

Do Tourists' Motives Alter Based on What They See on E-Sources of Information? An SEM Approach to Determine the Impact

Sabari Shankar R.*, Sonia Katherin Mathew**, Elizabeth Renju Koshy***

Abstract *With growing competition in the tourism industry and changing tourists' expectations, motives and behavior, marketers are at the outset to promote, position and brand their tourism destinations lucratively. Though there are many allied themes on destination branding and marketing arena, tourists' motives have been widely looked up as research emphasis the dynamic revamps being seen with the intervention of digital sources of information. However, research at this aspect is at gradual phase. This paper focuses on such a theme and tries to understand the significant impact of tourists' behavior towards esources of information on their motives. Literary sources have been analyzed and hypothesis has been formulated. To test the assumption, the research location has been chosen – a district in Tamil Nadu state which serves wide range of tourists' motives and bestowed with distinct tourism attractions. A Structured questionnaire containing the necessary items measuring the study factors has been floated to 422 tourists through convenient sampling technique. However, 327 have been rounded as the final sample after excluding the illegible responses. Three Stage Analysis has been performed where Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) has been used for data reduction and exploring the new factors, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) has been used for identifying and confirming the individual models and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) has been used for understanding the structural relationship between the factors. Model fit has been found for CFA and SEM. Significant impact has been found by tourists' behavior towards the esources of information on tourists' motives. Simple Percentage Analysis (SPA) has been used to analyze the distribution of respondents based on their personal factors. Suggestions to the marketers and policy makers have been provided through managerial implications. Theoretical recommendations have also been narrated.*

Keywords: *Esources, Information, Tourists, Motives, Destination, Branding and Marketing*

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Tourism Industry is witnessing a huge change in terms of serving the tourists market and tourists' behavior. With the advent of technological innovations and the potentialities created by the tourism marketers for accessibility to tourism destinations, tourists' perception, attitude and behavior towards consuming the tourism resources and the experiencing the varied tourists' attractions have been revamped. According to the Indian Tourism Statistics 2019, the number of International Tourists Arrivals in India has grown to 1742 million and represented 3.7%

growth rate comparing to the previous year. However, the pandemic being an era where many industries, including perhaps the tourism and travel industry have been terribly affected, the inflow has been a great drop down due to restrictions imposed by the Governments. However, anonymous sources indicate that with loosing pandemic's futility, the industry may even boost with not only the tourists' inflow but also with changed paradigms of industry's vibrance. With the given circumstances of economy, the industry and the policy makers are at the outset to ponder on critical perspectives and one among those is managing the Destinations lucratively. Managing the destination is not

* Assistant Professor, Symbiosis Institute of Business Management (SIBM) Bangalore, Karnataka, India.
Email: sabarishankar92@gmail.com

** Associate Professor, Department of Management, Musaliar College of Engineering and Technology, Pathanamthitta, Kerala, India. Email: soniakatherin3040@gmail.com

*** Assistant Professor, Department of Professional Studies, Christ University, Karnataka, India.
Email: dr.renjukoshy@gmail.com

only a basic management activity perhaps having various benefits including the sustainability of tourism resources and high-level positioning in the global market. In such context, the digital sources of information play a vital role in managing the destinations. Research has proven inferences and evidence about the influence of information sources on tourists' perception, marketing strategies, destination image and personality management and even tourists' behaviors. In Marketing Science, information has been the most researched and analyzed area with reference to various contexts of products and services, including the brands to understand and define the consumers' behavioral applications (Hyde, 2008). Information Sources could also be through digital interventions, and perhaps such electronic or online sources of information have been highlighted critically in various aspects of marketing. Accordingly, the tourism industry has also witnessed a drastic prosperity through the Information and Communication Technologies – ICT (Jacobsen & Munar, 2012). More than the traditional sources of information, the digital communication channels in marketing have been overlooked (Llodra-Riera, Martinez-Ruiz, Jimenez-Zarco & Izquierdo-Yusta, 2015) because of its significance in the tourism industry, perhaps managing and branding the destinations and mainly on tourists' cognitive perceptions and evaluations of destinations (Baloglu, 2000). Also, evidence highlights that the varied source of information not only intrudes the tourist's perception but also alters their behavioral intention and decision-making processes (Gartner, 1993; Arsal, Woosnam, Baldwin & Backman, 2010). Though there are variety of sources of information, perhaps online and offline modes, sources such as friends, colleagues, relatives, family members, and associative groups etc – the offline sources of information., Newspapers, Books, Magazines, travelogues, and other guidebooks, though being traditional sources, on touring have also been associating with tourists' behavior (Jacobsen & Munar, 2012; Shankar, 2020a). Similarly, digital sources such as social media networking, blogs, and other digital sources have been witnessed as the influential parameters of tourists' behavior (Shankar, 2021a). With growing digitalization in tourism industry, the marketers are at pinnacle for enhancing their strategies for digitalizing wherever possible starting from creating awareness to the quality delivery of experience to retention and sustainability of the tourists towards their destinations profitably. In such context, the digital marketing tools have been highly trailed on marketing the destinations, perhaps in branding and positioning their tourism offerings. Nevertheless, the tourists do acquaint furiously with the digital tools for various reasons. For example, there is a segment of tourists who believe that generating content (user generated content) about their experience gained on their tour would reflect on their social identity (Osei, Mensah & Amenumey, 2018). Similarly, tourists use digital sources for not only information search process but perhaps

for connecting and building with the tourists who have similarities in motives and interests (Schmallegger & Carson, 2008; Pan, MacLaurin & Crotts, 2007; Stepchenkova, Mills & Jiang 2007 and Shankar, 2020a). This paper aims at understanding one of such concepts, tourists' motives to tour. Tourists' motives are decisive and have been widely acknowledged by the marketers in constructing and implementing marketing and branding tourism destinations (Dolnicar, Crouch & Long, 2008). With evolving new motives and the fierce competition among the destination marketers to serve those motives, tourists' motives have become an imperative factor to analyze as such researching on the offbeat tourist's motivation elements would even identify and conceive new tourists micro market segments (Becken & Gnoth, 2004). This research work, integrates the two predominant components such as Information sources, focused particularly on the electronic sources and tourists' motivation, and attempts to understand the significance of each on each. Thus, the title of this paper proposes to understand the influence of tourists' behavior towards e-sources of information on tourists varied motives. The outcome of this paper would help the destination marketers & stakeholders, policy makers and even the governments on understanding how the electronic sources intrude tourists' motivation, how significantly these two components can be enhanced that would facilitate in designing marketing and branding strategies, produce high tourists' inflow to the destination, branding and positioning.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Since this research paper focuses on the impact of e-sources of information and tourists' motives, the reviews pertaining to these two critical factors have alone been reviewed extensively.

Esources of Information

Internet technologies have become the inherent aspects of consumers even from understanding their needs/wants to purchasing and post purchase behavior (Shankar, 2020a) and this even applies to tourists as well. Tourists, at this digital era of living, search information about the destination that they plan to tour, perhaps based on their motives, on sources such as physical printed materials or electronic information components (Osti, Turner & King, 2009, pp. 64-65). However, with the evolution of digitalization in the marketing offerings specifically in tourism industry, the information search process has become a hazel-free process through various elements such as Online travel communities – where a group of travelers get connected, discuss about their 'look-for's' and seek detailed and suggestive information, social media networks such – inculcating FaceBook, Instagram

and other sources, Search engines – Google, that provides wide range of information, other informatory content sources – Wikipedia, online forums – where user generated information is colossal, and even on travel blogs and allied supporting sites etc., (Gelb & Sundaram, 2002; Buhalis, 2003; Lenhart & Fox, 2006; Pan, MacLaurin & Crotts, 2007; Casalo, Flavin & Guinaliu, 2010; Tusssyadiah et al., 2011; Wee-Kheng Tan & Tong-He Chen, 2012; Papathanassis & Knolle, 2011; Shankar, 2020a).

Research finding indicate that online travel communities are highly preferred by tourists for gathering information about the tourism destinations and its associated attractions, perhaps acquire an understanding of what the tourist's community perceive about their desired destinations (Casaló et al., 2010). Thus, this could be an imperative factor in determining tourists' behavior. Accordingly, this information generated by the community travelers does support destination managers and organizations at various strategic, tactical and technical levels (Wang, Yu & Fesenmaier, 2002). Social Media, being the most powerful and credible e source of information (Shankar, 2020a), involves diverse consumers (Fotis, Buhalis & Rossides, 2011; Albarq, 2014) not only provide information about the tourism destinations but also acts as experience-sharing platform (Wu & Pearce, 2017; Shankar, 2021b) but also helps in choice-making and decision-making process (Lee, Reid & Kim, 2014). A Research work by Shankar (2021a) indicated that social media was considered as a credible electronic source of information. Similarly, search engines do facilitate the tourists in searching information about the tourism destinations and the facilities and other amenities available in the desired tourism spots (Pan, Xiang, Law, & R. Fesenmaier, 2010). A Research by Shankar (2020a) revealed that search engines were the highly preferred sources of information and significantly impact tourists' perception about the destinations. Similarly, the travel forums – that has user generated data, word of mouth, professional advice and other type of information, official websites of the destination marketing organizations and government websites, travel agencies websites – including the supportive businesses and travel blogs have been found as tourists preferable digital sources of information (Yeong-Hyeon Hwang, Dev Jani & Ho Kyun Jeong, 2013; Chung, Lee, Lee & Koo, 2015; Xiang, Wang, O'Leary & Fesenmaier, 2015). All these electronic sources of information and tourists' behavior towards using these have been found significantly related to choice and decision process, image perception and post visit behavior.

Tourists Motivation

Understanding tourists' motives is a compelling activity, as those motives tend to differ time to time and would significantly impact the tourist's perception about the tourism

destinations, their choice and decision process, perhaps post visit behavior, and thereby considered as one of the most essential aspects in designing destination marketing and branding strategies (Dolnicar, Crouch & Long, 2008; Park & Yoon, 2009; Tkaczynski et al., 2009; Shankar, 2020c). Also, understanding the consistently changing motives, the marketers are bestowed with the opportunities in figuring out the new niche or micro tourists' segments among the existing market and thereby facilitate in designing a new offering with distinct values (Becken & Gnoth, 2004). Tourists' motives are referred through two critical approaches such as Push – the elements that trigger or conceive internal stimuli naturally and pull – the elements that are formed by external sources. Either motive is formed by both internal and external components. For example, tourists inherent with the basic understanding or belief or knowledge about the destinations (Cognitive) by receiving information from various sources – could be online or offline time to time and that information perceived in the tourists' mind reflects as the motives to explore the destinations (Martin & del Bosque, 2008; Wang, Qu, & Hsu, 2016; Mason, Gos & Moretti, 2016; Shankar, 2020c).

Researchers of destination marketing and branding arena often claim that the tourists' motives are widely changing based on various transformation agents. Some tourists would love to explore and meet people who are aligned with their interests (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002). Tourists can be grouped based on their motives to relax, getting away from routine work and crowds, exploring new culture, adventure, entertainment and learn new things (Shankar, 2020c). Interestingly, tourists are also motivated to explore and taste the distinct flavors of wine (Dejan, Marija & Vesna, 2017). Research by the authors Yun and Lehto (2009) inferred that tourist's tour for the purpose of family reunions. As a new segment of the tourists' market, Sun Seekers have been found designing tours accordingly (Prebensen & Kleiven, 2006). Few other motives such as visiting national parks (Kruger & Saayman, 2010), spa tourists' motives (Kamata & Misui, 2015), novelty, knowledge and self-development (Kim, Chiang & Tang, 2017), golf travel motivations (Kim & Ritchie, 2012), diaspora tourism (Otoo, Kim & Choi, 2020), Off-season holiday trips (Alén, Losada & Carlos, 2017), and other motives etc. Some tourists tour for satisfying their need for nostalgia (Leonga, Yehb, Hsiaoc & Huand, 2015). Interestingly, bicycle tourism has been highly seen among young tourists, and growing as a niche motive (Ritchie, Tkaczynski & Faulks, 2010). Evidence infers that these diverse set of motives emerge because of various reasons such as cultural differences do create distinct motives (Kim & Lee, 2008 and Jiang, Scott & Ding, 2018). Also, as a common factor, tourist's motives are significantly affected by their personal factors (Meng, Tepanon & Uysal, 2006; Verma, Verma & Khurana, 2018; Shankar, 2020b).

Electronic Sources of Information and Tourists Motivation

Colossal evidence has been found in both the areas—sources of information and tourists' motivation. However, the ultimacy of this research is to understand how the information sources do, perhaps the digital sources significantly intrude on tourists' motivation to tour. Hence, review analysis of such connections has been explored and ascertained. Stringent findings exist that tourists prefer digital information sources to search information about the destinations' attractions, and other varied aspects and those search behavior influence tourists' motives, choice processes and destination image perception (Baloglu, 2008; Tourndereck & Caldwell, 2008; Llodra-Riera, Martínez-Ruiz, Jiménez-Zarco, Izquierdo-Yusta, 2015; Corominaa & Camprubí, 2016; Almeida-García, Domínguez-Azcue, Mercadé-Melé & Pérez-Tapia, 2020; Shankar, 2020c; Shankar, 2021b). It is important to note that, the information sources have been highly looked upon associating with tourists travel motives; research based on the Structural Modelling approach revealed that these two factors were related in senior travel market (Kim, Weaver & McCleary, 1996). A study on understanding the Thailand Destination Image and its influencers revealed that the tourist's behavior towards information sources and tourists' motives were significantly interrelated (Chetthamrongchai, 2017). Similarly, research on culinary tourism inferred that the internet sources of information and tourists' behavior towards those significantly influence tourists' choice process (Karim & Leong, 2008) and this could be ascertained to reflect on tourists' motives as well. Accordingly, Sparks and Pan (2009) in their research on Chinese Outbound Tourism, inferred that tourist use electronic sources to get information about their target destinations. Such information would reflect on the level of tourists' motives. Batra (2008) found that tourists' motives to eat out at ethnic restaurants in Bangkok were determined by the information sources. There are many research works related to the offline sources of information and their connection with tourists' motives and behavior whereas the reference to electronic sources is limited. This could be the probable emergence of digital sources of information that has been lately intruding the people's lifestyles. However, such digital sources are conceiving new tourism practices and reflecting on tourists' perceptions (Munar & Jacobsen, 2013).

The overall review identifies that there is a huge emphasis has been given to the information sources and tourists' motives. However, many research works that attempted to understand the significant relationship between these two factors focused on the offline information sources whereas the behavior online or digital sources are less researched. Also, though Indian Tourism Industry is conceiving its competitive edge in the global market (Shankar, 2019), studies focusing on electronic information sources are

relatively less in the Indian context, perhaps inferring to tourists' motives has not even on the middling contribution to the literature. Thus, this study would not only add value to the existing literature but also will indicate further research possibilities for industry and research betterment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research work, being an extract from hefty research on understanding tourists' behavior and destination image and personality, the methodological components constituting to this work have alone been provided below:

Research Type: Empirical approach has been adopted here as the focus is on tourists and has been researched using a quantitative methodology.

Sample Unit, Size, and Technique: The Sample Unit consists of tourists who have visited the selected district where there are tourism destinations. The Sample was expected to be 500. However, after excluding the illegible responses, the sample size was rounded to 327. The total responses received were 422. Convenient sampling technique has been adopted.

Methods of Data Collection: The Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire that contained the necessary statements measuring the required factors. The questionnaire was inculcated with the statements seeking information about the tourist's socio-demographic characteristics, behavior towards electronic sources of information and tourists' motivation. Tourists Behavior towards the electronic sources and tourists' motives have been measured used Likert 5-point Scaling. Pilot Analysis with 55 responses, revealed that there was a consistency in the scales as the reliability for tourists' behavior was 0.832, and tourists' motive was 0.892. Secondary data, such as reviews were gathered from the databases such as EBSCO, JSTOR, and Cabell's Directories.

Analysis and Tools Used: IBM SPSS was used for analyzing the data with Simple Percentage analysis for understanding respondents' socio-demographic profile, and Exploratory Factor Analysis for data reduction and factors identification. IBM AMOS was used to find the individual models through Confirmatory Factor Analysis and finding the structural relationship between the electronic information sources and tourists' motives through Structural Equation Modeling.

Hypothesis Formulation: The hypothesis was framed based on the assertion derived from the literature.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the tourist's behavior towards the electronic sources of information and tourists' motives.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between the tourist's behavior towards the electronic sources of information and tourists' motives.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis includes two predominant aspects. First is the Simple Percentage Analysis to analyze the socio-demographic characteristics of tourists and second, the Three Stage Analysis Process for analyzing the objective.

Tourists' Socio-Demographic Profile

Even though this study focuses on understanding the significance of tourists' behavior towards the electronic sources of information and tourists' motives, the socio-demographic characteristics of the tourists have been analyzed. This is critical for not only understanding the distribution of respondents based on their personal profile but also the importance and relevance, as the tourists characteristics would significantly impact the tourists preference towards the electronic sources of information, and tourists motives as well (Shankar, 2020 a,b,c and 2021 a,b,c).

Table 1: Tourists Socio-Demographic Profile – Simple Percentage Analysis Results

Socio-Demographic Factors		Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	186	56.9
	Female	141	43.1
	Prefer Not to Say	0	0
	Others	0	0
Age	16 - 24	99	30.3
	25 - 34	127	38.8
	35 - 44	90	27.5
	45 - 54	4	1.2
	55 -64	7	2.1
Educa- tion	Schooling	11	3.4
	Undergraduate	87	26.6
	Postgraduate	101	30.9
	Professionals	62	19.0
	Doctorate	61	18.7
	Others	5	1.5
Occupation	Business/Entrepreneur	65	19.9
	Govt. Sector	97	29.7
	Private Sector	85	26.0
	Researcher/Student/ Others	80	24.5

Socio-Demographic Factors		Count	Percentage
Monthly Income (K denotes 000)	NA	76	23.2
	Less than 20000	31	9.5
	21k to 35k	17	5.2
	36k to 50k	58	17.7
	51k to 65k	50	15.3
	More than 65000	95	29.1
Marital Status	Married	172	52.6
	Unmarried	155	47.4
	Others/Prefer Not to Say	0	0

From the above Table, it has been found that the highest percentage of the respondents belong to the male category (56.9%) whereas 43.1% are female respondents. Nearly 39% of the respondents are between 25 and 34 years of age. However, only 30.3% and 27.5% of the tourists fall between 18 years and 24 years and 35 years and 44 years of age, respectively. More than 30% are postgrads and more than 26% are undergrads. 29.7% of the respondents have been found as Government Service employees whereas 26% are Private Service employees. However, close to 20% (19.8%) have been found as entrepreneurs or business owners. As far as monthly income is concerned, more than 30% of the respondents earn more than 50,000 (INR) per month. Close to equal distribution has been found in tourists' marital status – 51% married whereas 49% of the respondents are unmarried.

Three Stage Analysis

This three-stage analysis consists of Factor Analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, and Structural Equation Modelling.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

EFA has been used to identify the high loading factors, perhaps a data reduction technique that qualifies the factors such as tourists' behavior towards the electronic sources of information and tourists' motives for further analysis stages. Varimax Rotation has been used and the loadings less than 0.5 have been suppressed (for both the factors).

Tourists' behavior towards the electronic sources of information had 17 statements measuring the behavior. KMO and Bartlette's results inferred that the data had a measure of 0.812 as the sample adequacy for behavior and hence, the data had the viability for factor analysis. The results stated that there were 6 statements that had high loading such as Always prefer Online Sources of Information – 0.890, Plenty of information helps in effective decision making – 0.808, Search Cost is Low – 0.799, Various Options of

Esources makes convenient search – 0.809, Helps in better decision making with videos/photos/user-generated info – 0.791, and book other services - 0.790. These statements were grouped together and named as tourists' behavior towards the electronic sources of information and proceeded for further analysis.

Similarly, the EFA was performed on the Tourists Motives. There were 17 statements that measured the tourists' motives such as Relaxation/Escape, Excitement/Adventure, Knowledge, Social adventure, entertainment & fun, and Prestige Motives. KMO and Bartlette's results indicate that the adequacy of the data for analysis is 0.891. EFA loadings identified that there were 5 statements with high loadings such as visiting destinations where the friends haven't been to -0.930, to fame among friends about the trip – 0.915, adventure, entertainment & fun-seeking – 0.912, experiencing new weather and places – 0.894 and developing a close relationship with the same interest cohort – 0.829. These statements have been finalized and named as tourists' motivation for CFA.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

CFA was used to test if there was an existence of model in each of the factors. This Multivariate technique tests the relationship between the observed variables and latent constructs. This analysis requires the factors to acquire some components to fall on acceptable values and those are Absolute Model Fit, Incremental Model Fit and Parsimonious Model Fit. Each component mentioned in the table fall under three predominant fit indices such as Absolute model fit – consists of Chi square value, Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA) and Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Incremental model fit - consists of Adjusted Goodness of Fit (AGFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and Normed Fit Index (NFI) and Parsimonious

Fit Indices - consists of Chi-Square value divided by Degrees of Freedom (CMIN/df). These fit indices have been mentioned in the below Table 2. These fit indices have been considered as relevant for CFA and SEM (Yuan, 2005; Kenny & McCoach, 2003). Based on step 1 high loadings of the factors – tourists' behaviour towards the electronic sources of information and tourists' motives, the CFA was performed. All the high loading constructs of respective factors mentioned in step 1 were used for performing CFA to confirm the existence of the model in each factor. However, some constructs were removed as those were not heading to the model fit requirements. Statements of Tourists' behaviour towards sources such as Helps in better decision making with videos/photos/user-generated info with the loading value of 0.791, and book other services with the loading value of 0.790 were removed in the first iteration. Similarly, the statements such as experiencing new weather and places and developing a close relationship with the same interest cohort with the factor loading values of 0.894 and 0.829 (respectively), measuring the tourist's motivation in the first iteration. Hence, four statements representing tourists' behaviour towards electronic sources of information such as – prefer online sources of information, information helps in decision making, low search costs and various esources of information were grouped together and named as tourists behaviour towards esources and forwarded for the further SEM Analysis. Similarly, the statements representing tourists' motivation such as - visit destinations where friends have not been to, fame among friends, and adventure, entertainment and fun seeking were grouped together and named as tourists' motivation and forwarded for further SEM Analysis. The following table represents the individual CFA results of tourists' behaviour towards esources of information (4 statements) and tourists' motivation (3 statements).

Table 2: CFA Results of Tourists Behaviour towards Electronic Sources of Information and Tourists Motivation

Components	Acceptable Values	ESI	TM	Acceptable or Non-Acceptable
Chi-Square	More than 0.05	.51	0.308	Acceptable
RMSEA	less than 0.08	.078	.011	Acceptable
GFI	Close to 1	.991	.998	Acceptable
AGFI	Close to 1	.991	.984	Acceptable
CFI	Close to 1	.956	.999	Acceptable
NFI	Close to 1	.839	.999	Acceptable
TLI	Close to 1	.887	.912	Acceptable
CMIN/df	Less than 5	2.971	1.038	Acceptable

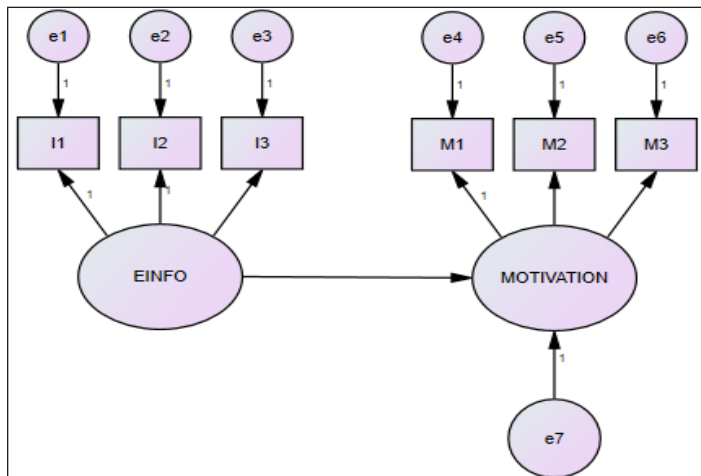
From the above table, it has been found that each factor such as tourists' behaviour towards electronic sources of information has perfect absolute, incremental, and parsimonious fit as the Chi Square = 0.51 > 0.05, RMSEA

= 0.078 < 0.08, GFI = 0.991 $\approx$ 1, AGFI = 0.991 $\approx$ 1, CFI = 0.956 $\approx$ 1, NFI = 0.839 $\approx$ 1, TLI = 0.887 $\approx$ 1, and CMIN/df = 2.971 < 5. Similarly, the factor tourists' motives have perfect absolute, incremental, and parsimonious fit as the

Chi Square = 0.308 > 0.05, RMSEA = 0.011 < 0.08, GFI = 0.998 $\approx$ 1, AGFI = 0.984 $\approx$ 1, CFI = 0.999 $\approx$ 1, NFI = 0.999 $\approx$ 1, TLI = 0.912 $\approx$ 1, and CMIN/df = 1.038 < 5.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

SEM was used to test the significant, perhaps structural relationship between the tourist's behaviour towards the electronic sources of information and tourists' motives. Based on the CFA results, the individual models were structurally diagrammed. However, the item – Various esources of information makes convenient search of the tourist's behaviour towards esources of information was removed as the M I Value, and reliability value were not contributing to the model fit. Hence the structural model was iterated with 3 statements of tourist's behaviour and tourists' motives. The below figure 1 represents the final structural model drawn and validated on IBM AMOS.



(Note: ENIFO – Tourist's behaviour towards electronic sources of information, Motivation – Tourists Motivation, I – Information, M – Motivation, e – error variables corresponding to each of the items, I1 – Statement; Always prefer electronic sources for information search, I2 – Plenty of Information helps in effective decision making, I3 – Low search cost, M1 – visit the destination where friends have not been, M2 – Tell friends about the trip – faming, M3 – adventure, entertainment and fun seeking).

Fig. 1: Structural Relationship Model Representing the Significance between Tourists' Behaviour towards Esources of Information and Tourists' Motives

The SEM Results that indicated the significant impact of tourists' behaviour towards the esources of information on tourists' motivation stated that, RMSEA = 0.071 < 0.08, GFI = 0.969 $\approx$ 1, AGFI = 0.907 $\approx$ 1, CFI = 0.949 $\approx$ 1, NFI = 0.936 $\approx$ 1, TLI = 0.892 $\approx$ 1, and CMIN/df = 4.193 < 5. This indicated that the model was perfectly fit and valid. However, to test the hypothesis, the significant value between these two factors was looked upon. The p value between the tourist's behaviour towards the electronic sources of information and tourists' motivation was 0.004 < 0.05 (P Value was

significant). The S E Value was found as 0.651. Hence, the alternative hypothesis – there is a significant impact by tourists' behaviour towards esources of information on tourists' motivation has been accepted.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The ultimacy of this paper was to find out the impact of tourists' behaviour towards the electronic sources of information on tourist motivation, and the objective was achieved. However, this paper has key indication to the marketers and policy makers. Tourists Motivation, though looks very common in destination marketing studies, but has a dynamic perspective as the research evidence describe that motives tent to vary from person to person (Shankar, 2020b). There are various factors that affect tourists' motivation such as the tourists' personal factors and even the perceived destination image – both cognitive and affective (Shankar, 2020 b, c). Hence, it is critical for the destination marketers to widely look into the changing motives of tourists as those would derive colossal opportunities and challenges as well. This research indicated that prestige as the most influential motives of tourists – the statements such as *visiting the destinations where friends have not been* and *tell friends about the trip* indicate that. Also, another critical motive that reflected on the model is adventure, entertainment and fun seeking. This is an essential aspect for the marketers to understand, perhaps with the selected location for research, the district serves more than 1 motive of tourists. One of the key points is, the location has potentiality to serve varied tourists motives, second the motives have been influenced by the electronic sources of information and tourists' behaviour towards those. The behaviour reflected on the electronic sources are tourists who have participated in this research work often refer to the digital sources for searching information about the destinations and its attractions, believe that these sources facilitate in better decision making and perceive the cost of search is low. This indicate that the tourists have favourable behaviour and attitude towards the electronic sources and thereby such sources intrude tourists' motivation despite the perspective of motive. Given this finding and referring to the existing marketing and branding strategies, this research indicates the marketers to understand that traditional marketing strategies, though would work at instances, may not be desirable to cater and serve the growing market and consumers expectations. Specially, with the 327 samples, the majority of the tourist fall between the age category of 16 to 44 years and indicate their preference towards the digital sources. This inference highlights that the marketers have to focus more on the electronic sources for not only creating salience about the destinations but also to position, promote and brand their destinations. Such strategic formulation would increase the customer base and facilitate the destination marketers to reach large audience, perhaps

can even position the destination in the global tourism market. As far as branding destinations is concerned, the marketers are in the pinnacle to understand that the motives are emerging and changing among the tourists. Even though the destinations are viable to deliver the offerings to satisfy the varied motives, unless those multifaceted elements are included in the branding process and brand positioning, the inflow of tourists and considering the destination to tourists' choice box become a stake. In other words, the marketers should include the elements that highlights the destinations' capacity to serve wide range of tourists motives, in their branding and promotion process, or while positioning their destinations – inculcate the values as 'the destination that serves wider motives' and such strategy of marketing and branding through the digital sources such as social media, search engines and other digital sources would not only increase the tourists inflow, but also helps in boosting local economies, growing allied businesses such as travel, hospitality and other businesses, and generating revenues. In this context, it is decisive for the policy makers to understand that some digital sources such as social media networks, perhaps the most powerful channel of communication and information source, should be governed and restricted for unauthorised usage and generating information. Such management policy would maintain the credibility of information about the destination and facilitate the tourists to post their experience (user generated information) and such practice would build strong image about the destination (both cognitive and affective destination image).

THEORITICAL IMPLICATION

First, evidence from the literary sources indicated that there were enough studies pertaining to the offline sources of information. However, research works constituting to the online sources or digital sources of information are at the gradual stage. Research lacks evidence on this perspective, mainly on Indian context. Second, the scales used in measuring tourists' motivation have been established by the authors (Beerli & Martin, 2004). However, further studies have been modifying the scales according to the research elements such as location, estimated sample characteristics and distribution. The scales to measure the tourist's behaviour towards the electronic sources of information was not found with the given literature analysis. This paper has produced the scale that measure tourists' behaviour towards the electronic sources based on their convenience – usage, cost, frequency, features, awareness, accessibility and credibility through iterations after pilot testing. This can be further modified when the research pertaining to this arena is performed elsewhere. Thereby, the three-stage analysis has also been done as the items have not been established in the literature sources – tourists' behaviour. EFA performed on the behaviour reflects that 'prestige' as the most significant

and loaded aspect of tourists' motivation. However, when other motives such as sun seeking, family reunion and other can be inculcated based on the research location and cohort; in this case, those have been removed after pilot analysis. This research also indicates the opportunity for building up a sophisticated model that portrays tourists' motivation based on the information sources, perceived destination image and other aspects as this would add values to the literature and can be produced as a conceptual framework.

CONCLUSION

This research work was intended to find out the significant impact of tourists' behaviour towards electronic sources of information on tourists' motives. The novelty lies with the approach of the study where behaviour is focused than the actual sources. In such context the results indicated that the stringent belief about the electronic sources such as preferable way of searching, variety of sources and low search cost impacts tourists' prestige motives. This finding adds new evidence to the literature of tourists' motives. Also, with growing competition among the destination marketers, perhaps in competitive positioning of their tourism destinations, this paper has indicated that tourists' motives have to been highly pondered as that would proceed for decision making, visiting and consuming the tourism experience and thereby generate businesses. Also, the paper has implied strongly on using the motives in banding through attractive elements. Such marketing and branding strategies would not only facilitate marketers in increasing the tourist's inflow but also in boosting local economies, generating revenues, inducing the allied hospitality, travel and supportive businesses, and mainly for sustainability development of tourism destinations.

LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research work is limited to location of research, time period, and the sample size. Replicating the same research or the components of this research work in another location, or time period and even with increased or decreased sample size would produce varied results and thereby can lead to varied recommendations. The findings of this research are limited to the sample of 327, location – Coimbatore a district in Tamil Nadu which has wide tourists' attractions, time period between 2018 and 2020 and the approach – an empirical investigation. The scope lies with focusing on the limitations – performing the same study elsewhere with distinct sample size and research approaches, producing a model-based study on tourists' motivation, focusing on the emotional aspects of the electronic sources of information, or even on the other destination management components.

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