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Adoption of AI Based Chatbot by Tourism Industry in Ahmedabad City

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Abstract

The study clarifies the situation from both the perspective travel agents and tourist too. How they have adopted AI based chatbots for travelling industry or willingness to adopt such AI based chatbots. Chatbots are the latest innovative medium between travel agents and tourists in the tourism industry. Overall purpose of the study is to explore the adoption of AI based chatbots in tourism industry. The survey has been conducted in local areas of Ahmedabad city. Expedia is one of the best examples of using chatbots for their tourists. Convenient sampling method has been used to collect the data. In this study, 196 Respondents were approached and, among them, 144 Respondents were willing to answer the questionnaire. Research has been done based on Personal interview with 15 employees working at managerial or CEO level in tourism industry and their answer has been recorded. The study has conducted Chi Square and Correlation test. The normality of the data has been tested to conduct the non-parametric tests. Major findings of the study are that (i) There is a positive relationship between trust on chatbots and adding chatbot consent on travel agent's website. (ii)Instant information, time saving, accurate answer are the factors that drives tourist to use chatbots for travel industry. (iii) The study has proven that there is association in Chatbot users and factors drives to use chatbots. The study has been concluded that currently tour operators has challenges in their industry like had a limited team if they use chatgpt or chatbot then they can take customer reviews through Chatbot and it will make easy their work. Many local travel agents are not using chatbots but they are willing to use chatbots for their customers rather than using traditional telephonic conversation.

Keywords: AI Based Chatbots, Tourist, Tourism Industry, ChatGPT, Trust for Chatbots, Chatbot Users

Introduction

In the last 10 years, IT has transformed the tourism industry. Chatbots are the latest innovative medium between travel agents and tourists. Although, Artificial Intelligence (AI) requires to upskill their manpower and Continuous investment to tackle such E-tourism hurdles (Calvaresi et al., 2021). AI based chatbots are being used by travel agents to provide better customer services to travellers (Hanji, Navalgund et al., 2024). Generally, at the starting of the conversation, chatbot provides easy options to interact. Chatbots reduce the cost for both buyers and travel agents. As Buyer do not need to call to customer service. Similarly, on Another side, Company do not need to employ customer service staff (Ukpabi et al., 2019). AI is a recent technology that is adopted by hospitality industry. Obsession to use chatbots, Social pressure and expected performance of chatbots are influence to using these technologies. Inconveniency related to communicate with the chatbots is a negative influence (Melián-González et al., 2021) .

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Background of the Study

Chatbots are being widely utilised by buyers and sellers. Chatbots can enhance the customer service with satisfaction (Ramachandran, 2019). The chatbot works as a virtual assistant. It allows users to correspond with the application and provides pertinent information like hotel or resort booking, flight bookings with online payments, destinations (Table 1). Chatbots help in collecting customer feedback. Conversational chatbots provide more accurate information than human tourist guides. Chatbots enlarge the revenue of the travel agencies. Once chatbots are used by users, it will stimulate them to use it again and again. Chatbot can become a centre point for user's inquiries related to travel. Some of the users behaves towards chatbots like they are talking to a human (Neha Patil, 2022). Chatbot communicate with customers and solve their inquiries, helping to enhance the customer service. Although, enough research has not been done on the adoption of AI based chatbots in tourism industry. Congruity, complications and visibility are the hindering factors to adopt AI based chatbots in tourism industry (Hanji, Hungund et al., 2024). Habit, chatbot awareness, outputs, effort expectancy influence to use AI based chatbots for tourism industry (Hanji, Navalgund et al., 2024).

Literature from last seven years indicate that anthropomorphism is the most common that influence the adoption of AI based chatbots for tourism industry. Obsession, faith, effectiveness, social pressure affects usage of AI based chatbots (Table 2). In today's era travellers are looking for easy, simple and instant solutions to various travelling issues so chatbot is best option for them (Gatzioufa & Saprikis, 2023). Travel industry has faced many challenges during COVID pandemic. Habit, social presence and health equally contribute to intention to use chatbots (Hasan et al., 2021). Chatbots' suitable tasks are booking, customer supports and ordering in tourism industry. Frequently asked questions are handled by chatbots. Chatbot users' questions are already inputted by system for their accurate answer. The system stores the current enquiries of users in archives. Chatbot works as human and machine interaction (Nagawade et al., 2023). Habit, Social influence, trust, attitude are the common factors that affect to use Chatbots for travelling Industry. Reliability of Chatbots are also most influential factors that affect the tourist to use Chatbots. Chatbots are helpful for all stages of the tourist trip planning, during trip, after the trips too. Places and accommodation, you can find out with the help of the Chatbots (Melián-González et al., 2021). We can see how AI has changed the main processes in tourism industry (Bulchand-Gidumal, 2020).

Tourists agree that Chatbots provide reliable trip planning. Managers state that tourists trust Chatbots up to some extent. Chatbots provide intelligent solutions to queries; however, some people want human interaction so they don't prefer Chatbots. They accept Chatbots, but sometimes people face some hurdles like lack of communication of the mother-tongue. They want customised answers so in that case people prefer human interaction rather than preferring Chatbots (Pillai & Sivathanu, 2020). Chatbots can be used for grievance handling. Consumer trust the new technologies slowly and gradually. Sometimes customers don't know either they are chatting with chatbot or human. The quality of information affects whether customer trust chatbots or not. Other side security and privacy negatively influence chatbot trust (Alagarsamy & Mehrolia, 2023). The expressions of Chatbots can lead to better customer satisfaction. According to this study customers require emotional expressions thus chatbot avatar may help to have a better satisfaction among Chatbot users. Chatbots used for customer service in tourism industry (Zhang et al., 2024).

Objectives of the Study

- To explore the use of Chatbot and ChatGPT in tours and travel industry.
- To explore the relationship between tourist' concern about Chatbot should be on travel agents' websites and Chatbots makes easiness to travel.
- To explore tourist's willingness to adopt AI based chatbot tech in tourism industry.
- To study the factors which drives the tourist to use a chatbot for travel industry.
- To explore tourist's trust for chatbots in travelling. They expect to chatbot should be there on tour operator's website.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study has adopted a descriptive research design. Qualitative data has been taken through personal interview with 15 working employees at managerial and CEO level in tourism industry. Google Form was created based on the primary objectives of the study. Quantitative data has been taken through structured questionnaire from 144 tourists. Google Form was divided into two parts:

- Demographic profile of the respondents.
- Respondents' adoption of AI based chatbots in the tourism industry.

Convenient sampling method was used to fill up the Google Forms. The population of the study consisted of Chatbot users, non-user and individuals willingness to adopt AI based chatbots for travelling. The Google Form's link was shared through emails and other social media platforms like WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram. A Likert scale was used in some questionnaires. Respondents scaled based on "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "neutral", "Disagree" and "strongly disagree". Furthermore, questions related to Willingness to adopt and factors affecting the adoption of AI based chatbots were asked to respondents. All questions were kept MCQ based and quite simple so respondent can easily answer the question.

Data Collection Method

This study is based on primary data, which has been collected through Structured questionnaire and personal interviews with tour operator in Ahmedabad city. Secondary data has been collected through websites and tour operators' Applications like MakeMyTrip and Agoda,

Sampling Method

The Sampling method used in this research is convenient sampling method. Respondents have been selected based on their job profiles belonging to different area of Ahmedabad city in tourism industry.

Sample Size

In this study, 196 Respondents were approached, and among them 144 Respondents were willing to answer the questionnaire. In addition, 15 employees at managerial and CEO level were agreed to participate in personal interview.

Data Analysis Tools and Techniques

A normality test has been done to check out to apply the non-parametric tests. Variables reliability has been checked and Cronbach's Alpha was 0.721, which is greater than 0.7; so, the data considers reliable and good. Chi-Square and Pearson's Correlation test has been conducted to check out the significant relationship between trust on chatbots and want to add chatbots on the website. Chi-square test has been conducted to check out significant association between Chatbot users and factors that drives to use AI based chatbots. SPSS 21 has been used to conduct a various test that is Chi-square, Normality test, Reliability test and Correlation tests.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Demographic Data

Measures	*Items*	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Age (In Years)	Below 18	0	0
	18-30	117	81.30%
	31-45	27	18.80%
	46-60	0	0
	Above 60	0	0
Gender	Male	75	52.10%
	Female	69	47.90%
Profession	Job	66	45.80%
	Business	24	16.70%
	Student	33	22.90%
	Freelancer	6	4.20%
	Home maker	15	10.40%
Travel Frequency (Above 300 km)	Quarterly	66	45.80%
	Biannually	15	10.40%
	Once in a Year	48	33.30%
	Rarely	15	10.50%

Table 2: Adoption of AI Based Chatbot by Tourism Industry

Measures	*Items*	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Travel Agents Preference	Online Travel Agents	72	50%
	Traditional Travel Agents	72	50%
Awareness about chatbot	Yes	84	58.30%
Usage	No	60	41.70%
Chatbot user	User	75	52.10%
	Non-User	69	47.90%
Trust on chatbots for Travelling	Yes	24	16.70%
	No	30	20.80%
	Maybe	90	62.50%
Adding chatbot on website	Yes	117	81.30%
	No	27	18.80%
will make easy trip	Yes	90	62.50%
	No	12	8.30%
	Maybe	42	29.20%
Chatbot solves instant query	Strongly Agree	27	18.80%
	Agree	21	14.60%
	Neutral	75	52.10%
	Disagree	6	4.20%
	Strongly Disagree	15	10.40%
Willingness to use chatbot	1(least)	9	6.30%
Rather than using traditional	2	21	14.60%
Telephonic conversation	3	69	47.90%
	4	21	14.50%
	5(most)	24	16.70%
Willingness to use chatgpt	1(least)	6	4.20%
	2	18	12.50%
	3	66	45.80%
	4	30	20.80%
	5(most)	24	16.70%

Table 3: OTA Preference Frequencies

		Responses		*Percent of Cases*
		N	*Percent*	
OTA Preference	Booking.com	70	28.3%	48.6%
	TripAdvisor	25	10.1%	17.4%
	Travel guru	12	4.9%	8.3%
	Kayak	2	0.8%	1.4%
	Easemytrip	37	15.0%	25.7%
	Traditional agent	71	28.7%	49.3%
	others	30	12.1%	20.8%
Total		247	100.0%	171.5%

Out of 144 respondents, 28.3% use booking.com, 10.1% use TripAdvisor, 4.9% use Travel Guru, 0.8% use Kayak, 15.0% use Easemytrip, 28.7% use Traditional agents and 12.1% respondents use MakeMyTrip, Goibibo (Table 3).

Table 4: Factors Drive to Use Chatbot Frequencies

N		*Responses*		*Percent of Cases*
		Percent		
Factors drive to use Chatbot	Instant information	95	32.9%	66.0%
	Time saving	104	36.0%	72.2%
	Accurate answer	57	19.7%	39.6%
	Don't want to use chatbot	31	10.7%	21.5%
	Other	2	0.7%	1.4%
Total		289	100.0%	200.7%

Out of 144 respondents, 32.9% instant information, 36% time saving, 19.7% accurate answer and 0.7% other factors drive to use chatbots for travel industry. Whereas 10.7% respondents don't want to use AI based Chatbots for travelling (Tables 4, 5, 6).

Table 5: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	*Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items*	*N of Items*
.721	.762	8

Table 6: Item Statistics

	Mean	*Std. Deviation*	*N*
Trust for chatbot	1.35	.864	144
Want to add chatbot	.79	.408	144
Chatbot users	.51	.502	144
Willingness to use chatbot	3.20	1.028	144
willingness to use Chatgpt	3.29	.981	144
Instant information	.66	.475	144
Time saving	.72	.449	144
Accurate answer	.40	.491	144

Reliability has been tested to check out consistency between variables. Cronbach's alpha value is 0.721 which is greater than 0.7 thus it can be stated that the data is reliable.

Statistical Hypothesis

Hypothesis was framed based on primary objectives of the study.

H0a: There is no significant association in Trust on chatbot and adding chatbot on tour operator's website consent.

H1a: There is significant association in trusting chatbots and adding chatbot on tour operator's website consent.

Table 7: Crosstabulation of Trust on Chatbots and Adding Chatbots Consent

		Want to Add Chatbot		*Total*
		No	*Yes*	
Trust for chatbot	No	19	18	37
	Yes	3	17	20
	Maybe	8	79	87
Total		30	114	144

Out of 144 respondents, 79 respondents are not sure about trusting chatbots but they want chatbots on tour operator's website. 17 respondents trust on chatbots for travelling and they want chatbots on tour operator's website. 18 respondents don't trust the chatbot but ready to have chatbots on tour operator's website (Table 7).

Table 8: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	*df*	*Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)*
Pearson Chi-Square	28.451[a]	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	25.783	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	25.898	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	144		

As the p-Value of Pearson Chi-Square (28.451) is 0.0000, which is less than the 5% level of significance, we reject the null hypothesis which means that there is an association between trusting chatbots for travelling and want chatbots on tour operator's website, and H1a is supported (Table 8).

- H0b: There is no significant relationship between trust for chatbot and want to add chatbots on tour operator's website.
- H1b: There is a significant relationship between trust for chatbot and want to add chatbots on tour operator's website

Table 9: Correlations Between Trust for Chatbot and Want Chatbots on Tour Operator's Website

		Trust for Chatbot	*Want to Add Chatbot*
Trust for chatbot	Pearson Correlation	1	.426**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	144	144
Want to add chatbot	Pearson Correlation	.426**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	144	144

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As the p-value of the Pearson Correlation is 0.000, which is less than the 5% level of significance, we reject the null hypothesis which means that there is a significant relation between trust for chatbot and willingness to add chatbots on travellers' website. Moreover, Pearson Correlation is 0.426 which suggests a positive relationship between trust for chatbots and willingness to add chatbot on traveller's website (Table 9).

- H0: There is no significant association between Chatbot should be travel agents' website and Chatbots makes easiness to travel.
- H2: There is a significant association between Chatbot should be travel agents' website and Chatbots makes easiness to travel.

Table 10: Crosstabulation of Want Chatbot and on Tour Operator's Website and Chatbots Make Easiness for Travel

		Easiness for Travel			*Total*
		No	*Yes*	*Maybe*	
Want to add Chatbot	No	11	6	13	30
	Yes	0	82	32	114
Total		11	88	45	144

Out of 144 respondents, 82 respondents agreed that Chatbots on tour Operator's websites will make easiness for travelling. Whereas in total 114 respondents want Chatbots on tour Operator's websites (Table 10).

Table 11: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	*df*	*Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)*
Pearson Chi-Square	54.051[a]	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	49.469	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.243	1	.072
N of Valid Cases	144		

a. 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.29.

As the p-Value of Pearson Chi-Square test (54.051) is 0.0000, which is less than the 5% level of significance, we reject the null hypothesis which means that there is a significant association between Chatbot should be travel agents' website and Chatbots makes easiness to travel and H2 is supported (Table 11).

- H0: There is no significant association in Chatbot user and factors drive to use chatbot.
- H3: There is significant association in chatbot user and factors drive to use chatbot.

Table 12: Crosstabulation of Chatbot Users and Factors Drive to Use Chatbots

		Chatbot Users			
		Non-User		*User*	
		Count	*Column N %*	*Count*	*Column N %*
Factors drive to use chatbot	Instant information	35	50.0%	60	81.1%
	Time saving	43	61.4%	61	82.4%
	Accurate answer	16	22.9%	41	55.4%
	Don't want to use chatbot	17	24.3%	14	18.9%
	Other	0	0.0%	2	2.7%

Out of 144 respondents, 60 respondents stated that instant information is the factor that drives chatbot users to use chatbots. Whereas 61 respondents agreed that time saving is the factor that drive to use chatbots. A total of 41 respondents are going with the accurate answer factor (Table 12).

Table 13: Pearson Chi-Square Tests

		Chatbot Users
Factors drive to use chatbot	Chi-square	41.857
	Df	5
	Sig.	.000

As the p-value of the Pearson Chi-Square (41.857) is 0.0000, which is less than the 5% level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected (Table 13). This indicates that there is significant association in chatbot user and factors drive to use chatbot, and therefore H3 is supported.

Manager's Perspective on the Adoption of AI Based Chatbots in Tourism Industry: (Qualitative Data)

In this E-Challenging era, tour operator has to upgrade skillset of their employees. Tourists can get itinerary ideas by exploring ChatGPT. That will save travel agents time and reduce workload. As of now, some tour operators say that their receptionist cost is lower than the cost of using ChatGPT. Currently, tour operators face challenges in their industry, such as having a limited team. If they use ChatGPT or chatbot then they can take customer reviews through ChatGPT or bot and it will make easy their work. Recently Flamingo, Gujarat tours and travels, Vibrant holidays are not using chatbot and ChatGPT but they are willing to use it for their tour business. Flamingo company is not using ChatGPT because they are not sure whatever information is given by ChatGPT would me more accurate than their current staff. Recently, flamingo has not adopted this technology due to lack of trust.

Nirav Shah, CEO of Techno Ville does not agree that ChatGPT will lead to job displacement. It can increase the work efficiency. ChatGPT with multiple language can be more helpful in tourism industry because many tourists don't know English language so regional language in ChatGPT can increase the productivity. Although they can use ChatGPT in recruitment process too. Like ChatGPT can give readymade Group discussion. But this version of ChatGPT is not give the updated information like if tourist ask about weather of New Zealand, then it won't give information because it doesn't provide recent news or information. ChatGPT can be useful for front desk work, sales and operations work. TravelWidBee company's owner use ChatGPT for initial presentation, itinerary making and social media presence.

Chatbot can reduce front-desk workload by handling common repetitive inquiry. Chatbots are not meant to replace humans but rather enhance the customer service experience. It is useful to take customer reviews through ChatGPT. ChatGPT services are more accurate with less human errors. He doesn't believe ChatGPT lacks social contacts. AI assistants and intelligent chatbots can't take place of travel Agents. 2 years old data in ChatGPT and data mapping for the rates are the challenges of ChatGPT using in tourism industry. Basically, content writing and itinerary design travel agents do through ChatGPT in their company. Instant information drives tourist' continuance intention to use ChatGPT for travel services. They use ChatGPT tech for recruitment in tours and

travels company. ChatGPT is useful for recruitment, such as bots that collect information but the same can be done through a normal bot as well. However, when ChatGPT is integrated with itinerary planning, it provides better results.

Results and Discussion

From the results, it can be stated that some of the local travel agents were using the AI based Chatbots. Many of the travel agents were not using AI based Chatbots but they were willing to adopt them for future perspective. Those who were using Chatbots agreed that Chatbots can reduce the front desk work. (Ukpabi et al., 2019) also stated that Chatbots can reduce the workloads. Travel agents who were using traditional telephonic methods to solve their customer's query, they also willing to use Chatbots. Another side, 58.3% respondents were aware about the usage of Chatbots in travel industry. 52.1% respondents use the Chatbots for travelling. 50% of the respondents prefers Online travel agencies and 50% respondents prefer traditional travel agents. Out of 144 respondents, 47.9% were Male, and 52.1% were Female respondents.

81.3% of tourists suggested that Chatbots should be on Tour Operator's websites, as this would make easiness for trip planning. It will save time of both tourist and travel agents. Pearson Chi-Square results depicted P value is 0.000 which is less than 5% of significant level means There is an association between Chatbots should be there on travel agent's website and Chatbots can make easiness for trip and H2 was supported. The Pearson Correlation showed P Value is 0.426 which suggests a positive relationship between trust for chatbots and willingness to add chatbot on traveller's website and H1 was supported. Chi-square (41.857) result showed P value is 0.000 which is less than of 5% significant level. So there is significant association in chatbot user and factors drive to use chatbot and H3 was supported.

Conclusion

AI is increasingly being used in various industries. AI based chatbots and ChatGPT are parts of the Artificial Intelligence. Chatbots assists with personal guest queries. It enhances the work efficiency at sales and Operational level. The study justifies the potential use of AI based chatbots and ChatGPT in tourism industry. The main purpose of the study was to explore the adoption of AI based chatbots in tourism industry. Chatbot can bridge the gap between tourists and travel agents. Use of AI based Chatbots can remove traditional time-consuming methods to connect tourists. Time saving, instant information and accurate answer are the main three factors that drives tourist to use AI based Chatbots. (Neha Patil, 2022) agrees that instant information and accurate answer drives to use AI base Chatbots.

Future study can focus on Cultural, Situational, and financial factors to adopt the AI based Chatbots in tourism industry. In this study, some of the tour operator were using Chatbots and still others are going with traditional telephonic and SMS systems. Those who are not using Chatbots, they also willing to use it. Further study can explore the reasons why some of the tour operators not use Chatbots as well as ChatGPT. This research can be useful to those travel agents who are willing to use ChatGPT in their company. As the investigation depicts how much tourists are ready to adopt AI based Chatbots for travelling. Tourists agreed that there should be AI based chatbots on traveller's website so it can be easy for them to enquiry. The investigation has found that there is a positive relationship between trust on Chatbots and tourist's concern about chatbots should be on travel agents' website. (Melián-González et al., 2021) agree that It shows there is a significant association between Chatbot users and factors drive to use Chatbots for travelling. (Pillai & Sivathanu, 2020) (Melián-González et al., 2021) agrees that Trust on Chatbots is the Predictor that drives customers to use AI base Chatbots in hospitality Industry.

Managerial Implications

From a management Perspective, firstly, companies can reduce front desk workload by implementing AI based chatbots. Repetitive FAQs can solve by chatbots. It will result into instant solution of queries of tourists. Managers can have ready group discussions ideas from ChatGPT. Secondly, Tourist get itinerary ideas from chatbots so they can have ideas about places and hotels for the trip and it will reduce the work of explaining trip planning to

the tourists. Thirdly, Managers must have to upskill their employees for chatbots. Managers can do efficient work in a less time. Fourthly, in a recruitment process they can take Group discussion ideas from ChatGPT. For a market campaigns, we can have full presentation from ChatGPT.

Limitation of the Study

Firstly, the present study has taken Qualitative data from 15 employees working at managerial or CEO level in tourism industry which sample size is small. Therefore, the study cannot represent all working employees' perception towards adopting the AI based chatbots in tourism industry. Secondly, the survey has been conducted only in Ahmedabad city. Thirdly, Google Form was created to take quantitative data where possibility is high of tick marking neutral answers. Fourth, Study is limited to some variables. For future, study can be conducted with different variables.

Scope of Further Research

Future studies can include different cities across India. This study has included the limited factors affecting the adoption of AI based chatbots in tourism industry. Future study should investigate what Financial and situational and cultural factors affects the travel agents to adopt AI based Chatbots for their customers. Future studies should also examine tourists' attitudes towards the use of AI based chatbots. Additionally, future studies may focus on Food & Beverage services as well as Car rental services.

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