

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN TOURIST DESTINATION CHOICES AMONG SECOND YEAR TOURISM STUDENTS AT BESTLINK COLLEGE OF THE PHILIPPINES

ABSTRACT

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Social media has significantly transformed the tourism industry by influencing how destinations are perceived, selected, and experienced. This study examines the impact of social media on tourists' destination choices, focusing on its role in promoting convenience, attraction, and shaping destination image. Drawing on the study by Emmanuel Bruce et al. (2024), this research adopts the Gratification Theory, which explains how social media serves as a source of external information that assists tourists in making well-informed travel decisions. The study is guided by the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model, which outlines the research's input (problem statement), process (data collection and analysis), and output (recommendations and guidelines). The scope of the study is limited to fifty (50) second-year students majoring in Tourism Management. Its significance lies in providing valuable insights for various stakeholders—including administrators, students, parents, researchers, and future scholars—on the influence of social media in tourism-related decision-making, while also offering strategic recommendations for enhanced engagement. This study adopts a descriptive research design to effectively examine the impact of social media on tourist destination choices. Through the use of cluster sampling, a total of 50 second-year Tourism Management students were selected from a population of 781. Data collection was conducted using a structured survey questionnaire, which gathered demographic information and measured the influence of social media on key factors affecting destination selection, such as convenience, attractiveness, and destination image. The study employed comprehensive questionnaires aimed at gathering in-depth information on the impact of social media on tourist destination choices. A total of fifty (50) second-year Tourism Management students from Bestlink College of the Philippines were surveyed. The majority of the respondents were aged 19 to 20 years old, with females accounting for sixty-six percent (66%) of the participants. The findings of the study indicate that social media plays a significant role in influencing tourist destination choices in terms of convenience, attraction, and destination image. In terms of convenience, social media simplifies the process of navigating and accessing essential information about destinations. For attraction, it enables interactive engagement between prospective tourists and previous visitors, allowing for the exchange of experiences and recommendations. Regarding destination image, social media enhances the visual and emotional appeal of destinations through dynamic content formats such as stories, reels, and live videos, which provide authentic and relatable insights directly from travelers themselves.

RECOMMENDED CITATION

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