), desktop use (5.96%), and tablet use (3.55%). Only 2.23% and 2.04% of respondents, respectively, subscribe to social media using laptops and other sorts of gadgets.

Mostly used Manufacturers' Mobile Devices: Samsung phones are used by 42.74% of all respondents, followed by Sony/Ericsson at 8.77%, 16.15% Nokia, 14.64% Symphony, 6.57% Apple, and 5.09% Huawei. Other devices are used by the remaining 6.04% of respondents, including Siemens, Walton, Xiaomi, Oppo, Asus, HTC, Lava, and BlackBerry.

Telecom Services Most Commonly Used: Grameenphone is a telecom service used by 39.38% of the respondents. The remaining respondents, or 11.87%, utilise Bangla Link, Robi, Airtel, and Teletalk, respectively. 7.26% of users only utilise certain services. Therefore, based on the findings of our poll, Grameenphone is the top telecom service provider.

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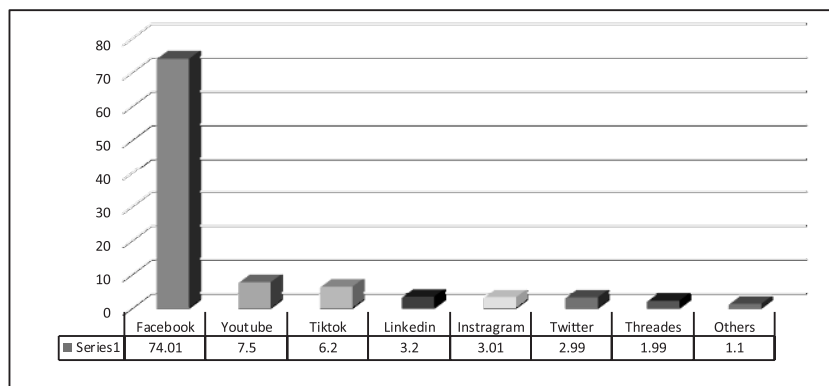


Figure 5: Mostly Used social media

Social media's growth effects on the travel and tourism sector: 95% of answers to a question on social media's influence on Bangladesh's tourist industry growth agreed that it had a substantial impact on the sector's expansion.

Only 5% of those surveyed said this impact on the tourist sector was less. People said that the social media posts, comments, and reviews of other users influenced their decision to go. The percentage of respondents who stated that social media has had a substantial influence on Bangladesh's tourist sector growth is represented in the following graph.

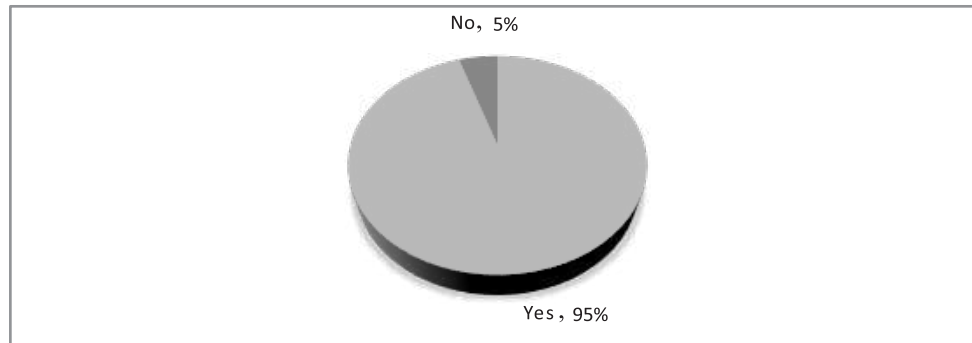


Figure 6: Impact of social media on Tourism Industry

The extent of social media's influence on the travel and tourism sector: The following question asked respondents to rate the effect of social media on the travel and tourism industry. According to 38.5% of replies, this effect ranges from extremely high to moderate. Only 8.21% of respondents that were polled rated the impact as low to extremely low. 1.79% of those surveyed declined to provide a response. According to the vast majority of respondents, the following graph illustrates how significant social media is to the tourism industry:

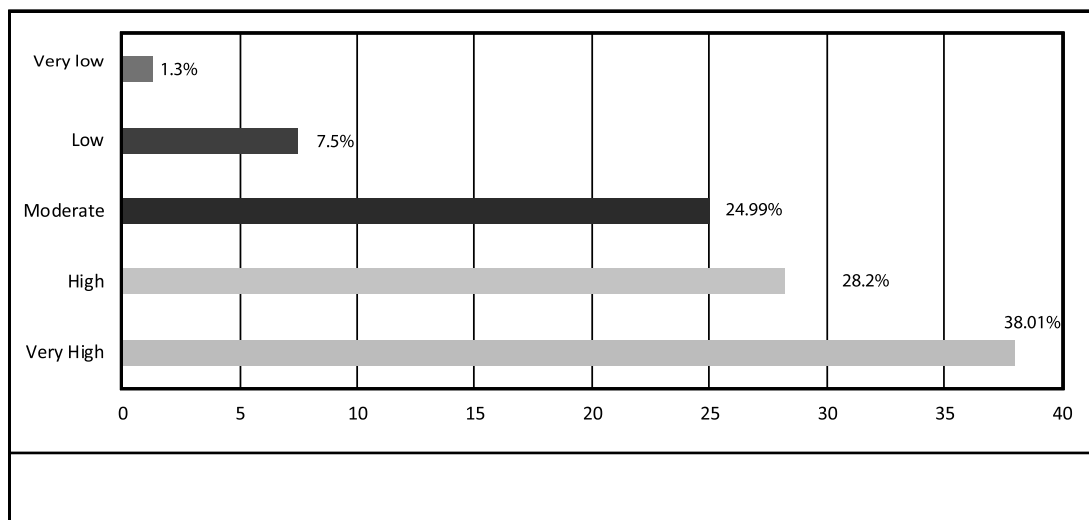


Figure 7: The extent of social media's influence on the travel and tourism sector

Government Use of social media to Study Tourism Sector: 95.47% of those who responded to the survey believe that the government should concentrate on social media to study the domestic and international tourist industries. Only 2.64% of respondents gave a negative response, while 1.89% of respondents did not reply.

The motivations for the trip: The majority of respondents (42.2%) stated that they like travelling for its enjoyment and amusement, followed by 19.15% for family reasons, 15.2% for academic purposes, 13.2% for business purposes, medical advice 7.25% and 3% for other purposes. The percentage distribution of respondents' reasons for travelling is shown in the graph below:

Major Barriers in Traveling: Money, according to 35% of respondents, is the main obstacle to travel. Poor transportation, bad weather, security issues, and stress were cited as important hurdles, respectively, by 20%, 10%, 7%, and 7% of respondents. Poor hotel facilities were cited by 14% of respondents, while 3% highlighted additional factors. The following graph illustrates the main obstacles in the tourist sector that the majority of visitors have noted:

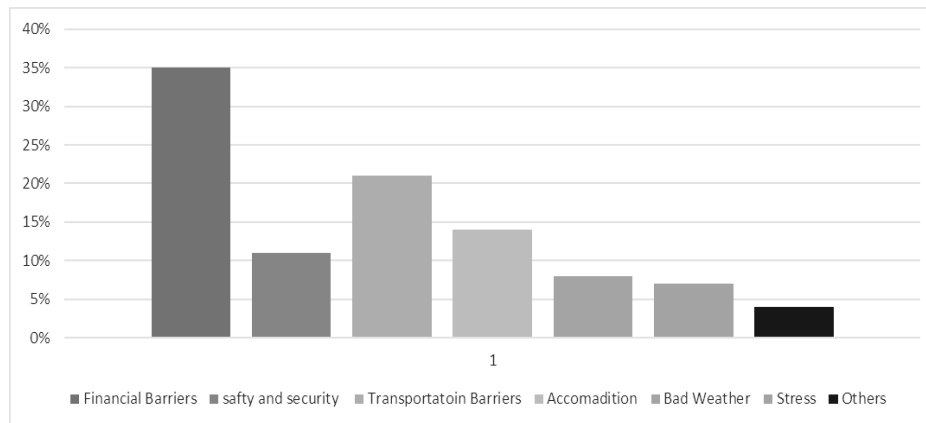


Figure 9: Major Barriers in Travelling

Social media has significantly transformed Bangladesh's tourism industry, boosted its global profile and attracted international travellers. User-generated content on social media platforms, such as travel blogs, photos, and videos, significantly influences tourists' perceptions and decisions about destinations and activities. Local stakeholders, such as tour operators, hotels, and cultural sites, actively engage on these platforms, contributing to the growth of tourism and attracting more visitors. Social media has also facilitated the emergence of niche tourism segments, particularly eco-tourism and cultural tourism, thanks to targeted marketing and information-sharing capabilities.

The impact of social media extends beyond shaping tourist preferences to influencing tourism policies in Bangladesh. Authorities are now recognizing the need to align strategies with the evolving digital landscape shaped by social media dynamics. The tourism industry in Bangladesh is responding to modern travelers' digital demands through increased technological adoption, integrating online booking platforms, augmented reality guides, and virtual reality experiences. Social media-driven tourism also contributes to the local economy by generating employment opportunities, promoting local businesses, and improving infrastructure in key tourist destinations. The symbiotic relationship between social media and tourism is shaping a dynamic and prosperous landscape for Bangladesh, encompassing both its global appeal and socio-economic development.

Conclusion and Future Directions

Social media has significantly impacted tourism in Bangladesh, making the country a popular tourist destination globally. User-generated content on travel blogs, photos, and videos has fuelled this interest, with local stakeholders like tour operators and hotels playing a crucial role in driving growth. Social media has also influenced the formulation of adaptive tourism policies in response to evolving digital landscapes, enhancing convenience and accessibility. The symbiotic relationship between social media and tourism not only amplifies Bangladesh's global appeal but also contributes to its socio-economic development. The collaboration of government bodies, stakeholders, and tourists is vital for harnessing the full potential of social media for sustainable tourism growth in Bangladesh. Social media usage has increased significantly over the past 20 years, driven by the ICT sector expansion. Businesses, including the tourism sector, can use social media to attract more tourists and gather data on anonymous passengers. By developing the tourism sector, Bangladesh can become a popular South Asian destination, contributing significantly to the country's economy.

Future research should explore the use of social media platforms to promote Bangladesh's cultural heritage, local stakeholder engagement, user-generated content, niche tourism segments, policy and regulation, social media ROI, technological adoption and innovation, and long-term socio-economic impact. Analyzing user-generated

content, popular narratives, and assessing campaign alignment with cultural values can help understand the power dynamics, conflicts, and opportunities in the tourism industry. Additionally, analyzing user-generated content and perception formation can help understand the impact on niche tourism segments and potential trends.

The report emphasizes the strategic importance of social media in the travel and tourism sector since it enables travelers to obtain information and make well-informed decisions. The growth of the ICT industry makes it simpler to utilize social media, encouraging users to post travel-related images, thoughts, and comments in an effort to draw in more visitors. This suggestion emphasizes how crucial ICT industry development is to the travel and tourism business.

Developing Supporting Sectors: The government should create ancillary industries including transportation, local safety, hotel facilities, restaurants, and food systems to assist the tourism industry. Improving these sectors will draw both domestic and international tourists. Companies should promote locations, offer travel advice, and interact with potential customers on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn. This will make it possible for the sector to upgrade its services as needed.

Find and develop the destinations with the greatest potential for tourism: Bangladesh has a wealth of natural beauty and several archaeological and historical sites that may draw both domestic and foreign tourists. To draw more tourists, the government and commercial tourism businesses should concentrate on creating new tourist destinations and enhancing current ones.

Authors Contribution's

The author confirms the sole responsibility for the conception of the study, presented results and manuscript preparation.

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Conflict of interest

The author declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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