An Empirical Study of Social Media Marketing in Tourism with Special Reference to Kolhapur City

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Abstract:

The major objectives of this study are to determine whether social media has an impact on tourism, what benefits travelers believe they receive from using social media while travelling, and whether there is an opportunity to benefit travelers strategically. Social media usage in the travel industry is growing significantly. Research into how social media affects many parts of the travel and tourism industry is being done by academics in increasing numbers. Utilizing social media is an integral part of creating a tourism management plan.

Keywords: Social Media, Marketing, Tourism, Tourism Awareness, Tourist Perception

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

The terminology "information communication technologies" and "Internet technologies" nowadays relate to mobile communications, which allow people to move around while producing, sending, and receiving various types of information. This approach led to the emergence of numerous communication paradigms. Individuals may interact, travel through place and time, and get their necessary information with the use of information and communication technology in the global world. This enables them to find the desired good or service.

Social media usage as well as the global creation of new technology have both increased significantly over the past ten years. Although during the past several years due to the crisis, people have started to cut back on vacations and sales have declined, further leading to reduced revenue, smaller payoffs, and a diminishing employment sector, the tourism and hospitality business has experienced an impressive development from the outset. The industry is currently experiencing a

resurgence and has undergone significant change as a result of the social media platforms' overpowering presence. These platforms have opened up new possibilities for advancement and customer attraction through facilitated communication and empowered guest engagement.

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To investigate the social media associations of respondents who were tourists in Kolhapur City.
2. To evaluate the key elements that lead to travellers' growing reliance on social media as a source of travel information.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Descriptive and Empirical methods of study were used for this research paper and for data collection the questionaries technique and observation method were being used. The researcher used both primary and secondary data with the study.The Tourist were covered for the present study in the Kolhapur City.

a) Primary Data was collected through a self- structured questionnaire.

b) Secondary data is collected from sources which are relevant to this study. It is mainly collected from websites, journals, articles, books, and reports of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Government of Maharashtra.

Sampling Population: The targe population of this study was tourists from Kolhapur in Maharashtra who know one or more travel related social networking sites and who use social networking sites for tour arrangements.

Sample Size: The Random Sampling Technique involves selecting the most accessible subjects. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher himself. A total of 146 questionnaires were returned and used for analysis.

4.0 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN TOURISM:

Customer awareness, interest creation, desire arousal, and action-incitation have all historically depended heavily on effective communication. When marketing first began to evolve, mass users were the target audience for the communication channels used to advertise goods and services. The internet's development in the 1990s caused changes in the media, communication, and marketing industries. Web 2.0, a form of quick and efficient two-way communication between a consumer and marketer, was made possible by Internet communication technology. (Buhalis, 1997). It becomes promising to generate personalized communication channels for each segment.

Social media platforms were made possible by Web 2.0 technology, enabling users to share and communicate their experiences, which helps DMOs and customers generate favourable opinions of a place (Molinillo et al., 2018). Since the emergence of Information & Communication Technologies (ICTs), which are powered by the Internet, social media has evolved from being only a

social networking platform to a marketing channel for practically all types of goods and services. Marketers have been intrigued by it on the one hand because it provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and information, but on the other, consumers now have access to an almost limitless variety of audio-visual and textual experiences. Consequently, academics' preferred research topics have included Social Media, Web 2.0, User Generated Content, and eWOM. (Lu, et. al., 2017; Kavoura, 2014; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014).

The repetitive information distribution from the organization's side and the sharing of tourist experiences serve as the driving forces behind content creation. Since its founding in 2004, Facebook has risen to the top of the social media heap in terms of acceptance, popularity, and use as a tool for destination marketing (Lu et al., 2017). Destination Marketing & Management Organisations have decided to have a presence on Facebook in order to communicate with their target audiences and promote their goods and services due to Facebook's popularity among users.

The tourism business has experienced a whole new system of ICTs and Internet applications, benefiting both customers and service providers across many sectors (Buhalis, 2004; Buhalis& Law, 2008). The tourism industry has changed as a result of the introduction of the Computer Reservation System in the 1970s, the Global Distribution System in the 1980s, and the Internet phenomenon in the 1990s (Buhalis, 2003; Bulais& Law, 2008). Tourism is seen as an information-intensive industry (Sheldon, 1997; Werthner& Klein, 1999), therefore it needs to keep up with changes in communication technology and consumer behavior that have an impact on travel-related information.

A platform on the internet called social media hosts user-generated material (Blackshaw, 2006). It has led to a shift in power away from organisations and towards customers, making it more conversational and participative between users and organisations. Social media has gained recognised as a widespread phenomenon because of its low cost of communication and worldwide reach. In contrast to conventional methods of communication, which were mostly from the firm, it has a broad demographic reach (Kaplan, & Haenlein 2010). Additionally, it has been noted that Destination Marketing Organisations are using social media as a marketing tool to market and promote destinations (Hays et al., 2013).

The term social media and web 2.0 has been used interchangeably to address User Generated Content (UGC), Consumer Generated Media (CGM) and Social Networking Sites (SNS). In any of the above mentioned form, social media offers collective power and intelligence to driven the businesses (Lange-Faria & Elliot, 2012). Destination Marketing & Management Organisation (DMOs) make use of these brand pages on social media for competition, new product information, interaction with customers and even handling complaints (Tsimonis& Dimitriadis, 2014).

5.0 KOLHAPUR CITY: TOURISM PERSPECTIVE:

Kolhapur is home to the oldest Indian culture and is the final stronghold of Chhatrapati

Shivaji Maharaj, the Maratha Empire. Kolhapur is proud of its vibrant culture, which dates back to the 17th Century and has developed over time.

Kolhapur is nationally and internationally well known for its ancient temples, religious importance and sacredness. It is also known as Dakshin Kashi (South Kashi) and it is one of the three important holy places. Tirupati Balaji is the richest temple in south India with a huge tourist inflow. Most of the tourists visit goddess Ambabai (Mala Laxmi) temple in Kolhapur after their visit to the Tirupati temple.

Historical places have a special importance as heritage sites. These sites are an evidence of social status, changes, social make up of those times. They are also means of research for today. Hence it is essential to conserve them for their future studies and these places can become a major part of the tourist attractions.

Kolhapur is well connected by road, rail, and air, making it accessible to tourists. The best time to visit is during the winter months when the weather is pleasant.

The tourism industry in Kolhapur is defined by a variety of hues that draw inspiration from nature, history, culture, and spirituality. A significant portion of the Kolhapur tourism is made up of the city's many well known locations. Kolhapur offers a variety of tourist attractions, like as temples, palaces, museum, gardens, and lakes.

The tourism potential of Kolhapur city is the following. Tourists also visit these places.

Sr. No.	Type	Tourist Places
1	Religious Tourism	▪ Ambabai Temple ▪ Trayboli Temple ▪ Ujalaidevi Temple ▪ Katyayani Temple ▪ Firangai Temple
2	Heritage Tourism and Ancient Monuments Tourism	▪ Old Palace ▪ New Palace ▪ Laxmi Vilas Palace (Shahu Maharaj Birthplace) ▪ Shalini Palace ▪ Khasbag Maidan
3	Water Bodies Destinations	▪ Pachaganga River ▪ Rankala Lakes ▪ Kalamba Lakes ▪ Rajaram Lake
4	Eco Tourism	▪ Shivaji University Botanical Garden
5	Museums	▪ Town Hall Museum ▪ Siddagiri Museum ▪ Chandrakant Mandare Art Gallery ▪ Bhalaji Pendharkar Kaladalan
6	Educational Tourism	▪ Shivaji University

		▪ Government Engineering College ▪ Government Medical College ▪ Rajashri Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj College of Agriculture ▪ Dr. D Y Patil Medical College ▪ Chhatrapati Shahu Institute of Business Education and Research, Kolhapur ▪ Rajaram College ▪ Rajashri Chhatrapati Shahu College ▪ Some other Management, Engineering, Law, Academic colleges
7	Handicraft Tourism	▪ Bamboowork ▪ Kolhapuri Lather Chappal (Kolhapuri Chappal) ▪ Silver ▪ Ghongadi
8	Industrial Tourism	▪ Gokul Shiragoan MIDC ▪ Shiroli MIDC ▪ Kagal- Hatakanagale Five Star MIDC ▪ Shivaji Udyam Nagar
9	Cultural Tourism	▪ Mardani Khel ▪ Powada ▪ Sasan Kati ▪ Lezim ▪ Halagi ▪ DhangariDhol
10	Medical Tourism	▪ Chhatrapati Pramila Raje Hospital ▪ Savitribai Phule Hospital ▪ Aster Adhar Hospital ▪ Kolhapur Cancer Centre ▪ Some other multi-speciality hospitals located in city
11	Film Tourism	▪ Kolhapur Film City ▪ Jayprabha Studio

6.0 DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION:

Data analysis provides an insight into methods; statistical tools used and conceptualize the results to achieve the objectives of the study. Further, the results have been interpreted logically and presented in tabular forms for better understanding

According to filled questionnaire from tourist of Kolhapur City the result are following.

6.1 Demographic Distribution of Respondents:

The demographic distribution of social media users includes Age, gender, respondents travelling with, and number of trips in one year of respondents. Percentage Analysis tool has been used to analyse and interpret the demographic characteristics. It is helpful in understanding the

features and status of social media in marketing.

Table No. 1 : Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Sr.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
I. Age Wise Distribution of Respondents			
a)	18 – 30	84	57.53%
b)	31 – 40	35	23.97%
c)	41 – 50	16	10.96%
d)	51+	11	7.53%
	Total	*146*	*100.00%*
II. Gender wise Distribution of Respondents			
a)	Male	82	56.16%
b)	Female	64	43.84%
	Total	*146*	*100.00%*
III. Respondents Travelling with			
a)	Family	81	55.48%
b)	Friends	47	32.19%
c)	Single	18	12.33%
	Total	*146*	*100.00%*
IV. Number of trips/ holidays in one year			
a)	0 – 1	22	15.07%
b)	2 – 3	86	58.90%
c)	4 – 5	24	16.44%
d)	More than 5	14	9.59%
	Total	*146*	*100.00%*

As per the data, approaching tourists with age group 18 - 30 years old are having more attraction towards tours. Their percent is almost 57.53 and 7.53 percent of the age group of 51+ years old were attracted to tours.

In this gender wise distribution of respondents is male are56.16% and female are 43.84%using social media for tourism purpose. The increase number is male in tour planning.

In above table explains the participation in tourism on the basis of various category of people. For this purpose, sample population is classified into three categories namely Family, Friends, and Single. The highest respondents in tourism is from the categories of with family 55.48% and Friends 32.19%. The lowest respondents in tourism from the categories of Single with 12.33%.

The information of Number of trips in one year made by respondents. 58.90% of tourists made 2 - 3 trip per year. And 16.44% of tourists made 4 to 5 trips per year.

6.2 Social Media Applications Use of Respondents

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Table No. 2 : Social Media Applications Use of Respondents

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Type of Media		Frequency	Percentage
a)	What's App	21	14.38%
b)	Facebook	20	13.70%
c)	Instagram	39	26.71%
d)	Twitter	5	3.42%
e)	Koo	3	2.05%
f)	LinkedIn	6	4.11%
g)	YouTube	52	35.62%
Total		**146**	**100.00%**

The total number of users is 146, which means that WhatsApp is used by 14.38% of users, Facebook is used by 13.70% of users, Instagram is used by 26.71% of users, Twitter is used by 3.42% of users, Koo is used by 2.05% of users, LinkedIn is used by 4.11% of users, and YouTube is used by 35.62% of users.

6.3 Daily Times spend in Social Media Platform

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Table No. 3 :Daily times spend in Social Media Platform

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Hours	Frequency	Percentage
a) 1 – 2 hours	42	28.77%
b) 3 – 4 hours	63	43.15%
c) 5 – 6 hours	25	17.12%
d) 7 – 8 hours	9	6.16%
e) More than 9 hours	7	4.79%
Total	**146**	**100.00%**

Table No. 3 indicates that 43.15 percent of tourist respondents in Kolhapur 3 – 4 hours daily time spend in social media platform.28.77 percent of tourist respondents are daily time spending 1 – 2 hours.

6.4 Travel for Holidays

Table No. 4 : Travel for Holidays

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
a) Once a Year	74	50.68%
b) Once a Two year	16	10.96%
c) Twice a Year	40	27.40%
d) More than twice per year	16	10.96%
Total	146	100.00%

Overall, many people travel once a year for holidays. This may be because it is the most affordable and convenient option for many people. Twice a year and once every two years are also popular options, while more than twice a year is less common.

6.5 Social Media used for planning for tour/ travel

Table No. 5 : Social Media used for planning for tour/ travel

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
a) Yes	129	88.36%
b) No	17	11.64%
Total	146	100.00%

Yes, social media is widely used for planning tours and travel. According to a study 88.36% of travelers use social media to plan their trips. The most popular social media platforms for travel planning are Instagram, Facebook, and TripAdvisor. These platforms allow travelers to find inspiration, research destinations, and book accommodations and activities.

6.6 Reasons to use Social Media to search for Information

Table No. 6 : Reasons to use Social Media to search for Information

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
a) Easy	22	15.07%
b) Reliable	46	31.51%
c) Multiple Detailed Information	44	30.14%
d) Get Distinct Solutions	27	18.49%
e) Higher Level of Trust in Responses	7	4.79%
Total	146	100.00%

Table No. 6 indicates that 31.51 percent of the total sample selected Reliable Reasons to use

Social Media to search for Information and 30.14 percent sample size are reasons to use social media for Multiple detailed information. 15.07 percent of them are just easy, 18.49 percent get information for distinct solutions, and 4.79 percent have a higher level of trust in their responses.

6.7 The Major Source of Promotion of Tourism in Kolhapur

Table No. 7 : The Major Source of Promotion of Tourism in Kolhapur

Source	Frequency	Percentage
a) Social Media	131	89.73%
b) Non- Social Media	15	10.27%
Total	**146**	**100.00%**

Based on the data you provided, social media is the major source of promotion of tourism in Kolhapur. It has a frequency of 131, which is equivalent to 89.73% of the total frequency. Non-social media, on the other hand, has a frequency of 15, which is equivalent to 10.27% of the total frequency.

6.8 The Major Steps Taken by The Department of Tourism (Govt. of Maharashtra) of Kolhapur for Promoting Tourism

Table No. 8 :The Major Steps Taken by The Department of Tourism (Govt. of Maharashtra) of Kolhapur for Promoting Tourism

| Promoting Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Advertisement	37	25.34%
b) Information Broachers	29	19.86%
c) Arrangement of Festivals & Cultural Programmers	31	21.23%
d) Celebrity Endorsement	29	19.86%
e) Marketing Strategies	20	13.70%
Total	**146**	**100.00%**

The above table explains the major steps taken by the Department of Tourism (Govt. of Maharashtra) of Kolhapur for promoting tourism. 25.34 percent of respondents Advertisement option taken by the Government for promoting tourism. 21.23 percent of respondents provide Arrangement of Festivals & Cultural Programmers to tourist customers. 19.86 percent of respondents for the strategy of Information Broachers & Celebrity Endorsement and 13.70 percent respondents' strategy for Marketing Strategy to tourists customers.

6.9 Tour Planning for Using Social Media

Table No. 9 : Tour Planning for Using Social Media

Reason	Rank				
	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
To Search for Reviews of hotel and places of attractions.	81	27	21	11	6
	55.48%	18.49%	14.38%	7.53%	4.11%
To get an idea about Tourist Destination	32	77	25	8	4
	21.92%	52.74%	17.12	5.48%	2.74%
To access Photos and Videos of the destination	54	60	17	7	8
	36.99%	41.10%	11.64%	4.79%	5.48%
To Read about the experience of other travelers	55	61	15	8	7
	37.67%	41.78%	10.27%	5.48%	4.79%
Booking Hotel/Flights etc.	57	49	24	10	6
	39.04%	33.56%	16.44%	6.85%	4.11%
To Selecting tour companies/ tour operators	48	63	20	9	6
	32.88%	43.15%	13.70%	6.16%	4.11%

**Graph No. 1 : Tour Planning for Using Social Media**
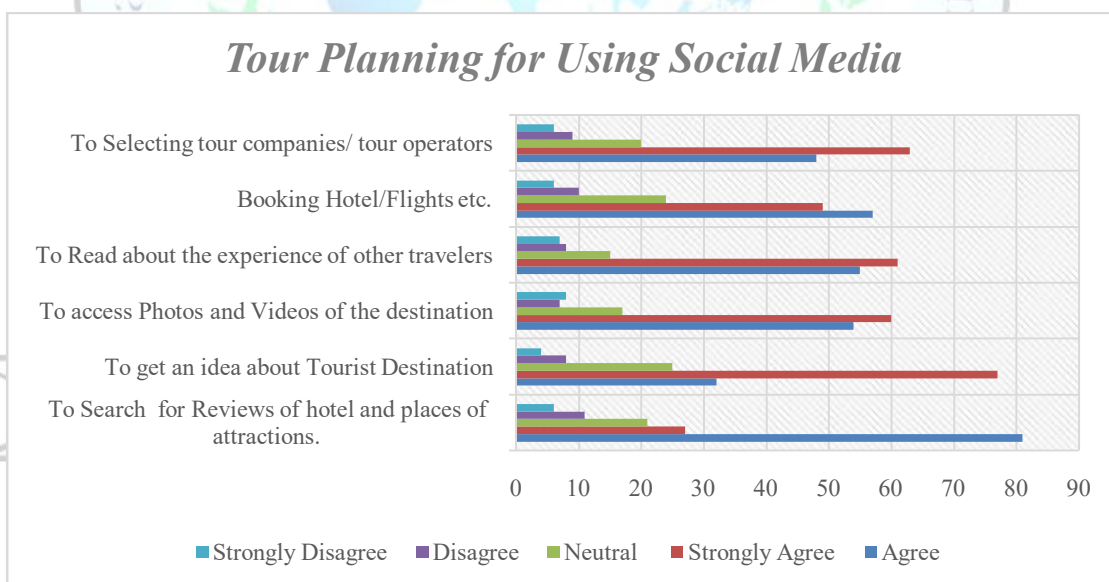
Above table and Graph shows that most respondents either agree or strongly agree with these reasons for using social media for tour planning, indicating that social media is indeed a valuable tool for gathering information and planning trips. The most common reasons include searching for reviews and getting an idea about tourist destinations, while selecting tour companies/tour operators appears to be the least common reason among the options presented.

6.10 During Tour Use of Social Media

Table No. 10 :During Tour Use of Social Media

Reason	Rank				
	Agree	**Strongly Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
To Stay Connected with Friends and Family	69	39	16	14	8
	47.26%	26.71%	10.96%	9.59%	5.48%
Collecting reviews about local attractions, activities, accommodation etc. posted by other travellers.	45	55	12	23	11
	30.82%	37.67%	8.22%	15.75%	7.53%
To Upload photos and videos	58	39	24	11	14
	39.73%	26.71%	16.44%	7.53%	9.59%
Information about specific attractions and leisure activities	53	50	18	15	10
	36.30%	34.25%	12.33%	10.27%	6.85%
To post reviews and rate the hotels, restaurants and attractions that was visited.	48	44	28	15	11
	32.88%	30.14%	19.18%	10.27%	7.53%
To Share travel experiences	45	55	20	15	11
	30.82%	37.67%	13.70%	10.27%	7.53%

Graph No. 2 : During Tour Use of Social Media

During Tour Use of Social Media
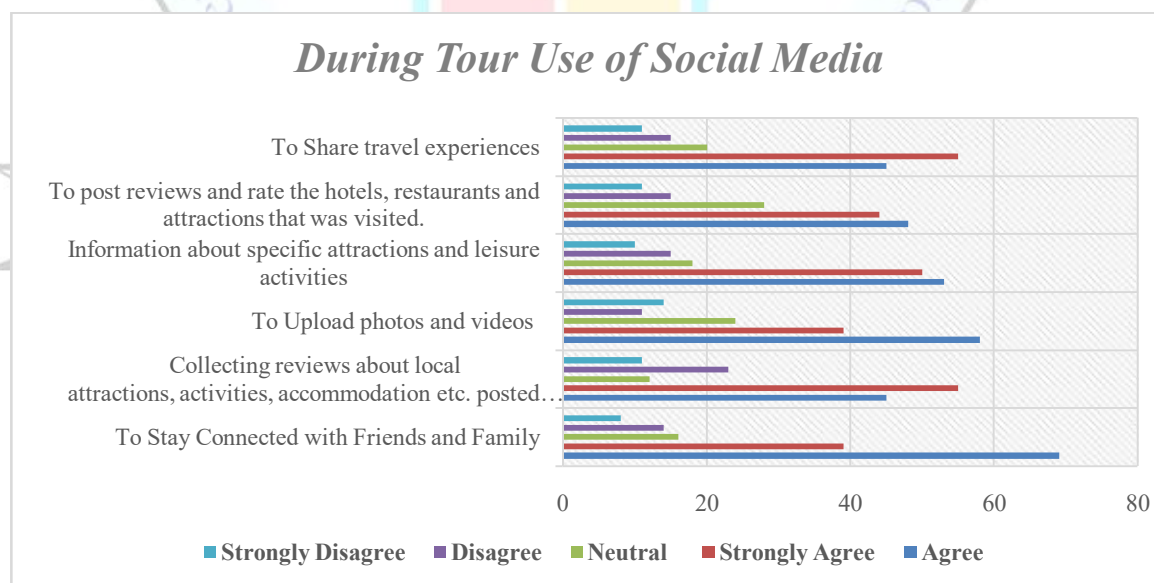
Above table and graph indicates that the most common reasons for using social media during tours include staying connected with friends and family, collecting reviews about local attractions,

and sharing travel experiences. Posting photos and videos and seeking information about attractions and activities are also common uses of social media during travel.

6.11 After Tour Use of Social Media

Graph No. 11 :After Tour Use of Social Media

Reason	Rank				
	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
To let friends and family know about experiences while on holiday	63	31	26	11	15
	43.15%	21.23%	17.81%	7.53%	10.27%
To publish a blog about Travel Experiences	31	37	35	26	17
	21.23%	25.34%	23.97%	17.81%	11.64%
To upload photos and videos of travel	42	31	36	23	14
	28.77%	21.23%	24.66%	15.75%	9.59%
To post reviews and rates the hotels, restaurants and attractions that was visited	37	40	27	22	20
	25.34%	27.40%	18.49%	15.07%	13.70%
To inform other tourists about experiences during the trip	44	32	28	21	21
	30.14%	21.92%	19.18%	14.38%	14.38%
To share travel related information with anyone who is interested.	35	46	22	25	18
	23.97%	31.51%	15.07%	17.12%	12.33%

Graph No. 3 : After Tour Use of Social Media

After Tour Use of Social Media

■Strongly Disagree ■Disagree ■Neutral ■Strongly Agree ■Agree
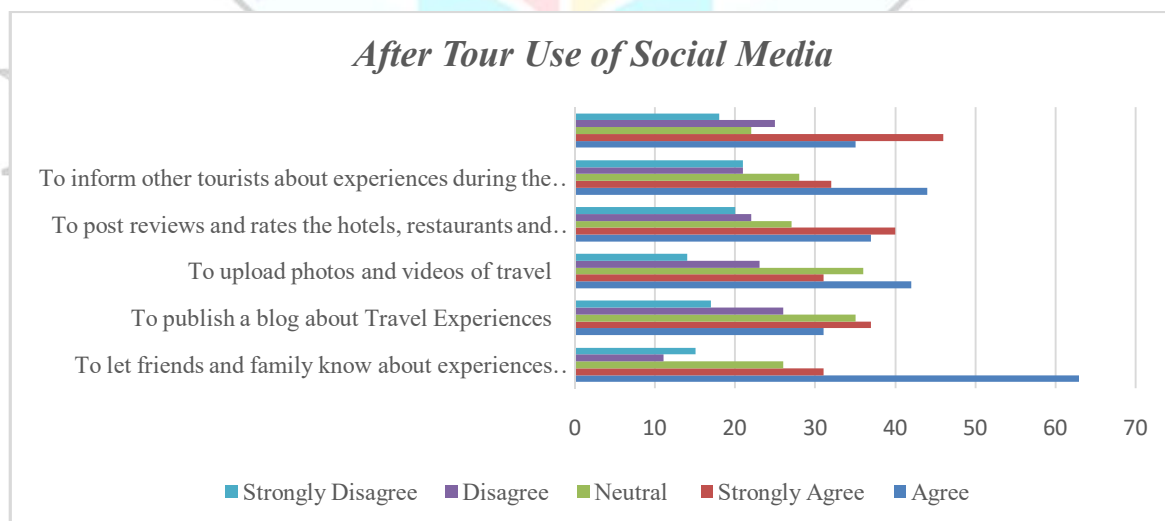
These Graph and Table provides that insights into why people use social media after traveling, with a range of motivations including sharing experiences with friends and family, creating content like blogs and photos, reviewing and rating places they visited, and informing other travelers. Strongly agreeing and agreeing responses are generally higher than disagreeing and strongly disagreeing responses for most of the reasons.

7.0 SUGGESTIONS:

1. The social networking approach should be sufficiently adaptable to allow it to consider new developments and decide what works and what does not.

2. The tourism management should take appropriate measures in response to the evaluations and grievances posted by tourists on social media, and it should inform customers of the course of action taken.

3. The promotional deals during the season should be posted on social media on a regular basis to attract a lot of tourists.

8.0 CONCLUSION:

This study examined the function of social media platforms and marketing techniques in Kolhapur's tourism sector. The study used a hybrid strategy to data gathering and analysis, which makes use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research, in order to accomplish its objectives. According to the preliminary findings, social media is becoming a more important source of travel information for both current and potential tourists. In accordance with this, in addition to the convenience that these technologies offer, additional elements including the social media's credibility, dependability, and dependability played a crucial role in enticing people to rely on it as a source of travel information.In order to impress these tech-savvy travelers' approval and, as a result, maintain their competitiveness in the tourism market, the study advised that tourist sites should work to build a strong brand image not only offline but also on social media platforms.

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