

A Study on Consumers' Perception towards Contemporary Travel Marketing Trends

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ABSTRACT

With the advent of internet and easy access to information, almost every industry has adopted changes in their marketing strategies. Travel industry has witnessed different marketing trends with the passage of every generation of consumers – from pamphlets to glossy brochures to travel agents, advertising on social media, chat bots, websites, blogs, Mobile applications and many more. This is a study showing the consumers' perception towards various marketing trends being adopted by the Travel Industry. The research will focus on objectives such as consumer awareness, consumers' perception on reliability factor towards contemporary Travel Marketing Trends and some data analysis will be done on selected travel marketing trends and their dependence on gender and age group. For Data Analysis; testing of hypothesis, Chi-Square test & descriptive statistic shall be used.

1. Introduction

These days technology is so deeply rooted into our system that it not only affects the professional lives but also our personal lives.

With the advent of internet and easy access to information, almost every industry has adopted changes in their marketing strategies. Travel industry has witnessed different marketing trends with the passage of every generation of consumers – from pamphlets to glossy brochures to travel agents, advertising on social media, chat bots, websites, blogs, Mobile applications and many more.

According to Luis Maroto, Chief Chief Executive Officer and President of Amadeus;

“The global travel industry, and the way in which consumers experience it, is changing so dramatically that it requires a fundamental change to the way in which travel is sold and how the traveller is served.”

The travel industry has taken a lot of smart moves with the help of technology so as to keep the travel experience more and more hassle free, where information is available just at the fingertips which helps in online ticket booking, to have their boarding pass online and track their distance and weather of the destination online.

The Adweek, has listed top 10 trends that are shaping the Travel Marketing today. They are:

- (1) The Instagram Effect
- (2) Online Video
- (3) Curated, Personalised Trips
- (4) Homes away from homes
- (5) Authentically local feel
- (6) 'Bleisure': Business plus Leisure
- (7) A more intimate connection
- (8) Openness
- (9) Chatbots

(10) Disconnecting

2. Statement of Research Problem

This research attempts to understand the consumers' perception towards a list of contemporary travel marketing trends. Although there have been a lot of usage of internet and various modes of easy access to information on travelling, it is still unknown to what extent each of these trends are useful such as travel websites, blogs, mobile applications and more. Also people may be referring to multiple modes to get the right kind of information like Trivago, Makemytrip and cleartrip; it needs an insight into how much one relies on each of these modes. Sometimes it so happens that not all the travel websites or mobile applications give the same type of information and here is where it is required to test how much a customer relies on such trends which are highly marketed by the travel industry.

3. Review of Literature

Thomases, (2017) in his research on Redefining the Travel Customer Experience suggests that in U.S 44percent of travellers research & book their travel on smart phone. 65percent avoid hotels that charge for wifi and upto 73percent believe that mobile boarding passes make travelling much easier. People these days use Travel Chatbots, mobile & voice search to find immediate answers to their travel related problems. It also suggested that companies who align their marketing with the digital transformation, will win in the game to satisfy the customers travel experiences.

Offutt, (2016) in his research on Travel Innovation and Technology Trends 2016 suggested that the new emerging trends have the potential to be game changer for the travel industry. It was also found that business and technology trends that affect the future of travel distribution are going to be the major game changers for the travel industry. They are Block chain Payment technology, less cost of operating internet, social media networks and E- Commerce, virtual reality applications, messaging i.e. check in with the help of messaging applications like Whatsapp & Facebook Messenger.

They said the key to success is continuous innovation and for longer duration projects, strategic leadership should be sought for.

Amadeus, (2017) conducted a research in Nice, France. The research talks about Generation Y and Generation Z and new ways of coming up with the design of combining digital and human aspects of travel retail. It was found that 77 percent of the interviewed had never set their foot into the Travel Agency, 49 percent found travel inspiration through their social network. The research shows that due to the advent of artificial intelligence and digital world, many players in the travel industry might be at crossroads.

Inigo Aranzabal, Alex Luzarraga, Yelena Ageyeva-Furman, Rafael Hernandez, (2017) conducted a research on Imagining the future of travel industry. This research talks about border controls, security concerns and how travellers can benefit from real time information. They talk about developing Asia and improvising Europe, the respective ecosystem and their integration with the technology. The findings suggest that traditional travel providers such as hotels and airlines will lose their direct relationship with customers as tech giants become the industry's gate keepers. It shows the colonisation of Google, its partner website and combination of mobile messaging platforms like whatsapp, snapchat and Line hold upper hand in providing strong information to travellers.

Bisht, (2016) is of an opinion that Asia Pacific is going to be the most lucrative market till 2022 for travel industry where India and China are going to be the most lucrative market. The key players in the Indian market are Makemytrip, Yatra and cleartrip. It found that 90% of the business travellers in India own a smartphone and generally book their travel online. It is also estimated that the future trend will see a huge downloadable mobile applications culture around Asia Pacific, Europe and North America.

4. Significance of Research

The purpose behind doing this research is to understand which of the contemporary trends people use while planning a trip/travel. To understand consumers' choice of modes of accessibility to travel information, their reliance on the contemporary trends will help to know the same. The research is also done to understand the relationship between different age group of people and their choice of contemporary modes of travel marketing. This research also attempts to check if there is any association between gender and specific contemporary travel trends.

5. Scope of the research

This research is done taking selective contemporary travel marketing trends namely; social media posts (Twitter/Facebook/Instagram), online video, customised personalized trips, holiday homes, authentic local feel apartments, chatbots, digital detox, travel websites, travel blogs and android mobile applications.

The research is limited to people residing in India only who have recently travelled either within India or abroad.

6. Research Objectives

- To understand the consumers' perception towards selected contemporary travel marketing trends.
- To know the awareness about contemporary Travel Marketing Trends among people.
- To check whether a relationship exists between Gender and perception towards various travel marketing trends.
- To understand the perception of people on the reliability factor towards contemporary Travel Marketing Trends.

7. Research Hypothesis

1. H0A: There is no significant relationship between Contemporary Travel Marketing Trends and Age Group of respondents.

- i. Ha: Reliability on Chatbots is independent of Age Group.
- ii. Hb: Reliability on Travel Websites is independent of Age Group.
- iii. Hc: Reliability on Travel Agent is independent of Age Group
- iv. Hd: Reliability on Travel Blogs is independent of Age Group
- v. He: Reliability on Android Mobile Applications is independent of Age Group.
- vi. Hf: Reliability on Social Media Posts is independent of Age Group.
- vii. Hg: Reliability on Reference Group is independent of Age Group
- viii. Hh: Reliability on Online Video is independent of Age Group.

2. H0B: There is no significant relationship between Contemporary Travel Marketing Trends and Gender of respondents.

- i. Ha: Reliability on Chatbots is independent of Gender.
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- vii. Hg: Reliability on Reference Group is independent of Gender.
- viii. Hh: Reliability on Online Video is independent of Gender.

8. Research Methodology

- **Research Design:** A descriptive research design has been applied to know the perceptions of travel

consumers towards the various contemporary travel marketing trends set by the travel industry.

- **Research instrument:** A questionnaire has been used as a survey was conducted to understand the consumers' perception towards contemporary travel marketing trends followed by the travel industry.
- **Sampling Method:** A non Probability, Convenience Sampling method has been applied.
- **Sampling Frame:** An Indian population ranging in the age group of 18 years to 70 years; who have travelled in the recent past has been considered.
- **Sample Size:** 104 respondents are being surveyed.

A questionnaire was sent to the people in the age group of 18 to 70 years, who have travelled recently.

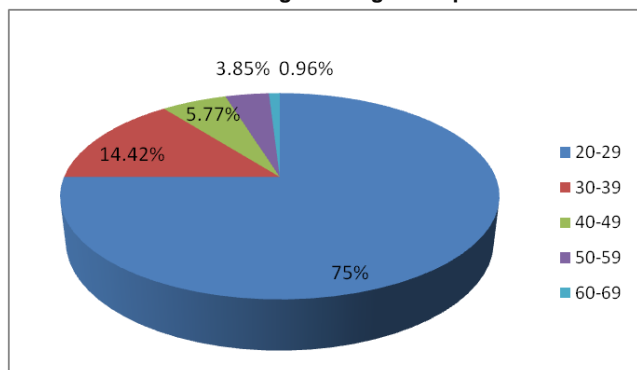
9. Data Analysis & Interpretation:

1. Gender:

Out of the total respondents of 104 who travelled recently, females constituted 50 percent and males constituted 50percent i.e. 52 males and 52 females.

2. Age Group :

Figure 1: Age Group



The pie-chart above shows that out of the total respondents, 75 percent people who travelled recently fall under the age group of 20-29 years; followed by people in the age groups of 30-39 years and 40-49 years both constituting 14.42percent and 5.77percent respectively. The people who fall under the age of 50-59 years and 60-69 years constitute 3.85percent and 0.96percent respectively, of the respondents who travelled recently.

3. Frequency of Travel :

Table 1: Frequency of Travel

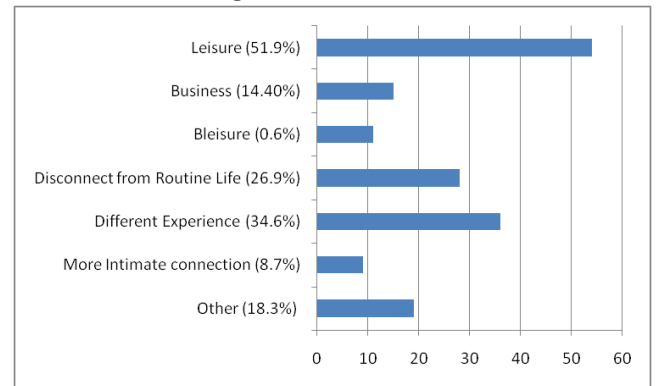
| Frequency Of Travel | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------|
| More than Twice a year | 28.8 |
| Twice a year | 18.4 |
| Once a year | 17.3 |
| Not Fixed | 35.5 |

With the majority of Indian Population representative sample, 35.5percent said that there is no fixed time for them to travel. While 28.8percent of the people said they travel atleast more than twice a year. Whereas 18.4percent people said they

travel twice a year and 17.3percent people said they travel just once a year.

4. Reasons To Travel:

Figure 2: Reasons To Travel



To understand the consumers' perception on contemporary travel marketing trends, it becomes very important to know the reasons for their travel, as the reasons will help understand their perception towards the travel marketing trends.

Respondents gave multiple reasons to travel ranging from Leisure to Business to Bleisure(Business plus leisure) & many more.51.9percent of times respondents chose Leisure , making it the major reason for travel. Also 34.6percent of times people chose to travel to experience a different place, culture, customs and traditions. The third most preferred reason to travel is to disconnect from routine life as 26.9percent of times respondents have selected that. The major difference between choosing Leisure is that they are planned vacations while travelling for Disconnecting from Routine Life is usually a forced vacation , so as to get a change over which is much needed rather than planned. Apart from the reasons mentioned in the above chart there are also some other reasons whereby people chose to travel and the reasons are some fortunate and unfortunate incidents within the family and also due to enrolment of students for further education but at distant places. Therefore 18.3 percent of the times respondents have chosen 'Other' as a reason to travel.

5. Habit of Researching Online Before Travel:

Table 2: Habit of Researching Online Before Travel

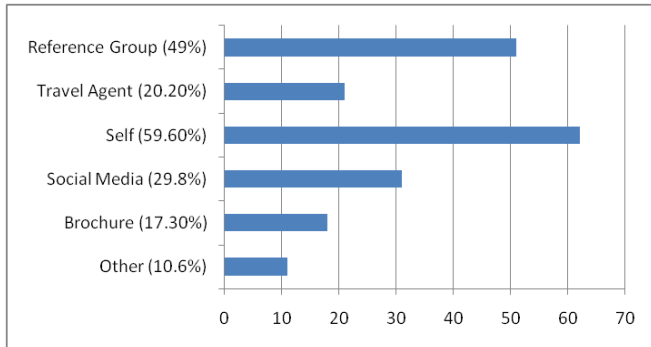
| Habit Of Researching Online Before Travel | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| Always | 47.1 |
| Sometimes | 45.2 |
| Never | 7.7 |

47.10percent of the respondents said that they always research online before planning a trip/Travel. While 45.2percent of the respondents also said that they check online

sometimes only before travel while just 7.7percent respondents said that they never research online before travel or planning a trip.

6. Who do they refer to while planning a Trip/Travel:

Figure 3: Respondents reference towards; while planning a travel



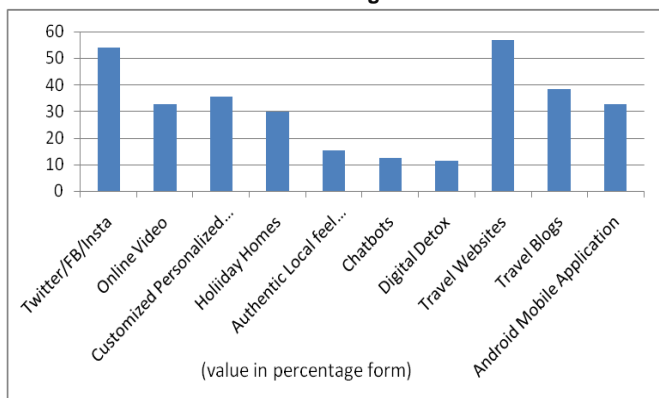
The column chart shows that people highly refer to their close reference group and their own selves while planning a trip/travel ,i.e. 59.6percent of times people gave high preference to self and 49percent of times to Reference group. It is also observed that people prefer more of Social Media than on the Travel agent. It is also observed that other sources are preferred while planning a travel, they are mainly Mobile Applications & Brochures.

7. Awareness of Contemporary Travel Marketing Trends:

It is observed that people are aware about a lot of latest travel marketing trends , whereby the awareness about Travel Websites is seen the highest among respondents by 56.7percent; followed by Twitter/Facebook/Instagram Posts by53.8percent. A high awareness has been seen for Travel blogs by 38.5percent. Customized personalized trips are also very famous among people as the awareness level is 35.6percent followed by Android Mobile Applications and Online Video(Story Telling) by32.7percent each.

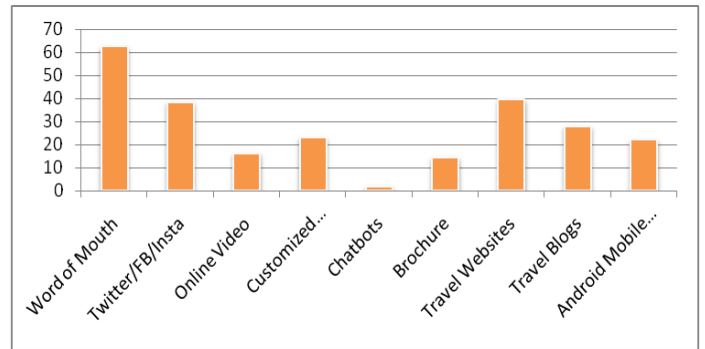
Yet the awareness levels for Digital Detox, Chatbots and Authentic Holiday Homes were seen less indicating 11.5percent, 12.5percent and 15.4percent respectively.

Figure 4: Levels of Awareness for Each of the Contemporary Travel Marketing Trends



8. The Marketing Trends Considered to be actually Useful while planning a Trip:

Figure 5: Trends considered to be actually useful while planning a travel



It is observed that although people are aware about a lot of contemporary travel marketing trends, only a few have been considered really useful by them while planning a trip/travel.

Word of mouth still remains the most useful tool even in the 21st century when it comes to planning a travel as 62.5percent of times people said it is more useful than any other marketing trend.

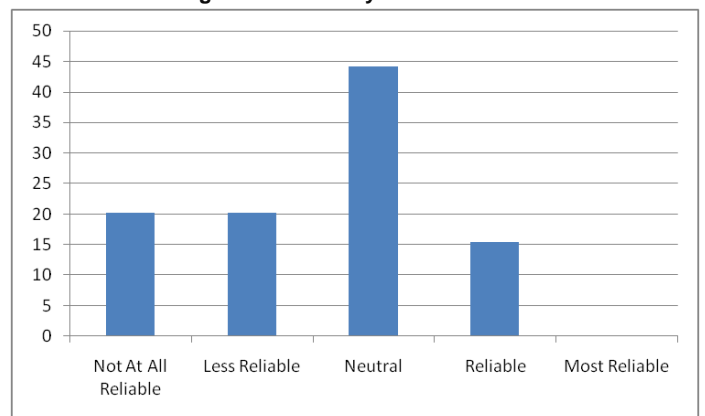
39.4percent of times people considered Travel Websites to be useful, followed by Social Networking sites(Twitter, Facebook, Instagram posts) by 38.5percent, travel blogs by 27.9percent and Android Mobile Applications by 22.1percent.

It is also observed that, chatbots are not considered to be useful by most of the people as only 2percent of people have said they consider it to be useful.

9. Rating on Reliability factor for various Contemporary Travel Marketing Trends:

(i) Chatbots

Figure 6: Reliability on Chatbots



It is observed that most of the respondents have rated chatbots' reliability as neutral by 44.2percent. It is also learnt that just 15% of the people consider it to be reliable while most other consider it to be not at all reliable, less reliable.

(ii) Travel Websites:

It can be observed that most of the respondents have rated this as reliable on a Likert scale by 44.2percent.

Figure 7: Reliability on Travel Websites

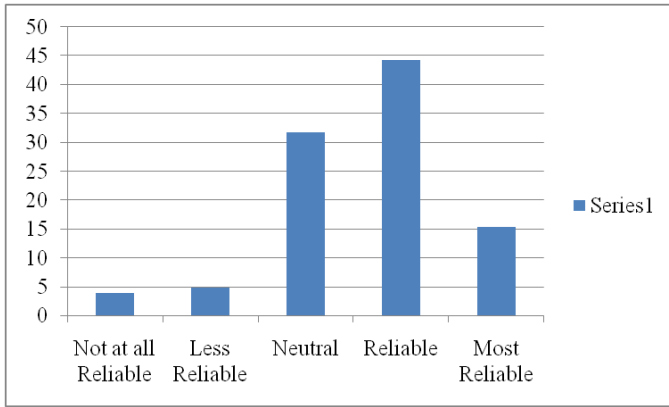
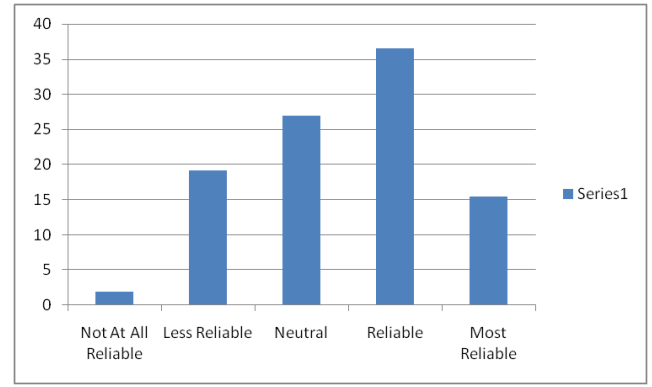


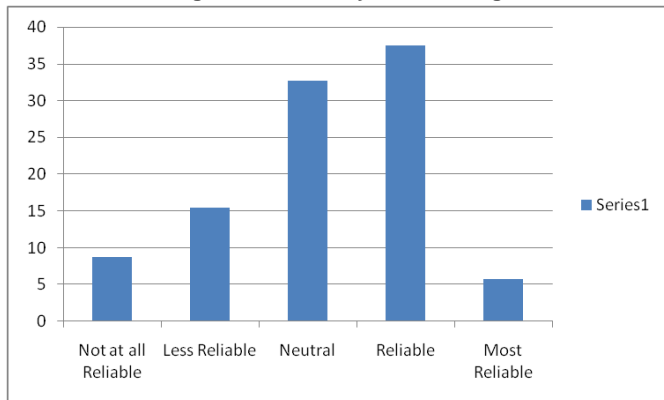
Figure 10: Reliability on Android Mobile Applications



(iii) Travel Agent:

It is observed that there is no much difference between the percentage of people who have rated Travel Agents as reliable and as neutral. The Likert scale shows that 32.7 percent people have rated it as neutral while 37.5 percent people have rated it as Reliable.

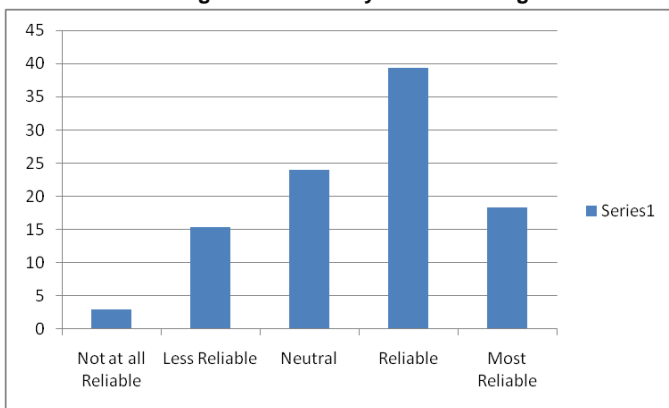
Figure 8: Reliability on Travel Agents



(iv) Travel Blogs:

It is observed that most of the people feel that Travel Blogs are reliable as 39.4percent of them have rated it as reliable.

Figure 9: Reliability on Travel Blogs



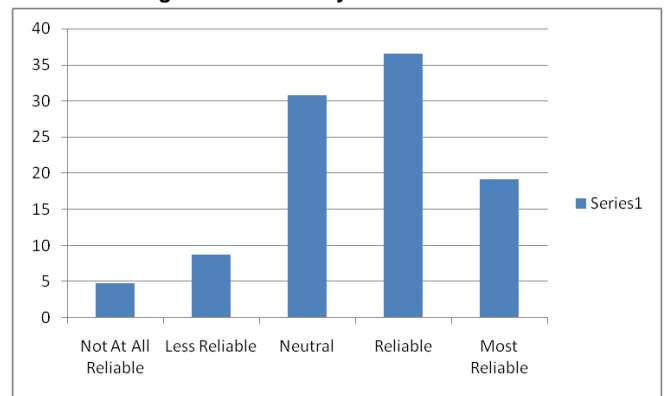
(v) Android Mobile Applications:

It is observed that more number of people feel that Android Mobile applications have been reliable while planning a trip/ travel. 36.5 percent of respondents have rated it as reliable.

(vi) Social Media Posts (Twitter/Facebook/Instagram) by Travel Companies:

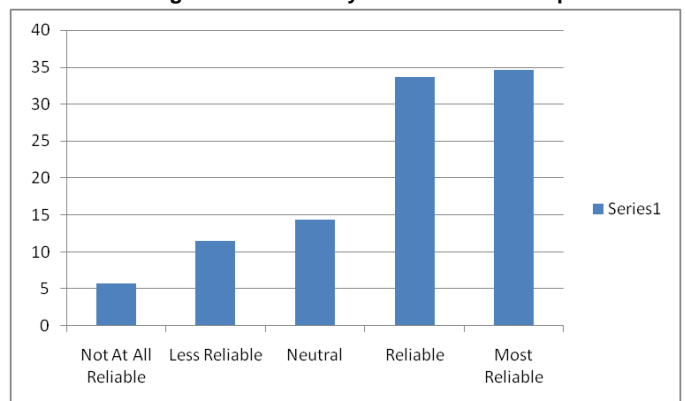
It is observed that 30.8 percent of the people feel that social media posts by travel companies are reliable, while at the same time 36.5 percent of the people said they are neutral towards the same.

Figure 11: Reliability on Social Media Posts



(vii) Reference Group (Word of mouth):

Figure 12: Reliability on Reference Groups

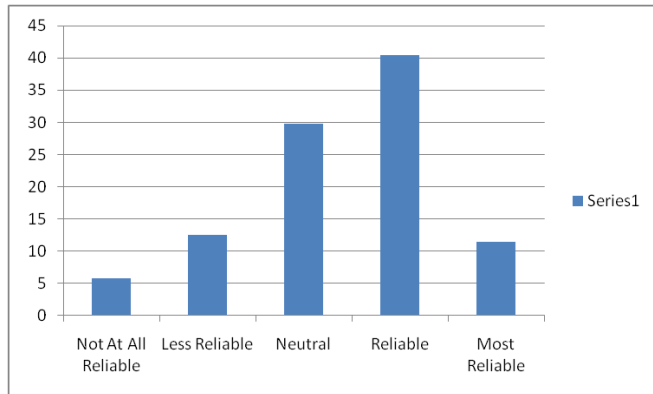


It is observed that most of the people feel that reference group experiences and advices are most reliable as 33.7percent people have rated it as reliable and 34.6percent people have rated it as most reliable.

(viii) Online Video (Story Telling):

It is observed that more number of people feel that online videos are also considered as reliable when it comes to travel marketing trends. 40.4percent people have rated it on the Likert scale as reliable.

Figure 13: Reliability on Online Video



10. Hypothesis Testing

The data analysis shown below gives the results on dependence /independence on Reliability of various contemporary travel marketing trends on age group and gender.

In each of the crosstab below, the value in respective column, 1.00 = Not at all reliable, 2= Less Reliable, 3.00 = Neutral, 4.00 = Reliable, 5.00 = Most Reliable.

(I) H0A: There is no significant relationship between Contemporary Travel Marketing Trends and Age Group of respondents.

1. Ha: Reliability on Chatbots is independent of Age Group.
2. Hb: Reliability on Travel Websites is independent of Age Group.
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6. Hf: Reliability on Social Media Posts is independent of Age Group.
7. Hg: Reliability on Reference Group is independent of Age Group.
8. Hh: Reliability on Online Video is independent of Age Group.

Table3: P- Value corresponding to Contemporary Travel Marketing Trends Vs Age Group.

| Sr. No. | Contemporary Travel Marketing Trends VS Age Group | Pearson Chi- Square tests | | |
|---------|---|---------------------------|----|-----------------------|
| | | Value | Df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| 1 | Chatbots | 20.322 ^a | 15 | 0.16 |
| 2 | Travel Websites | 23.039 ^a | 20 | 0.287 |
| 3 | Travel Agent | 6.345 ^a | 20 | 0.998 |
| 4 | Travel Blogs | 20.825 ^a | 20 | 0.407 |
| 5 | Android Mobile Applications | 23.490 ^a | 20 | 0.265 |
| 6 | Social Media Posts | 18.899 ^a | 20 | 0.528 |
| 7 | Reference Group | 17.670 ^a | 20 | 0.609 |
| 8 | Online Video | 10.390 ^a | 20 | 0.961 |

Interpretation: Since the p value corresponding to chi-square is more than 0.05 therefore null hypothesis is accepted. It means there is no significant relationship between Contemporary Travel Marketing Trends and Age Group of respondents.

The reliability of respondents on All the above mentioned contemporary travel marketing trends such as Chatbots, Travel Websites, Travel Agents, Travel blogs, Android Mobile Applications, Social Media Posts, Reference Group and Online Video is independent of age group.

(II) H0B: There is no significant relationship between Contemporary Travel Marketing Trends and Gender of respondents.

1. Ha: Reliability of respondents on Chatbots is independent of Gender.
2. Hb: Reliability of respondents on Travel Websites is independent of Gender.
3. Hc: Reliability of respondents on Travel Agent is independent of Gender.
4. Hd: Reliability of respondents on Travel Blogs is independent of Gender.
5. He: Reliability of respondents on Android Mobile Applications is independent of Gender.
6. Hf: Reliability of respondents on Social Media Posts is independent of Gender.
7. Hg: Reliability of respondents on Reference Group is independent of Gender.
8. Hh: Reliability of respondents on Online Video is independent of Gender.

Table 4: P- Value corresponding to Contemporary Travel Marketing Trends Vs Gender.

| Sr. No. | Contemporary Travel Marketing Trends VS Gender | Pearson Chi- Square tests | | |
|---------|--|---------------------------|----|-----------------------|
| | | Value | Df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| 1 | Chatbots | 10.987 ^a | 3 | 0.012 |
| 2 | Travel Websites | 3.045 ^a | 4 | 0.55 |

| | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------|---|-------|
| 3 | Travel Agent | 1.254 ^a | 4 | 0.869 |
| 4 | Travel Blogs | 6.890 ^a | 4 | 0.142 |
| 5 | Android Mobile Applications | 3.591 ^a | 4 | 0.464 |
| 6 | Social Media Posts | 4.759 ^a | 4 | 0.313 |
| 7 | Reference Group | 4.759 ^a | 4 | 0.313 |
| 8 | Online Video | 8.547 ^a | 4 | 0.073 |

Interpretation:

Ha: Reliability of respondents on Chatbots is independent of Gender.

This is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted. Since the p value corresponding to chi-square is 0.012 which is less than 0.05, therefore null hypothesis is rejected and the reliability of respondents on Chatbots is dependent on Gender.

The reliability of respondents on all the other, above mentioned contemporary travel marketing trends such as Travel Websites, Travel Agents, Travel blogs, Android Mobile Applications, Social Media Posts, Reference Group and Online Video is independent of gender.

Since the p value corresponding to chi-square is more than 0.05 therefore null hypothesis is accepted. It means there is no significant relationship between Contemporary Travel Marketing Trends and Age Group of respondents.

11. Suggestions

1. More innovative ideas, like giving a welcome gift to travellers when they reach hotels or board flights booked through either websites or mobile applications can help the travel industry marketers to fight the competition as the population seems to adapt any new trends easily.
2. A combination of complementary meals from the hotels is always available, also if the package is customized in such a way that for booking through the mobile application or website and looking for a specific hotel can plan one complementary meal from hotel and another from website or the application. This can boost more reliability about the perception towards the websites and the mobile applications.
3. Security of data is something that is inevitable to be maintained by the marketers, then the reliability on social media and android mobile applications will increase further.

4. Chatbots have seen most neutrality when it comes to reliability. So if artificial intelligence is put to some better use in identifying a person's name through his mobile data and making a personal address to the needs and give suggestions according to the budget of that person, in guiding the people on travel tips, it can prove to be more reliable.
5. Travel websites and travel blogs have shown higher reliability hence it would be better to continuously keep updating the websites as well as blogs on newer trends and more information about better places, rates, customs and traditions related to that place. Along with regular updation, the travel companies should give some exciting offers to personal bloggers to write about their travel companies, just like instagram pays a couple to travel around the world and post great pictures.
6. As Holiday Homes, the trend has picked up pace, low budget service apartments that give authentic local feel should also be marketed by Makemytrip, Tripoto and Trivago like portals to give a budget stay to the potential customers who may not be looking for more luxury.

12. Limitations of study

1. The list of contemporary travel marketing trends on which the respondents were surveyed, is not an exhaustive one.
2. The respondents reply can be biased.
3. As the sample size is small, the results may differ if done with a larger sample size.

13. Conclusion

From the above study it can be concluded that people are aware of majority of contemporary travel marketing trends. But at the same time their perception towards these marketing trends is not the same as for all. Some of the marketing trends such as travel websites and travel blogs are more reliable than others. Also the point cannot be missed that even in this era of digital world, the perception towards preferring the views of reference group is still highly regarded.

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