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Recommended Citation

Majeed, Dr. Rukhsana and Gupta, Dr. Radha () "An Investigation into the Impact of Social Media on the Promotion of Sustainable Tourism in the Tourist Destinations of Kashmir Division," *Journal of Tourism Insights*: Vol. 14: Iss. 1, Article 20.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.9707/2328-0824.1397>

Available at: <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/jti/vol14/iss1/20>



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An Investigation into the Impact of Social Media on the Promotion of Sustainable Tourism in the Tourist Destinations of Kashmir Division

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Abstract: The aim of this research paper is to investigate the impact of social media on the promotion of sustainable tourism in the tourist destinations of Kashmir division. The study offers information on sustainable tourism and associated destination products that should be promoted on social media. Convenience sampling was used to determine the sample size. The study's findings demonstrate a substantial understanding of sustainable tourism in the selected region and establish a link between social media use and socially sustainable tourism, especially in areas with low economic status. The study's conclusions include the significant impact on employment and revenue generation, poverty alleviation, and sales of local ethnic art and craft products. It also suggests strategies to enhance sustainable tourism in the Kashmir division.

Key Words: Sustainable tourism products, Social Media, Religious Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Cultural Heritage.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of social media on the promotion of sustainable tourism in the tourist destinations of Kashmir division. Study aims to identify sustainable tourism products and destinations that can be effectively promoted on social media platforms. It also aims to establish the link between social media use and socially sustainable tourism, particularly in regions with low economic status. It will explore the key socioeconomic and cultural elements that support sustainable tourism and enhance a destination's reputation. It may also highlights the importance of thoughtful policies to guide tourism and infrastructure development, employment generation, revenue generation, poverty alleviation, and sales of local handicrafts. The intention of the study is to fill the research gap on the role of social media in promoting sustainable tourism in the Kashmir division and provide valuable insights and recommendations for tourism stakeholders and policymakers. The following studies are a few that might support this one when examining how social media affects the promotion of sustainable tourism in the study area's tourist destinations: According to ([Rathorea, A. K. et al. , 2017](#)) Using search engines to organise vacations, social media plays a significant role in the internet tourist industry. From an opportunity standpoint, the study offers marketers and the tourism department the important value factors. Utilising social media could require a lot of work to pursue several options. Therefore, in order to enhance the quality of their information and services, tourist sector players (such as marketers and departments) should concentrate on their social media initiatives. ([Omar Salem Seed Gebreel & Ayman Shuayb, 2019](#)) It is imperative for tourism sites and destinations to utilise social media channels in order to create a compelling brand image that resonates with customers. In light of this, tourist destinations need to continuously strive to raise the calibre of their offerings. In order to build goodwill among the users of these platforms, they need also include them. ([Gergely Ráthonyi, 2012](#)) Social media has a significant influence on search results related to tourism, which means that we can get even more recent information or visitor opinions there. Social media platforms have impacted the tourism sector, causing it to adjust to the Web 2.0 phenomenon and address the evolving demands and anticipations of travellers. ([Mateen Yousuf, 2020](#)) Due to increased competition, travel agencies are able to maintain their lead by making full use of social media. As a tool for quality control, social media reviews must be constantly monitored by the travel and tourist industry. ([sahoo, S. S. & Mukunda. B.G, 2017](#)) The use of social media is still expanding. It is having an expanding impact on various social and economic facets. In the travel and tourism sector, social media is crucial. ([Pawan Kumar & Nisha Kumari, 2022](#)) Through a variety of social media platforms, travellers examine ratings, reviews, and comments. Researchers continue to debate whether social media can actually increase tourism business conversion, as well as visitor satisfaction and the frequency of follow-up visits.

(Rojanard Waramontri, 2020) It is crucial to concentrate on ethics and how service providers advertise on social media in the marketplace. Organisations must embrace new social media tactics and ethical social media management if they hope to survive. (Liu et al., 2020) Social media plays a particularly significant role in restaurant and lodging selections. Social media's continuous growth significantly influences various social and economic aspects. there is a need for comprehensive investigations to understand its impact on all facets of the industry and demonstrate its economic contribution(Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Surveys reveal that approximately 50% of individuals are inclined to download travel applications and research destinations before embarking on vacations(Živković et al., 2014).

This study attempts to investigate social media's impact on the promotion of sustainable tourism in the Kashmir Division of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. This investigation also offers valuable insights into sustainable tourism and associated products across all destinations within the Kashmir Division. The identified elements requiring promotion on social media platforms are emphasized. The study aims to furnish crucial information to the government, local communities, and providers of sustainable tourism, enabling them to plan media initiatives and formulate effective marketing strategies.

The study may have significant implications and importance in understanding the role of social media in promoting sustainable tourism in the Tourist Destinations of Kashmir Division. It may highlight the transformative impact of the internet on global consumption patterns and emphasizes the pivotal role of tourism in fostering local sustainability. The research would explore the potential of social media platforms in enhancing visibility, accessibility, and engagement with sustainable tourism destinations. It would emphasize the need for thoughtful policies to guide tourism and infrastructure development, ensuring the preservation of natural resources and eco-sensitive destinations. It may also underscores the socio-economic benefits of sustainable tourism, such as employment generation, revenue generation, and poverty alleviation. By leveraging social media, promoting local products, addressing socio-economic and cultural factors, implementing thoughtful policies, and focusing on employment generation and poverty alleviation, the study suggests strategies that can contribute to the enhancement of sustainable tourism in the Kashmir Division. Overall, present study will provide valuable insights and recommendations for policymakers, tourism stakeholders, and researchers interested in promoting sustainable tourism and utilizing social media effectively.

The contribution of this study lies in its exploration of the impact of social media on promoting sustainable tourism in the Kashmir Division. It will provide insights into the potential benefits of utilizing social media platforms for raising awareness, promoting local products, and addressing socio-economic and cultural factors

related to sustainable tourism. It will highlight the need for thoughtful policies to guide tourism and infrastructure development, ensuring the preservation of natural resources and eco-sensitive destinations. It may emphasize the significant socio-economic impact of sustainable tourism, including employment generation, revenue generation, and poverty alleviation. By leveraging social media effectively and implementing thoughtful policies, the study suggests strategies that can contribute to the enhancement of sustainable tourism in the Kashmir Division. Overall, this study would add to the existing body of knowledge on sustainable tourism and its relationship with social media, providing valuable recommendations for tourism stakeholders and policymakers.

2. Review of literature

According to (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), “Social Media categorizes various applications under specific groups based on their characteristics. These include collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds”. In light of the rapid advancement in modern technology, particularly social networking sites, there is a heightened competition among tourism companies to offer the best deals on tourist destinations (Alhizzawi et al., 2018). The advent of social media represents a significant milestone for businesses and government agencies in redefining communication and engagement with their target audiences. This transformation has altered our communication habits and behaviors through the Internet, establishing a new medium for information consumption and dissemination. User-generated content (UGC) is recognized as an additional information source in travelers' decision-making processes, supplementing rather than replacing other sources of information (Manap & Adzharudin, 2013). The internet has become a crucial platform for tourism, transforming the industry by providing direct access to information and purchasing options for travelers. The development of Web 2.0 has expanded these possibilities, significantly altering tourists' information search behavior and decision-making processes, reducing reliance on intermediaries (Ráthonyi, 2013). The expanding role of social media in tourism is a growing research focus, influencing various aspects from information search to decision-making behaviors. Social media not only shapes tourist behaviors but also plays a crucial role in the promotion of tourism. It enables tourism service providers to glean valuable insights and feedback from tourists and the public, guiding them towards best practices in the industry (T. Mir, 2017). Social media encompasses a wide range of content types within social networks, including blog posts, forum discussions, photos, audio, videos, links, profiles, and status updates. It facilitates the easy creation, upload, and global sharing of content, enabling individuals to contribute and exchange user-generated content and experiences online. Essentially, social media involves the sharing of information within a social

network through various platforms and services (Nadda et al., 2015). The tourism industry recognizes the significant potential of social media as a powerful tool for shaping destination reputation and influencing consumer opinions. In a bid to enhance its tourism image, the Madhya Pradesh government has engaged a reputable brand and advertising agency. Recognizing the prevalence of domestic tourists in India, the state government has strategically employed TV commercials as a means to effectively promote tourism. This underscores the importance of marketing and advertising in capturing the attention of tourists and fostering positive word-of-mouth advertising (Gohil, 2015). The tourism industry recognizes the significant potential of social media as a powerful tool for shaping destination reputation and influencing consumer opinions. In a bid to enhance its tourism image, the Madhya Pradesh government has engaged a reputable brand and advertising agency. Recognizing the prevalence of domestic tourists in India, the state government has strategically employed TV commercials as a means to effectively promote tourism. This underscores the importance of marketing and advertising in capturing the attention of tourists and fostering positive word-of-mouth advertising (Sahin & Sengün, 2015). Social media plays a crucial role in both the demand and supply aspects of tourism. It enables destinations to directly engage with visitors through various online platforms, facilitating real-time interaction. Additionally, it allows destinations to monitor and respond to visitor opinions and evaluations of services, enhancing the overall tourism experience (Kiráľová & Pavlíček, 2015). The growth of the ICT (Information Communication Technology) industry has driven the extensive use of social media, transforming it into a potent marketing tool, especially in tourism. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn are pivotal for travel information. Shared travel experiences on social media serve as influential inspirations for others. Businesses in tourism can attract more travelers, and governments can enhance competitiveness through social media. With appropriate initiatives, Bangladesh has the potential to become a sought-after destination in South Asia, making a substantial contribution to its economy through the flourishing tourism industry (Karim, 2018). Social media has revolutionized the generation and distribution of tourism-related information. While past studies emphasized the positive impacts of social media on tourism management, there is a growing acknowledgment of its downside, particularly in providing consumers with enhanced facilities for lodging complaints (Dolan et al., 2019). The study reveals a positive correlation between Facebook penetration and tourist arrivals, emphasizing its significance, particularly in countries with both high and low initial tourist arrival levels. The identified positive relationship is attributed to transformations in travel research, increased social sharing, advancements in customer service, and the restructuring of travel agencies (Asongu & Odhiambo, 2019). According to (Bakhtishodovich et al., 2015), The analysis of their studies indicates a predominant

focus on the positive impact of user-generated content in enhancing "Traveler interaction and brand image improvement" within the tourism sector. To meet increasing guest expectations and enhance destination brand image, the introduction of new services through emerging technologies is considered essential. The second major benefit identified by the selected papers is the improved "Information availability of destination and services."

The literature indicates that few studies have been conducted in the Indian context on the relatively new idea of using social media to promote awareness of sustainable tourism. The research on the role of social media in promoting awareness of sustainable development, predominantly in the Indian context is lacking. By investigating the function of social media in raising awareness of sustainable tourism in the tourist destination Kashmir division of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, this study attempts to fill this research gap. Furthermore, Key socioeconomic and cultural elements that greatly support sustainable tourism and improve a destination's reputation are identified in the study.

3. Research objectives

1. To determine the key socio-economic elements that the UT (Union Territory) of Jammu and Kashmir has to focus on in order to develop sustainable tourism.
2. To determine the cultural elements that are crucial to sustainable development.
3. To recognize how social media helps to promote sustainable travel destinations and raise awareness.
4. To determine which items in Jammu and Kashmir are viable for tourism.

4. Study Area

The study area comprises of the of Kashmir division of Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir. The major tourist destinations in the Union Territory's (UT's) Kashmir division were easily accessible to the researchers, and therefore were identified for conducting the present study. The present study was conducted in the key popular tourist destinations in the Kashmir region and therefore was identified for conducting the present study. The tourists visiting the main tourist locations in the Kashmir Division, namely Srinagar, Gulmarg, Pahalgam, and Sonamarg, were the sources of primary data collection.

4.1 Sustainability of tourism development in Kashmir division

According to (Dar & Islam, 2018), "The Kashmir region is renowned for its unique natural and cultural tourism attractions, drawing visitors from around the world. To sustain and enhance tourism in the area, the government has implemented various initiatives. These include expanding tourism infrastructure, creating new tourist destinations, and identifying additional tourist circuits". (Jan, 2020), The study

indicates high satisfaction among tourists visiting Kashmir, particularly with prime attractions such as culture, crafts, local cuisine, people's attitude, festivals, and the natural beauty of the valley. While overall satisfaction with facilities and services is noted, some respondents express dissatisfaction with specific aspects. These include the availability of tourist information centers, telecommunication facilities near tourist spots, banking facilities near tourist areas, special tourism area packages, and information on the official website. Additionally, the study underscores the significant role of accommodation in shaping tourists' satisfaction with their experience in Kashmir. (Aslam et al., 2018), Kashmir, known as the "Paradise on Earth," draws millions of tourists yearly, bolstering the state's GDP. However, the eco-sensitive nature of many destinations poses challenges. The study stresses the need for thoughtful policies to guide tourism and infrastructure development, preventing harm to natural resources. It concludes that tourism trends are linked to the region's law and order, emphasizing the importance of a peaceful environment for attracting visitors. (Malik, Y.M. 2020), to revitalize tourism, the government must actively promote a peaceful environment. Developing tourism infrastructure through public-private partnerships is recommended, with incentives for private enterprises and community involvement essential for successful tourism development in the Kashmir Valley. (Shah, 2013), the travel and tourism industry is the fastest-growing sector in India, playing a crucial role in the economy of Jammu and Kashmir. As the largest service industry, tourism significantly contributes to the state's GDP, generates foreign exchange, creates widespread employment opportunities, and contributes to tax revenue. Moreover, it serves as a backbone for related sectors such as hospitality, civil aviation, and transportation, forming a vital part of the overall economic landscape. (M. A. Wani, 2022), highlights the rich tourism resources in the region and the need for a proper tourism policy. The study examines the government's efforts in promoting tourism, including the development of infrastructure, eco-tourism, and offbeat tourist destinations. It also emphasizes the importance of tourism in the economy of Jammu and Kashmir, generating revenue and employment opportunities. According to (G. A. Wani, 2020), (Singh & Unjum, 2016), (Ganai et al., 2017), (A. H. Mir et al., 2017), the Kashmir Valley, one of the three major regions of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, offers a plethora of well-known tourist attractions, including stunning hill stations, landscapes, horticultural products, evergreen forests, wildlife, historical and architectural monuments, culture, art, crafts, fairs, festivals, and more. As such, it has enormous potential for the development of rural tourism. Rural tourism is still in its infancy, despite being the Centre of diversity in natural resources, customs, and culture.

5. Research methodology

The study employed a research methodology focused on the identification of domestic tourist respondents hailing from various Indian states. These respondents were found to be visiting key tourist destinations within the Kashmir division. To collect data for the study, research activities were conducted across diverse tourist spots in Kashmir. The study focused on specific tourist destinations, namely Srinagar, Sonamarg, Gulmarg, and Pahalgam. The convenient sampling approach for data collection has been opted to leveraging the easy accessibility to these chosen locations. In this regard, a sample of 200 respondents was conveniently selected for the study. The sample comprised individuals who willingly participated and allocated substantial time to engage in the interview process with the researchers. Data were gathered from these selected domestic tourist respondents, hailing from different states, and visiting diverse tourist destinations in Kashmir.

A structured questionnaire has been prepared and distributed through Google forms. It is pertinent to note that before circulation the questionnaire was pretested and modified to ensure validity. The structured-questionnaire applied a five-point Likert scale, one point for “Strongly disagree,” two points for “Disagree,” three points for “Undecided,” four points for “Agree” and five points for “Strongly agree.” Out of the 200 questionnaires that were distributed among tourists, a total of 150 functional responses were retrieved. Hence, the valid sample size for the study was considered as 150.

6. Analysis and findings

[Table 1](#) presents the demographic characteristics of the study participants. The respondents, aged 16 to 56 years and above, were distributed across various age groups. The majority fell within the 47–56 age range, followed by 37–46 and 27–36 age groups. Gender distribution showed approximately 68% male respondents and 32% female respondents. Marital status indicated 42.7% married and 57.3% unmarried participants. Educational backgrounds varied, with 32.0% being graduates, 26.0% postgraduates, and 18.7% holding intermediate education. In terms of occupation, 33.3% were Businessmen/Entrepreneurs (including tourism providers), 16.7% had government/private jobs, 18.0% were from the Agriculture sector, and 32.0% were students.

Notably, over 43.3% of respondents were aged 47 years and above, suggesting significant social media and internet usage among the elderly. However, these findings appear contradictory to TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India) and IAMAI (Internet and Mobile Association of India) reports, which indicate a higher correlation between age demographics and internet usage. Another study conducted by ([Hysa et al., 2021](#)) “states in their study that the frequency of using SM decreases with age”. Despite this, respondents expressed comfort with social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and state government travel websites.

Table 1: Demographic variables of respondents

Variables	Particulars	Percentage
Age	16-26	12.7
	27-36	14.0
	37-46	30.0
	47-56	28.0
	Above 56	15.3
Gender	Male	68.0
	Female	32.0
Marital Status	Married	42.7
	Unmarried	57.3
Qualification	Primary	6.0
	Secondary	17.3
	Intermediate	18.7
	Graduate	32.0
	PG & Above	26.0
Occupation	Govt. / Pvt. Employee	16.7
	Businessmen/ Entrepreneurs	33.3
	Agriculture	18.0
	Student	32.0
Monthly Income	Below INR 30,000	16.0
	INR 31,000-61,000	45.3
	INR 62,000-91,000	16.0
	Above INR 92,000- 121000	22.7

The respondents' monthly income spanned from INR 30,000 to over INR 1, 21,000. A significant 45.3% stated a monthly income of INR 31,000, while 16% fell within the income range of INR 62,000-91,000, and another 16% earned below INR 30,000. The demographic composition mainly reflected the middle and upper-middle-class segments. This implies that engaging in sustainable tourist activities requires both time and financial resources. It's noteworthy that sustainable tourism might not be the initial preference for individuals who haven't undertaken trips

previously, considering the investment of time and money involved in such endeavours.

Table 2: Preferred source of information	Percentage of respondents
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube)	27.0
Online word of mouth (WOM)	9.0
Website of tour supplier	16.0
Google Search	14.0
Blogs	11.0
Travel magazine	14.0
Newspaper & Other Print Media	7.0
Others	2.0
Total	100.00

Explained in [Table 2](#). The information source on tourist destinations was determined to be quite pertinent. Among the nominated respondents, 27% on Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube), followed by 16% Website of tour supplier, 14% equally on Google Search and Travel magazine, 11% Blogs, 9% Online word of mouth (WOM), 7% Newspaper & Other Print Media and Others 2%. So, it can be evaluated that the Social media is the most favoured information source. The results from this are supported by various studies: According to ([Gulati, 2022](#)), Social media promotion activities are indeed instrumental in creating a sustainable demand amongst tourist. ([Camilleri, 2018](#)), Social media platforms provide a dynamic space for raising awareness and promoting destinations, concepts, regions, or cultures simultaneously, making it a versatile and impactful marketing strategy.

Table 3: Sustainable tourism Products in Kashmir Division	
Scenic Landscape	Dal Lake Gulmarg Pahalgam
Cultural Heritage	Shalimar Bagh and Nishat Bagh Jamia Masjid Shankaracharya Temple
Adventure Tourism	Skiing in Gulmarg Trekking in the Himalayas White Water Rafting
Shopping	Pashmina Shawls Kashmiri Carpets

	Paper Mache Items
Cuisine	Wazwan Kahwa
Religious Tourism	Amarnath Cave Hazratbal Shrine
Floral and Horticultural Tourism	Tulip Garden
Cruises and Houseboats	Houseboat Stays Shikara Rides

According to (M. I. Malik & Bhat, 2015) “The most popular tourist destination in Kashmir is this area. The cities of Srinagar, Pahalgam, and Gulmarg are located in this region and draw large numbers of both domestic and foreign visitors. This area is the only one with the necessary tourism infrastructure. Srinagar provides modern instruments for tourism development and communication. The study also enumerated and identified sustainable tourism offerings from the UT's Kashmir Division. (Table 3). The division's economic expansion was primarily propelled by the aforementioned products. These products also created jobs, gave local women the confidence to support themselves, and provided fresh chances for business ventures and Entrepreneurs. Thus, in addition to reducing poverty, sustainable tourism products have also helped to build a sustainable host community. The results are in contrast to the literature previously reviewed on the relationship between social media use and sustainable travel in underdeveloped regions. (Malla et al., 2019), The state's most important economic sector and one that has contributed most to the state's gross domestic product (SGDP) is the tourism sector in Jammu & Kashmir. The tourism sector contributes the most to job creation and the advancement of the handicraft industry, following agriculture and horticulture. (Khaki et al., 2016), the year 2011 saw record-breaking tourist and pilgrim arrivals. Revenue from the Director Tourism Kashmir/Jammu showed a consistent threefold increase from Rs 32.25 lakh in 2006-07 to Rs 93.3 lakh in 2011-12, with a temporary dip in 2008-09 due to political instability. The analysis underscores a positive link between tourist influx and employment, indicating that as tourist numbers rise, overall employment also increases.

	No. of respondents*	Percentage
Yes	85	57.0
No	65	43.0
Total	150	100.00

Table 4 showed that, out of 150 respondents, only 57% had travelled to environmentally friendly tourist locations in the division, while roughly 43% of respondents said they had not. Additionally, the study attempted to ascertain the

respondents' preferred mode of booking their holidays. Visitors who are active on social media seek choice flexibility. [Table 5](#) made it clear that 53% of respondents wanted to schedule and plan their own vacations, while 37% chose to work with a tour operator to arrange their travels. The remaining 10% of respondents relied on travel agencies.

Mode of planning	Count	Percentage
Schedule their own vacations/ holidays	80	53.0
Schedule own vacations/ holidays through tour operator	55	37.0
Dependent on tour operator	15	10.0
Total	150	100.00

Respondents regarding their preferred mode of booking tickets.

According to [Table 6](#), 47% of the participants favoured booking online (OTM), 48% preferred booking directly through the websites of travel companies, and 5% preferred booking through travel agencies. [Table 7](#), shows that 45.0% of respondents said they preferred to book hotels via OTM (Make my Trip and Trip Advisor). Just 6.0% of travellers used their local travel agencies, while 49.0% opted to make their reservations directly through hotel websites. Consequently, the data suggests that using travel agencies to book hotels is no longer the norm. Additionally, it was noted that the respondents utilised convenient online booking services like Make My Trip and Trip Advisor. As a result, the results imply that online booking systems are largely focused on convenience.

Mode of booking	Count	Percentage
Through Online Travel Mode	70	47.0
Through Travel Company Websites	72	48.0
Through Local Travel Agents	8	5.0
Total	150	100.00

Mode of reservation	Count	Percentage
Through Online Travel Mode	67	45.0
Through Travel Company Websites	74	49.0
Through Local Travel Agents	9	6.0
Total	150	100.00

Notably, the data showed that 50% of respondents thought Facebook was the most significant influencer, with 45% ranking it higher, Instagram at 25%, Twitter at 25%, Youtube at 20%, and the remaining 10% ranking lower. [Table 8](#), provides an illustration of the above study. The findings imply that social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube were the main venues for online chats, while travel websites like Make my Trip, Trip Advisor, and the Tourism of UT Jammu and Kashmir were included in the "Others" category.

Table 8: Social media influencer in order of preference

Social Media Platforms	Rating by Respondents*	Percentage
Facebook	5	50.0
Instagram	4	45.0
Twitter	3	25.0
Youtube	2	20.0
Others	1	10.0
Total		100.00

Notes: – highest influencer; 1 – lowest influencer

Inquiries were made further to find out how much the respondents knew about sustainable tourism and the possibilities for expansion of the chosen locations. The aim of the study was to understand the respondent's sensitivity to sustainable tourism, the media platforms utilised for tourist engagement, and the promotional strategies employed for the location. To assess the reliability of each questionnaire item, the Cronbach's reliability method was utilised. Twenty items were used in a reliability test with SPSS 25.0 statistical software. The initial reliability coefficient value was found as 0.737.

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	150	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	150	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.737	20

To strengthen the measuring model, irrelevant variables were eliminated based on item-total statistics. Item dependability was assessed once again on the remaining items. The reliability coefficient value was found as 0.972.

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	150	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	150	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.972	16

The respondents strongly agreed that tourism helps create employment possibilities, as evidenced by the highest mean value (4.5533) shown in Table 9. It is important to highlight the substantial impact that social media tourism promotion efforts have had on respondent trips. According to a preliminary analysis based on the mean values in Table 9, social media helps tourists obtain important information (4.3067), increases sales of local cuisine (3.9200), and boosts the region's economic development (3.8200). Additionally, tourism increases sales of regional ethnic art and craft products (3.7800), reduces poverty (3.7867), and the number of visitors is a measure of revenue generation (3.7200).

Therefore, it is essential that the government allocates sufficient funds for its promotion and supply up-to-date travel information via its portals. It should be mentioned that Kurtosis greater than 3 was observed for the first eight variable items in Table 9. It is referred to have a leptokurtic distribution when the Kurtosis is greater than 3. Its central peak is frequently sharper and higher than that of a normal distribution, and its tails are longer and fatter.

Table 9: Insights on the sensitive of the respondents towards sustainable tourism				
Insights on sensitivities of respondents	N	Mean	S.D	Kurtosis
Tourism generates employment opportunities	150	4.5533	1.20701	4.830
Tourism promotion activities on social media increases footfall in the tourism destination	150	4.4467	1.25070	3.116
Social media provide needful information to the tourist	150	4.3067	1.33586	3.800
Upsurge in tourism brings in more sale of local cuisines	150	3.9200	.37578	3.592
Growth in tourist arrivals boosts economic development of the region	150	3.8200	.38547	3.843
Tourism helps in alleviating poverty	150	3.7867	.30852	3.649
Upsurge in tourism leads to growth of sales local ethnic art and craft products	150	3.7800	.52928	4.676
Arrival of tourists are indicators of revenue and income generation	150	3.7200	.69630	3.425
Events such as trade fairs influence tourists to visit the different regions	150	3.5667	1.23384	-1.119

Art and culture festivals build up tourism	150	3.5000	.70235	-.208
Insights on sensitivities of respondents	150	3.3733	1.02024	.725
Religious places influence your visit	150	3.3467	.88981	.710
Tourism promotes the local entrepreneurship and self-sustainability	150	3.0733	1.81010	-1.872
Tourism promotion goes together with the socio-economic development	150	2.4933	1.43188	-.762
Tourism promotion increases revenue of the Government	150	2.3333	.79145	-.727
Adequate information regarding to tourist destinations and available facilities should be provided by the Government	150	2.1200	.95482	.668
Valid N (listwise)	150			

7. Suggestions and Recommendations

Undoubtedly, Kashmir is popular for its exceptional natural splendour and is frequently called "Paradise on Earth." The area has a plethora of resources that add to its appeal, and it is rich in tourism. Kashmir has always been one of the most popular travel destinations due to its natural beauty and terrain, agreeable climate, and rich legacy. It offers chances for Adventure-tourism, Medical-tourism, Pilgrimage-tourism, and Eco-tourism. Due to its abundance of naturally occurring wildlife, which is mostly undiscovered, the Kashmir division offers a great deal of promise for tourism. As it was previously said, sustainable products manufactured by skilled men and women craftsmen include handicrafts and handlooms. Self-sustaining resorts are being developed, offering their guests a variety of activities. Additionally, a number of tourist locations, including Gulmarg and Pahalgam, as well as houseboats in Srinagar and Sonamarg, Kashmir, are encouraging homestays. The various recommendations of the study are as under:

- Leverage social media platforms to enhance the visibility, accessibility, and engagement with sustainable tourism destinations in the Kashmir Division. This can help promote sustainable tourism and raise awareness among potential visitors.
- Implement thoughtful policies to guide tourism and infrastructure development, ensuring the preservation of natural resources and eco-sensitive destinations.

This will help maintain the delicate balance between tourism growth and environmental protection.

- Emphasize the socio-economic benefits of sustainable tourism, such as employment generation, revenue generation, and poverty alleviation. Highlighting these benefits can help garner support from local communities and policymakers for sustainable tourism initiatives.
- Focus on promoting local products and addressing socio-economic and cultural factors that are crucial for sustainable tourism development in the region.
- Invest in improving tourist infrastructure, such as the availability of tourist information centers, telecommunication facilities near tourist spots, banking facilities, and user-friendly official websites. This can enhance the overall tourist experience and satisfaction.
- Ensure a peaceful environment and security in the region to attract more tourists and support the growth of the tourism industry.
- Encourage public-private partnerships and community involvement in tourism development to ensure the sustainability and long-term success of tourism initiatives.
- These recommendations can contribute to the enhancement of sustainable tourism in the Kashmir Division by leveraging social media, promoting local products, addressing socio-economic and cultural factors, implementing thoughtful policies, and focusing on employment generation and poverty alleviation.

8. Conclusion

The study underscores the transformative impact of the internet on global consumption patterns and highlights the pivotal role of tourism in fostering local sustainability. Emphasizing the need for an easily accessible media platform for strategic promotion, the study concludes that active promotion of sustainable tourism destinations on social media enhances visibility and accessibility. The outcomes of the study correlates with various researches. According to (Rasheed, 2020), “Social media is important for many elements of tourism, from information search to decision-making”. (Amin et al., 2016), “Social media can assist in positioning a place differently and giving it an identity that may help the destination become a tourist favourite”. Significant perceptions into sustainable tourism in the selected region were provided, revealing a connection between social media usage and socially sustainable tourism, particularly in economically backward areas. The study also indicated the role of social media in promoting sustainable tourism in the tourist destinations of Kashmir division has significant implications. It highlights the transformative impact of the internet on global consumption patterns and emphasizes the pivotal role of tourism in fostering local sustainability. The study explores the potential of social media platforms in enhancing visibility, accessibility, and

engagement with sustainable tourism destinations. It underscores the need for thoughtful policies to guide tourism and infrastructure development, ensuring the preservation of natural resources and eco-sensitive destinations. The study also emphasizes the socio-economic benefits of sustainable tourism, such as employment generation, revenue generation, and poverty alleviation. The results of the study shows that Social media helps tourists obtain important information, increases sales of local cuisine, and boosts the region's economic development. Tourism increases sales of regional ethnic art and craft products, reduces poverty, and the number of visitors is a measure of revenue generation. The study suggests that the government should allocate sufficient funds for tourism promotion and provide up-to-date travel information via its portals. The analysis of respondent sensitivities shows that tourism generates employment opportunities, social media promotion increases footfall, and social media provides useful information to tourists.

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