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Impact of Social Media Marketing on Tourism Promotion: A Study of Andhra Pradesh

Kusuma Epuri¹, Dr. Ch. Venkata Naga Siva Kumar²

¹ Research Scholar, BBA, Koneru Lakshmaiah Educational Foundation (KLEF) Kusumaepuri8@gmail.com

² Assistant Professor, Koneru Lakshmaiah Educational Foundation (KLEF)

ABSTRACT

Tourism is an important contributor to economic development, employment generation, cultural exchange, and regional development, and social media has become a major channel through which tourists discover destinations and make travel decisions. Andhra Pradesh has diverse religious, beach, eco, heritage, and cultural attractions, but their visibility depends on effective communication. This study examines the role of social media marketing in promoting tourism in Andhra Pradesh, focusing on the platforms tourists use, the types of content that influence them, and the effect of social media on destination awareness, interest, and intention to visit.

A descriptive, quantitative survey was conducted using a structured online questionnaire completed by 74 respondents (64 residing in Andhra Pradesh and 10 in other Indian states). Data were analysed using frequencies, means, one-sample Wilcoxon tests, Spearman correlation, chi-square tests, Kruskal–Wallis and Mann–Whitney tests, and multiple regression.

Respondents are heavy users of social media for travel content (70.3% daily). Instagram (29.7%) and YouTube (24.3%) are the most used platforms. 71.6% are aware of Andhra Pradesh destinations through social media, 78.4% agree that social media influences their destination choice, and 78.4% agree that photos and videos increase their interest. Reels and short videos (35.1%) and travel vlogs (25.7%) are the most influential content types. Trust in social media travel information is more guarded (mean 3.31 out of 5; 52.7% agree, 25.7% disagree), and 63.5% say they are likely to visit an Andhra Pradesh destination after seeing such content. Travel cost (29.7%) and transport or accessibility (27.0%) are the main barriers. Statistical tests did not find that influence, visual content, trust, or awareness significantly predict likelihood to visit, nor that demographic characteristics are significantly associated with awareness or prior visits. The study concludes that social media is widely used and positively regarded for tourism discovery in Andhra Pradesh, and recommends short-video and vlog-led campaigns on Instagram and YouTube, supported by reliable official information and attention to cost and transport barriers.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Tourism Promotion, Andhra Pradesh, Destination Awareness, Tourist Intention, Digital Marketing, Social Media Influencers.

1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Tourism is an important contributor to economic development, employment generation, cultural exchange, and regional development. In recent years, the tourism industry has experienced significant changes due to the rapid growth of digital technologies and social media. Tourists increasingly use digital platforms to search for destinations, explore travel experiences, compare alternatives, read reviews, watch travel videos, and make travel decisions. As a result, social media marketing has become an important tool for tourism organizations and destination marketers.

Social media marketing refers to the use of social networking and digital platforms to communicate with customers, promote products and services, create brand awareness, and encourage customer engagement. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, X, and other digital channels allow tourism destinations to present their attractions through photographs, short videos, travel stories, reviews, and user-generated content. Unlike traditional promotional methods, social media enables two-way communication between tourism marketers and potential tourists. It also allows users to share their experiences, which can influence the perceptions and decisions of other travelers.

Andhra Pradesh is a state with considerable tourism potential due to its diverse natural, historical, religious, and cultural attractions. Destinations such as Tirupati, Visakhapatnam, Araku Valley, Vijayawada, Amaravati, Srisailem, Gandikota, Konaseema, and various coastal and heritage locations attract visitors for different purposes. The state offers opportunities for religious tourism, beach tourism, eco-tourism, heritage tourism, cultural tourism, and adventure tourism. However, effectively communicating the uniqueness and attractiveness of these destinations to a wider audience is essential for increasing tourist visits.

The increasing use of smartphones and social media has created new opportunities for promoting Andhra Pradesh's tourism destinations. Attractive destination photographs, travel reels, YouTube videos, influencer collaborations, online reviews, and user-generated content can create awareness and encourage people to consider visiting a particular destination. Travel influencers can also play an important role by sharing their personal experiences and recommendations with their followers. Positive online reviews and engaging visual content can strengthen destination image and influence tourists' travel intentions.

Social media also provides tourism marketers with the ability to reach specific groups based on age, interests, location, and online behavior. This makes digital promotion more targeted and interactive. Tourism organizations can use social media analytics to understand audience preferences, monitor engagement, identify popular destinations, and improve promotional campaigns. At the same time, challenges such as misleading information, negative reviews, lack of consistent content, and competition among destinations may affect the effectiveness of social media marketing.

Therefore, studying the impact of social media marketing on tourism promotion is important for understanding how digital platforms influence tourists' awareness, attitudes, destination preferences, and intention to visit. This study focuses on Andhra Pradesh and examines the role of social media marketing in promoting its tourism destinations. The study aims to provide useful insights for tourism departments, destination marketers, travel agencies, hospitality businesses, and other stakeholders in developing effective social media strategies to enhance the visibility and attractiveness of Andhra Pradesh as a tourism destination.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Andhra Pradesh possesses a wide range of tourism assets, yet its destinations compete for attention with better-known destinations in other states. Social media offers a low-cost and interactive way to reach potential tourists, but it is not clear which platforms and content types are most effective for Andhra Pradesh, how far tourists trust the travel information they see online, and whether exposure translates into interest and intention to visit. Existing studies either treat digital marketing broadly, cover several states together, or focus on other regions. This study addresses the problem for Andhra Pradesh specifically.

1.3 Significance of the Study

- For tourism authorities and destination marketers, the study identifies the platforms and content formats to which tourists respond most.
- For travel agencies and hospitality businesses, it indicates the barriers that may prevent interest from turning into visits.
- For local stakeholders, it highlights the importance of reliable, trustworthy online information.
- For researchers, it provides a state-specific dataset on social media and tourism in Andhra Pradesh that can be extended in future work.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To study the role of social media in promoting tourism in Andhra Pradesh.
2. To identify the most popular social media platforms used by tourists to discover tourist destinations.
3. To analyze the impact of social media content, such as photos, videos, reels, and reviews, on tourists' travel decisions.
4. To examine how social media influences tourists' awareness and interest in visiting tourist destinations in Andhra Pradesh.
5. To suggest effective social media marketing strategies for improving tourism promotion in Andhra Pradesh.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

Based on the objectives and the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, the following hypotheses were tested. For H1 to H4, the null hypothesis is that the mean response equals the neutral mid-point (3) of the scale.

- **H1:** Social media significantly influences tourists' destination choice.
- **H2:** Photos and videos on social media significantly increase tourists' interest in destinations.
- **H3:** Tourists significantly trust the travel information available on social media.
- **H4:** Tourists are significantly likely to visit an Andhra Pradesh destination after seeing social media content about it.
- **H5:** Perceived social media influence, visual content, trust, and awareness significantly predict the likelihood of visiting an Andhra Pradesh destination.
- **H6:** Demographic and platform characteristics (gender, age, occupation, location, main platform) are significantly associated with awareness of Andhra Pradesh destinations and with previous visits.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study covers social media users who consume travel content, with respondents mainly from Andhra Pradesh and some from other Indian states. It considers social media platforms, content types, trust, awareness, interest, likelihood to visit, previous visits, and barriers to visiting. It does not measure actual tourist arrivals, destination revenue, or the performance of any specific tourism department campaign.

1.7 Chapter Scheme

Chapter 1 introduces the study, its objectives, and hypotheses. Chapter 2 reviews the literature and identifies the research gap. Chapter 3 describes the methodology. Chapter 4 presents the data analysis and interpretation. Chapter 5 gives the findings, discussion, strategies, limitations, and conclusion, followed by references and the questionnaire.

2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The review of literature provides a conceptual and empirical foundation for understanding the relationship between social media marketing and tourism promotion. The studies reviewed below examine social media usage, digital marketing, content characteristics, tourist engagement, destination selection, and tourism promotion in India, with particular attention to studies relevant to Andhra Pradesh. The literature also helps identify the research gap that supports the need for the present study.

2.2 Venkataramireddy (2024)

Venkataramireddy (2024), in *A Study on the Role of Social Media in Promoting Sustainable Tourism in the States of Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry*, examined the role of social media in promoting sustainable tourism in Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry. The study focused on social media marketing, sustainable tourism, tourist attitudes, and tourism promotion. The study indicates that social media can support sustainable and responsible tourism by improving communication and interaction between tourists and tourism stakeholders. Social media platforms provide destinations with opportunities to communicate information about responsible tourism practices, attractions, and visitor experiences. An important contribution of this study is its direct inclusion of Andhra Pradesh in the research context. However, the study considers Andhra Pradesh together with Puducherry and does not focus exclusively on Andhra Pradesh. It also does not statistically isolate the impact of individual social-media platforms or specific promotional dimensions. This limitation creates scope for a more focused study of how social media marketing influences tourism promotion specifically in Andhra Pradesh.

2.3 Ch. Suman Swami Das (2024)

Ch. Suman Swami Das (2024), in *Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Travel and Destination Decision: An Empirical Study on Tourism and Hospitality in Andhra Pradesh*, investigated how digital marketing influences consumer travel behaviour and destination decisions in Andhra Pradesh. The study considered digital marketing, social media marketing, search engine optimization, content marketing, travel behaviour, and destination decision-making. The findings suggest that digital marketing strategies influence consumers' travel behaviour and their decisions regarding tourism destinations. The Andhra Pradesh-specific setting makes this study particularly relevant to the present research. Nevertheless, the study examines digital marketing as a broad concept rather than concentrating specifically on social media marketing and its individual dimensions. The present study can therefore extend this area by examining social media content, engagement, influencer influence, online reviews, and other social-media-related factors in relation to tourism promotion.

2.4 Chandrasekaran, ShabbirHusain and Balamurugan (2022)

Chandrasekaran, ShabbirHusain R. V. and Balamurugan A. (2022), in *Social Media and Tourism: A Cross-Platform Study of Indian DMOs*, examined how social-media content characteristics affect tourist engagement across Indian destination marketing organizations. The study focused on Facebook and Twitter and considered content characteristics and tourist engagement. Using more than 12,000 posts and approximately 3.65 million tourist impressions, the study provided substantial evidence on the relationship between the nature of social-media content and audience engagement. The findings indicate that interactive and informative posts tend to achieve stronger engagement across platforms. The large-scale cross-platform approach is a major strength because it provides evidence from a wide range of Indian tourism organizations. However, the study does not specifically examine Andhra Pradesh Tourism or directly measure tourists' visit or purchase decisions. Therefore, further research is needed to determine whether similar content characteristics influence tourism promotion and tourists' intentions in Andhra Pradesh.

2.5 Prem Kumar, Jitendra Mohan Mishra and Yedla Venkata Rao (2021/2022)

Kumar, Mishra, and Rao (2021/2022), in *Analysing Tourism Destination Promotion through Facebook by Destination Marketing Organizations of India*, studied how destination marketing organizations in India use Facebook for destination promotion. The study examined Facebook marketing, visual

content, informative content, user engagement, and destination promotion. It found that content related to scenic beauty, culture, and cuisine generated relatively stronger engagement. The study is valuable because it examined 32 Indian destination marketing organizations and combined social-media content analysis with interviews. It demonstrates that the type and presentation of tourism content can influence audience engagement and destination promotion. However, Andhra Pradesh was not independently examined, and the study placed greater emphasis on Facebook than on other contemporary social-media platforms. This provides a clear opportunity to conduct a state-specific study covering a wider range of social-media activities relevant to Andhra Pradesh tourism.

2.6 Sharma, Khatri, Khan and Shamsi (2023)

Sharma, Khatri, Khan, and Shamsi (2023), in *Extending the UTAUT Model to Examine the Influence of Social Media on Tourists' Destination Selection*, examined the influence of social media on tourists' destination-selection behaviour by extending the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model. The study considered performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, trust, habit, behavioural intention, and destination selection. The findings indicate that social media significantly influences tourists' destination-selection decisions. The study is important because it moves beyond simple social-media usage and explains the behavioural mechanisms through which social media may affect destination choice. Its application of the UTAUT framework provides a useful theoretical basis for studying digital influence on tourism decisions. However, the study was conducted in Chandigarh, Mohali, Panchkula, and Delhi rather than Andhra Pradesh. Hence, the applicability of these findings to Andhra Pradesh requires further empirical investigation.

2.7 Md. Tariqul Islam and Aswajit Boro (2019)

Islam and Boro (2019), in *Tourism Marketing via Social Media in India: The Most Effective Marketing Strategy to Evolve Indian Tourism*, examined the effectiveness of social media as a tourism marketing tool in India. The study considered social media marketing, tourism marketing, travel experience, and promotional effectiveness. The findings suggested that social media was an effective method of tourism marketing based on the survey evidence. The study highlights the growing importance of social media in communicating tourism information and reaching potential travelers. Its contribution lies in specifically evaluating social media as a tourism marketing strategy rather than treating it only as a general digital communication channel. However, the research was conducted at a broad Indian level and does not provide an Andhra Pradesh-specific analysis. A state-level study can therefore provide more localized evidence and identify the social-media factors most relevant to tourism promotion in Andhra Pradesh.

2.8 Rathore, Joshi and Ilavarasan (2017)

Rathore, Joshi and Ilavarasan (2017), in *Social Media Usage for Tourism: A Case of Rajasthan Tourism*, examined social-media usage in tourism with particular reference to Rajasthan Tourism. The study focused on social-media usage, travel-information search, online tourism, and tourism promotion. It found that social media creates opportunities for tourism stakeholders to communicate with travelers and share information, while also suggesting that tourism organizations can improve their online marketing strategies. The study combined primary interviews with secondary tourism data and social-media analysis, giving it both qualitative and contextual value. However, the study is limited to Rajasthan and therefore does not explain the current social-media environment or tourism-promotion requirements of Andhra Pradesh. The difference in destination characteristics also supports the need for a state-specific study.

2.9 Theoretical Background

Mangold and Faulds (2009) described social media as a hybrid element of the promotion mix, because it allows organisations to communicate with customers while also enabling customers to talk to one another. This helps explain why user experiences, reviews, and influencer posts matter for destinations. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003), which Sharma et al. (2023) extended to tourism, links technology use and behavioural intention to performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. In the present study, perceived influence, visual interest, trust, awareness, and likelihood to visit correspond to this logic: exposure to content can create awareness and interest, trust determines whether the information is relied upon, and intention is the outcome. The hypotheses H1 to H5 were framed on this basis.

Table 2.1 Summary of reviewed studies

Study	Focus	Main finding	Gap noted
Venkataramireddy (2024)	Sustainable tourism, AP and Puducherry	Social media supports responsible tourism communication	AP combined with Puducherry; no platform-wise analysis
Suman Swami Das (2024)	Digital marketing and destination decisions in AP	Digital marketing influences travel behaviour and destination decisions	Digital marketing broadly, not social media specifically

Study	Focus	Main finding	Gap noted
Chandrasekaran et al. (2022)	Content and engagement, Indian DMOs	Interactive and informative posts engage more	Facebook and Twitter only; not AP; no visit decisions
Kumar, Mishra & Rao (2021/22)	Facebook promotion by Indian DMOs	Scenery, culture and cuisine content engages more	AP not examined; Facebook focus
Sharma et al. (2023)	UTAUT and destination selection	Social media significantly influences destination selection	Studied in Chandigarh, Mohali, Panchkula, Delhi
Islam & Boro (2019)	Social media as tourism marketing in India	Social media effective as a marketing tool	National level; no AP analysis
Rathore et al. (2017)	Social media usage, Rajasthan Tourism	Opportunities to communicate with travellers	Rajasthan only

2.10 Synthesis of the Review

The reviewed literature consistently shows that social media has become an important instrument for tourism promotion. Across the studies, social media is associated with destination awareness, tourist engagement, information search, travel behaviour, destination selection, and promotional effectiveness. Visual and informative content, especially content highlighting scenic beauty, culture, cuisine, and travel experiences, can generate higher levels of audience engagement. The literature also indicates that interactive communication and user-generated experiences can strengthen the relationship between tourism destinations and potential visitors.

A second major theme emerging from the literature is the influence of social media on tourist decision-making. Studies using behavioural and technology-acceptance perspectives suggest that factors such as trust, social influence, habit, perceived usefulness, and engagement can affect tourists' intentions and destination choices. This indicates that social media is not merely a promotional channel; it can also influence how tourists evaluate destinations and make travel decisions.

The literature further demonstrates the importance of context. Indian studies provide useful evidence about social-media marketing at the national level and across different destination marketing organizations, while Andhra Pradesh-specific studies confirm the relevance of digital marketing to travel behaviour and tourism promotion. However, existing research does not provide a comprehensive, state-specific assessment of social media marketing dimensions and their impact on tourism promotion in Andhra Pradesh.

2.11 Research Gap

Based on the reviewed studies, several research gaps can be identified. First, although some recent research includes Andhra Pradesh, one study examines Andhra Pradesh together with Puducherry, while another addresses digital marketing broadly. There is limited exclusive focus on the impact of social media marketing on tourism promotion in Andhra Pradesh. Second, previous Indian studies have often focused on individual platforms such as Facebook and Twitter or on broad digital marketing activities. There is scope to examine multiple social-media platforms and promotional dimensions together.

Third, the existing literature does not sufficiently connect social-media marketing activities with specific tourism outcomes in Andhra Pradesh, such as destination awareness, tourist engagement, destination preference, and intention to visit. Fourth, differences between Andhra Pradesh and other Indian tourism destinations such as Rajasthan or the northern metropolitan regions suggest that findings from other locations cannot automatically be generalized to Andhra Pradesh.

Therefore, the present study seeks to address these gaps by focusing specifically on Andhra Pradesh and examining how social media marketing contributes to tourism promotion. The study provides empirical insights into the influence of social-media content, online reviews, influencer recommendations, and related digital promotional activities on tourists' awareness, destination preference, and intention to visit.

3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study follows a descriptive and quantitative design based on a cross-sectional survey. A survey suits the objectives because they require measuring tourists' platform use, perceptions, awareness, and intentions at a point in time.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population consists of social media users who consume travel content. The sample comprised **74 respondents** selected by convenience sampling: 58.1% female and 41.9% male; 60.8% aged 18–24; 36.5% students; and 86.5% (64) residing in Andhra Pradesh, with 13.5% (10) from other Indian states. Including respondents from other states is useful because they represent potential visitors to Andhra Pradesh.

3.3 Sources of Data

Primary data were collected through a structured online questionnaire [insert data collection period]. **Secondary data** were drawn from published studies on social media and tourism, as reviewed in Chapter 2.

3.4 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire contains 14 closed-ended questions in four parts (see the Appendix).

Table 3.1 Structure of the questionnaire

Part	Questions	Content
A. Profile	Q1–Q4	Age group, gender, occupation, location
B. Social media usage	Q5–Q6	Most used platform for travel content, frequency of use for travel content
C. Awareness, perception and intention	Q7–Q11	Awareness of AP destinations, influence on destination choice, effect of photos and videos, trust in travel information, likelihood to visit
D. Experience and barriers	Q12–Q14	Previous visit to an AP destination, most influential content type, main barrier to visiting

3.5 Measurement and Coding of Variables

Table 3.2 Variables and scoring

Variable (question)	Scale and scoring
Influence on destination choice (Q8), photos/videos increase interest (Q9), trust in travel information (Q10)	Strongly disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly agree = 5
Likelihood to visit (Q11)	Very unlikely = 1, Unlikely = 2, Not sure = 3, Likely = 4, Very likely = 5
Awareness through social media (Q7)	No = 1, Not sure = 2, Yes = 3
Frequency of use for travel content (Q6)	Rarely = 1, Weekly = 2, Several times a week = 3, Daily = 4
Previous visit (Q12)	Yes = 1, No = 0
Platform (Q5), content type (Q13), barrier (Q14), demographics	Nominal categories

3.6 Tools of Analysis

- **Descriptive statistics:** frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations.
- **One-sample Wilcoxon signed-rank test:** to test whether mean responses differ from the neutral mid-point (H1 to H4).
- **Spearman rank correlation and multiple regression:** to examine the relationship between perception variables and likelihood to visit (H5).
- **Chi-square test, Mann–Whitney U and Kruskal–Wallis tests:** to examine associations and group differences (H6).

Non-parametric tests were used because the variables are ordinal and the sample is small. Tests were run at the 5% significance level using Python (pandas and SciPy).

3.7 Reliability

Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951) was computed for the five perception and intention items (Q7 to Q11) and was negative ($\alpha = -0.14$). This shows that the items do not form a single scale; they measure different constructs (influence, visual interest, trust, awareness, and intention). Therefore, no composite index was created and each item was analysed individually, as is common for single-item attitude measures.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary and responses are used only for academic purposes. Results are reported in aggregate and no respondent is identified.

4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the analysis of responses from 74 social media users. Percentages are based on $n = 74$ and may not add to 100 because of rounding.

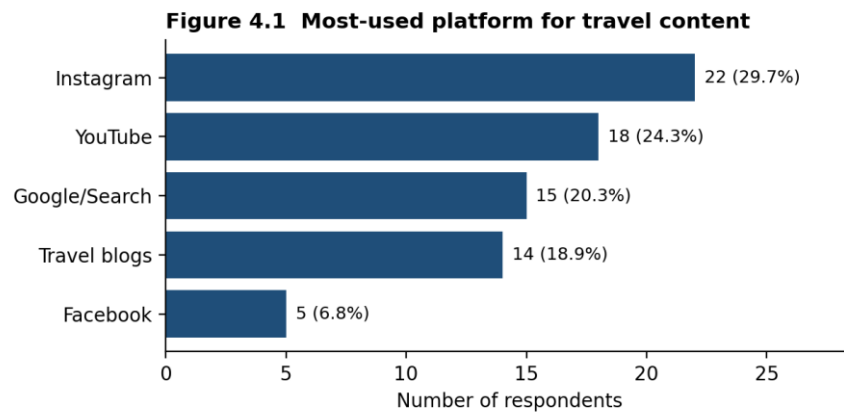
4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 4.1 Demographic profile (n = 74)

Variable	Category	Respondents	%
Age group	18–24 years	45	60.8
	25–34 years	16	21.6
	35–44 years	7	9.5
	45 and above	6	8.1
Gender	Female	43	58.1
	Male	31	41.9
Occupation	Student	27	36.5
	Private employee	19	25.7
	Other	11	14.9
	Self-employed	10	13.5
	Government employee	7	9.5
Location	Andhra Pradesh	64	86.5
	Other Indian state	10	13.5

The sample is young (60.8% aged 18–24), slightly female-dominated, and mostly resident in Andhra Pradesh. Results therefore mainly reflect younger users of social media.

4.2 Social Media Platforms and Usage for Travel Content



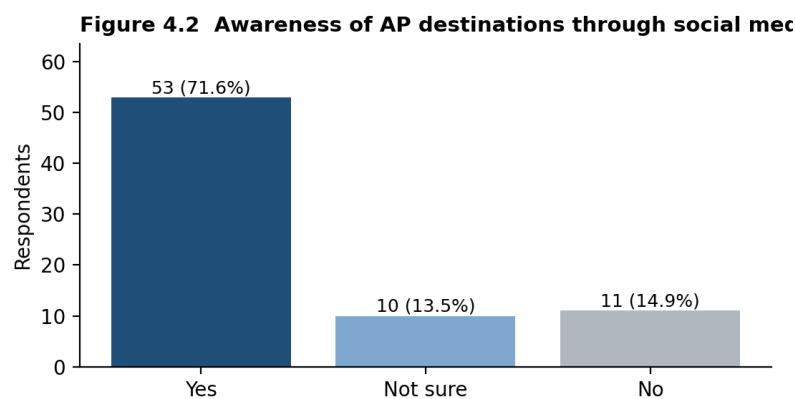
Instagram is the most used platform for travel content (29.7%), followed by YouTube (24.3%), Google or search (20.3%), travel blogs (18.9%), and Facebook (6.8%). Visual and video-led platforms (Instagram and YouTube) together account for 54.1% of respondents. Facebook, the platform most emphasised in earlier Indian DMO studies, is the least used here. This addresses **Objective 2**.

Table 4.2 Frequency of social media use for travel content (Q6)

Frequency	Respondents	%
Daily	52	70.3
Several times a week	16	21.6
Weekly	5	6.8
Rarely	1	1.4

Social media use for travel content is habitual: 70.3% use it daily and 91.9% at least several times a week.

4.3 Awareness of Andhra Pradesh Destinations



A clear majority (71.6%) say they have become aware of tourist destinations in Andhra Pradesh through social media, while 14.9% say they have not and 13.5% are not sure. Social media is therefore already an effective channel for destination awareness (**Objective 4**).

4.4 Influence, Visual Content and Trust

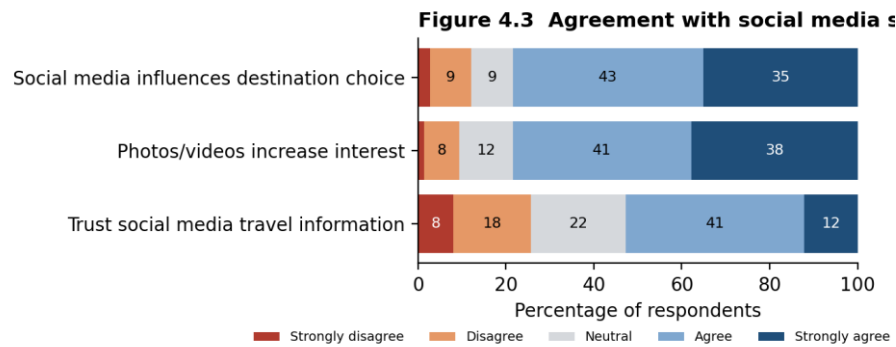


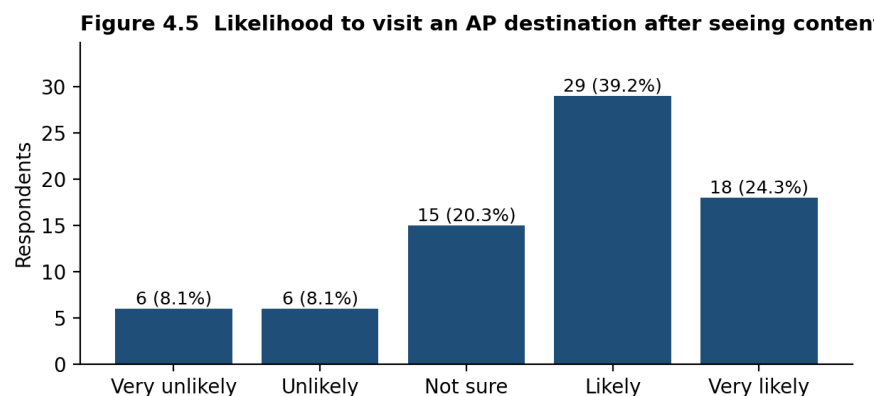
Table 4.3 Descriptive statistics and one-sample Wilcoxon tests against neutral (3)

Statement	Mean	SD	% agree	% disagree	p-value
Social media influences destination choice (Q8)	3.99	1.04	78.4	12.2	< .001
Photos and videos increase interest (Q9)	4.05	0.98	78.4	9.5	< .001
Trust social media travel information (Q10)	3.31	1.15	52.7	25.7	.031
Likelihood to visit an AP destination (Q11)	3.64	1.18	63.5	16.2	< .001

% agree includes Agree and Strongly agree (Likely and Very likely for Q11); % disagree includes Disagree and Strongly disagree (Unlikely and Very unlikely for Q11).

Respondents strongly believe that social media influences destination choice (78.4% agree; mean 3.99) and that photos and videos raise their interest (78.4% agree; mean 4.05). Trust is the weakest of the four items: a slim majority (52.7%) trust social media travel information, but one in four (25.7%) do not, and the mean (3.31) is only just above neutral. This indicates that tourists use social media heavily but check what they see, which links to the “lack of reliable information” barrier reported later.

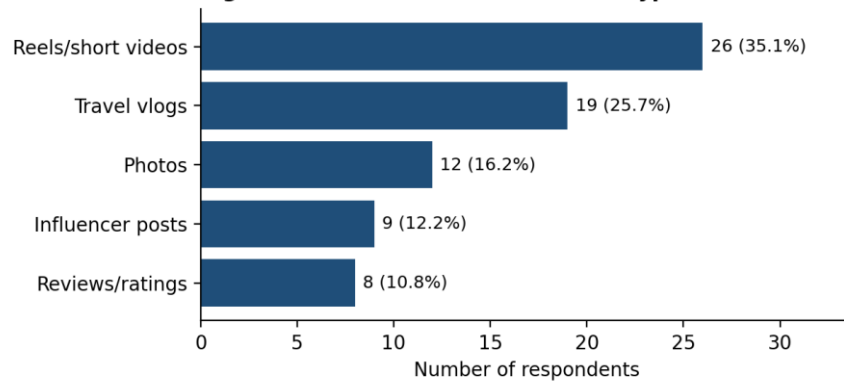
4.5 Likelihood to Visit and Previous Visits



After seeing social media content, 63.5% are likely or very likely to visit an Andhra Pradesh destination, 20.3% are not sure, and 16.2% are unlikely. 60.8% (45 respondents) have previously visited an Andhra Pradesh destination. Respondents who said they were unaware of AP destinations through social media had the lowest mean likelihood (3.00), compared with 3.66 for the aware group; the overall difference among the three awareness groups was borderline (Kruskal–Wallis $p = .055$).

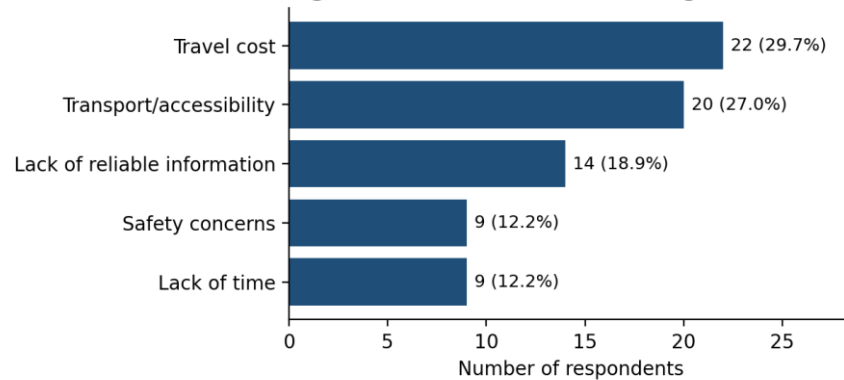
4.6 Content Type and Barriers

Figure 4.4 Most influential content type



Reels and short videos are the most influential content type (35.1%), followed by travel vlogs (25.7%), photos (16.2%), influencer posts (12.2%), and reviews or ratings (10.8%). Video formats together account for 60.8% of responses. This addresses **Objective 3**: dynamic, story-based content is more influential than static photos or written reviews. Influencer posts are chosen mainly by women (8 of the 9 respondents who chose them).

Figure 4.6 Main barrier to visiting AP destination



Travel cost (29.7%) and transport or accessibility (27.0%) are the main barriers to visiting, followed by lack of reliable information (18.9%), safety concerns (12.2%), and lack of time (12.2%). Cost and transport together account for 56.8% of responses, so practical issues, not lack of interest, are what mainly hold tourists back.

Table 4.4 Main barrier by previous visit to an AP destination

Main barrier	Visited	Not visited	Total
Travel cost	9	13	22
Transport/accessibility	13	7	20
Lack of reliable information	7	7	14
Safety concerns	8	1	9
Lack of time	8	1	9
Total	45	29	74

Barriers differ significantly by previous visit ($\chi^2 = 10.45$, $df = 4$, $p = .034$). Travel cost was the main barrier for 13 of the 29 respondents (44.8%) who have not visited, compared with 9 of the 45 (20.0%) who have, and the association between cost and not having visited is also significant (Fisher's exact test, $p = .036$). Cost therefore appears to be the barrier most closely linked to not turning interest into a visit. Because several cells are small, this result should be treated as indicative.

4.7 Hypothesis Testing

H1 to H4: Influence, visual content, trust and likelihood to visit

One-sample Wilcoxon signed-rank tests (Table 4.3) show that mean scores are significantly above the neutral mid-point for destination-choice influence ($p < .001$), the effect of photos and videos ($p < .001$), trust in travel information ($p = .031$), and likelihood to visit ($p < .001$). **H1, H2 and H4 are supported. H3 is supported, but weakly**, since the mean of 3.31 is only modestly above neutral.

H5: Predictors of likelihood to visit

Table 4.5 Spearman correlations with likelihood to visit (Q11), n = 74

Variable	ρ	p-value	Result
Social media influences destination choice (Q8)	-.13	.256	Not significant
Photos and videos increase interest (Q9)	.11	.361	Not significant
Trust in travel information (Q10)	-.07	.558	Not significant
Awareness of AP destinations (Q7)	.01	.923	Not significant
Frequency of use for travel content (Q6)	-.11	.375	Not significant

Table 4.6 Multiple regression: predictors of likelihood to visit (Q11)

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	3.803	1.053		3.61	.001
Influence on destination choice	-0.170	0.135	-.15	-1.26	.212
Photos and videos	0.071	0.146	.06	0.49	.628
Trust	-0.095	0.122	-.09	-0.77	.441
Awareness	0.208	0.190	.13	1.10	.277

$R^2 = .054$, adjusted $R^2 = -.001$, $F(4, 69) = 0.98$, $p = .426$.

None of the perception variables is significantly correlated with likelihood to visit, and the regression model is not significant ($R^2 = .054$). **H5 is not supported**. Likelihood to visit is high across the sample regardless of how strongly respondents rate influence, visual content, or trust. This may reflect the fact that most respondents are heavy users who rate social media highly, leaving little variation to explain, and the small sample also limits statistical power.

H6: Demographic and platform characteristics

Table 4.7 Chi-square tests of association

Variable	Previous visit χ^2 (df)	p	Awareness χ^2 (df)	p
Gender	1.63 (1)	.201	1.29 (2)	.526
Age group	0.61 (3)	.894	8.48 (6)	.205
Occupation	1.57 (4)	.814	4.17 (8)	.841
Location	2.84 (1)	.092	0.40 (2)	.818
Main platform	4.01 (4)	.405	6.72 (8)	.567

Many cells have expected counts below 5, so these results should be read with caution.

No demographic or platform variable is significantly associated with previous visits or awareness. Likelihood to visit also does not differ by gender (Mann–Whitney $p = .510$), age group ($p = .465$), occupation ($p = .598$), main platform ($p = .422$), content type ($p = .994$), or frequency of use ($p = .845$). Respondents from other states rated trust lower (mean 2.70) than those from Andhra Pradesh (3.41), but the difference was not significant (Mann–Whitney $p = .055$). **H6 is not supported.** Mean likelihood was highest among Instagram users (3.95) and lowest among Facebook users (2.80), but only five respondents chose Facebook, so this cannot be generalised.

Table 4.8 Summary of hypothesis tests

Hypothesis	Test	Result	Decision
H1: Social media influences destination choice	Wilcoxon vs 3	Mean 3.99, $p < .001$	Supported
H2: Photos/videos increase interest	Wilcoxon vs 3	Mean 4.05, $p < .001$	Supported
H3: Tourists trust social media travel information	Wilcoxon vs 3	Mean 3.31, $p = .031$	Weakly supported
H4: Likely to visit after seeing content	Wilcoxon vs 3	Mean 3.64, $p < .001$	Supported
H5: Perceptions predict likelihood to visit	Spearman; regression	$R^2 = .054$, $p = .426$	Not supported
H6: Demographics and visits/awareness	Chi-square; Mann–Whitney; Kruskal–Wallis	All $p > .05$	Not supported

5: FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

1. Social media is a habitual travel information source. 70.3% use it for travel content daily and 91.9% at least several times a week.
2. Instagram and YouTube lead. Instagram (29.7%) and YouTube (24.3%) are the most used platforms, followed by Google/search (20.3%) and travel blogs (18.9%); Facebook is least used (6.8%).
3. Awareness is high. 71.6% became aware of Andhra Pradesh destinations through social media.
4. Influence and visual content are strongly endorsed. 78.4% agree that social media influences destination choice and 78.4% that photos and videos increase interest (means 3.99 and 4.05).
5. Short videos and vlogs work best. Reels/short videos (35.1%) and travel vlogs (25.7%) are the most influential content types; reviews/ratings are least (10.8%).
6. Trust is guarded. Trust in social media travel information has a mean of 3.31; 52.7% agree and 25.7% disagree.
7. Intention to visit is positive. 63.5% are likely or very likely to visit an Andhra Pradesh destination after seeing social media content, and 60.8% have visited before.
8. Cost and transport are the main barriers. Travel cost (29.7%) and transport/accessibility (27.0%) lead; cost is significantly more often the main barrier among those who have not visited (44.8% versus 20.0%).
9. Few predictors were significant. Influence, visual content, trust, awareness, demographics, and platform did not significantly explain likelihood to visit, awareness, or previous visits.

5.2 Discussion

The findings agree with the broad conclusion of earlier studies that social media is an effective tourism marketing tool (Islam & Boro, 2019) and that it significantly influences destination selection (Sharma et al., 2023). The dominance of image- and video-based content is consistent with Kumar, Mishra and Rao (2021/2022), who found that scenic and cultural content generated stronger engagement, and with Chandrasekaran et al. (2022), who found that engaging content performs better. The high awareness among respondents also supports the Andhra Pradesh-specific evidence that digital marketing influences travel behaviour (Suman Swami Das, 2024).

Two points differ from what the literature might lead one to expect. First, trust was only moderate. Sharma et al. (2023) treated trust as a driver of destination selection; here it is the weakest-rated item and it did not predict likelihood to visit. Second, none of the perception variables explained likelihood to visit. A likely reason is that almost all respondents are frequent users who rate social media highly, so there is little variation between them, and single-item measures in a sample of 74 have limited power. The result should be read as an absence of evidence in this sample and not as proof that these factors are unimportant.

The barrier results suggest that the gap between interest and visits is about practicalities. Travel cost and transport lead the list, and cost is clearly more common among respondents who have not yet visited. Lack of reliable information (18.9%) also links back to the trust finding: tourists are interested but want dependable information before travelling.

5.3 Suggestions: Social Media Strategies for Promoting Tourism in Andhra Pradesh

1. Lead with short video and vlogs. Prioritise reels, short videos, and travel vlogs, which are the most influential formats, over static posts.
2. Concentrate on Instagram and YouTube, and keep strong search and blog content so that destinations are found when tourists search.
3. Build trust with reliable information. Provide verified details on routes, timings, entry fees, accommodation, and safety through official handles, and encourage genuine visitor reviews and ratings.
4. Address cost and transport barriers in the content. Promote budget itineraries, package deals, and clear public-transport or road-access information for destinations such as Araku Valley, Gandikota, and Konaseema.
5. Work with credible travel influencers, especially to reach women, who were the main audience for influencer posts, and make partnerships transparent.
6. Showcase the diversity of the state (religious, beach, eco, heritage, and adventure tourism) through themed campaigns, and use analytics to track which content converts interest into visits.
7. Address safety concerns with visible information on safety measures, tourist support services, and emergency contacts.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

- The sample ($n = 74$) is small and was selected by convenience, so results cannot be generalised to all tourists.
- The sample is young (60.8% aged 18–24) and some groups, such as Facebook users and respondents from other states, are very small.
- Responses are self-reported, and each construct was measured by a single item, so reliability could not be established (negative Cronbach's alpha).
- Several chi-square tests had cells with small expected counts.
- The study is cross-sectional and shows association, not causation. It measures intention, not actual visits triggered by social media, and does not study specific destinations or campaigns.

5.5 Conclusion

This study examined the impact of social media marketing on tourism promotion in Andhra Pradesh. Social media is a daily source of travel information for the respondents, Instagram and YouTube are the main platforms, and most respondents became aware of Andhra Pradesh destinations through social media. Visual content, especially reels and travel vlogs, is seen as the most influential, and nearly two-thirds say they are likely to visit after seeing such content.

However, trust in social media travel information is guarded, and travel cost, transport, and lack of reliable information stand between interest and actual visits. The study therefore concludes that social media marketing is a valuable but not sufficient tool for promoting Andhra Pradesh tourism: it creates awareness and interest effectively, but its impact depends on credible information and on addressing practical barriers. Larger studies with more detailed measurement are needed to confirm these findings.

5.6 Scope for Further Research

Future research could use a larger, probability-based sample; use multi-item scales for trust, engagement, and destination image; compare destinations within Andhra Pradesh (for example, Tirupati, Visakhapatnam, and Araku Valley); analyse the content published by Andhra Pradesh Tourism on different platforms; and examine actual visit behaviour after exposure to campaigns.

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