

Measuring Tourists' Intention to use Digital Platform in selecting travel products: A study on Bangladesh

ABSTRACT

The different digital platforms assist tourists to share and collect travel information which effects their purchasing and selection patterns. The prime intention of conducting this study was to measure tourists' preference in using different digital technologies while they make their travel decisions. The study used a quantitative approach to gather data from Bangladeshi travelers through an online questionnaire called Google form. The non-probability convenience sampling method was used to select 246 individuals to conduct this study. The study was destined based on primary and secondary data collection methods. SPSS 26.0 was used to examine the data. The descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic features of the respondents, and Multiple Linear Regression and Pearson correlation were also used to support the association between the dependent and independent variables. $R=0.737$ forecasted the variance of preferring digital technologies in selecting travel products with a goodness-of-fit level of roughly 54.3%. The digital platforms assist tourists to share and collect travel information ($M=4.26$) which affects their purchasing and selection patterns. The last travel plan patterns stated they usually research online (62%), mainly using/on the social media sites (41.10%), for travel information. The study highlighted the importance of these digital platforms among travelers and spotted the gap between the customer requirement and accessible digital sites for reservation and payment. So, viable and accessible payment methods should be implemented, emphasizing Bangladeshi tourists.

Keywords: Digital Technologies, social media, Tourism, Travel Decision

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the ancient era, innovation has made our life more pleasant by developing new technologies. The development of technology creates different methods and initiates various ways to make our life more comfortable. There are lots of debates regarding technological control over us: some believe different technologies influence different factors of our daily life. A report featured in Financial Times (2018) showed that the decision to purchase anything might alter at any time as humans are surrounded by various technologies. Digital technologies focus on using digital devices rather than discussing the usage and interpretation to solve the problems. Digital technologies manage digital devices or systems' development and possible use. Many of these systems and technologies are already developed, which makes their users dependent on them. The most prominent example is the social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, etc. Social media like Facebook can be used as an alternative way or tool to communicate with customers by disseminating new information since these tools are cheap and relatively easy to use and, most importantly, don't require any IT specialist (Hopkins, 2012). At the same time, technology offers a platform for interactions and groups, whether close or far apart geographically (Golder et al., 2007). The tourism sector has been dramatically controlled by technological advancements.

Tourism is one of the speediest sectors of the world economy, with numerous novel ideas and technological breakthroughs that assist visitors, inhabitants, and key stakeholders to better harness tourist locations' potential (Polukhina et al., 2019). Beyond client happiness, the tourism industry has involved technology to improve functioning skills and service quality (Sinha et al., 2020). Digital technologies are considered a convenient tool to gather travel information quickly: most tourists prefer online platforms like TripAdvisor and try to identify the contrast with other travel sites, scrutinize online reviews before making travel choices, and their relatives' opinion also influences their decisions (Gupta,

2019), furthermore having friends as tour mates is another crucial factor that inspires young Bangladeshi tourists to make travel decisions (Md. Nafi & Ahmed, 2018; Roy et al., 2021). Beldona et al., (2009) also focused and gave importance to having unique website features like reservation engines and an accessible customer interface that will assist them in making precise buying decisions.

Due to covid-19, people have avoided physical contact and adopted the digital platform as their mode of socialization and doing office work, which increased their usage and dependency on digital platforms. According to BTRC (December 2021), the number of active internet subscribers in Bangladesh was 123.81 million, whereas around 24 million were added during the COVID-19 period. In the meantime, covid-19 has made a notable alteration in our lifestyle behaviors with a dramatically increasing usage of electronic media while staying at home (Hu et al., 2020). Coronavirus has also transformed the face of other businesses like e-commerce, where 52% of customers avoid going to physical outlets, and 36% of them will continue this practice until being vaccinated (Bhatti et al., 2020). E-commerce is flourishing in Bangladesh as well; Abir (2020) has identified that online shopping has risen by 70% to 80% compared to the pre-COVID-19 period, and this market exceeded \$695.7 million in 2020. Covid-19 has driven more people to get used to with digital technologies and transformed online purchasing behaviors, forever, among educated consumers aged 25 to 45, mostly women (Savira & Suharsono, 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic has also increased the expansion of digital transformation and boomed e-commerce business by 4% on global retail business in 2020 despite of this strict global lockdown (UNCTAD, 2021). These dramatic changes in human behaviors will, directly and indirectly, influence travel-related products' purchasing behaviors. The digital platform is widely used in tourism whenever the restrictions are relaxed to visit the tourist destination. The use of social media in seeking a job and submitting job applications has been studied (Al-Amin et al., 2019), where the use of digital technologies in selecting travel products has been ignored in Bangladesh many times. This study aims to discover how severely this rapid addition of users on digital sites impacts individuals in selecting travel products, which may help us identify possible tourist behavior in any epidemic that comes ever after.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The growth of the internet and digital technologies has become a crucial part of our lives over the last two eras. People are now more connected with the internet and social media. According to DataReportal (2020; 2021), around 11.7% of the internet users and 23.3% of the social media users increased in 2020 and 2021. This omnipresence of the internet and its connected gadgets profoundly changed the aspect of the tourism industry on an operational and social level: today, we use these devices and tools to communicate with friends and families, confirm reservations, make all arrangements for our tours, look for better travel packages and for better deals of different online travel agencies (OTA) and even weather forecast to create an enjoyable trip (van Nuenen & Scarles, 2021). The tourist industry is gaining tremendous traction due to the adoption of various digital technologies; travel and tour companies may now work remotely, promote their goods and services on digital sites, and simplify their booking in advance (Sinha et al., 2020). Internet and social media usage are in high demand in today's world, particularly in promoting tourism, where it is used to generate traffic from close and far (Soegoto et al., 2018). Blogging has also become one of the top distinguished tools for information search on social media sites for the tourism sector (Mack, Blose, & Pan, 2008; Pudliner, 2007; Pühringer & Taylor, 2008; Pan, MacLaurin et al., 2007; Waldhör & Rind, 2008). The widespread dominance of social media sites to cooperate, interact, and share fresh content like blog posts, films, wikis, reviews, or images is becoming more common (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Leung et al., 2013).

Social media is considered as a hub of data required by the consumer to evaluate and make the final call for purchase (Hudson & Thal, 2013) to build word-of-mouth image on the internet (Ye, Law, Gu, & Chen, 2011) and suggestion for travel (Kurashima, Iwata, Irie, & Fujimura, 2010). Dellarocas (2003) thanked social media that tourism businesses have never had more opportunity to learn and respond to consumer demands than they do now. The role of social media in tourism was also analyzed in light of the whole web field of tourism and the framework of tourist searching for information (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010), where social networking is considered an incredibly accessible search engine for tourists (Gretzel, 2006) and customers' selection of hotel products (McCarthy, Stock, and Verma, 2010). The tourism business has to depend on different technological advancements for several reasons; firstly, the data is always reliant on

accurate time, secondly, tourists must be avail to access the travel information from all corners of the globe, and finally, tourism products are made with lots of travel components which needs on time fast transmission of the data (Matveevskaya et al., 2018).

Figure 1: Number of Mobile, Internet & Social Media Users in the World

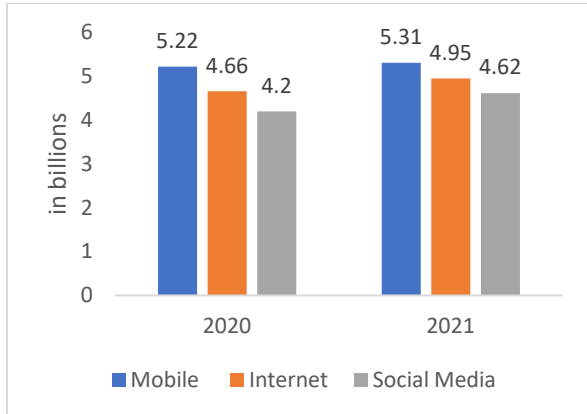
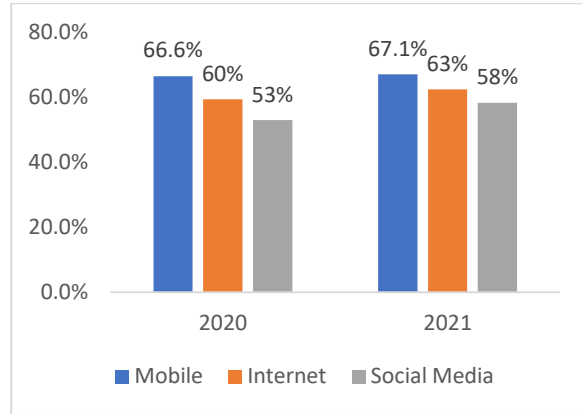


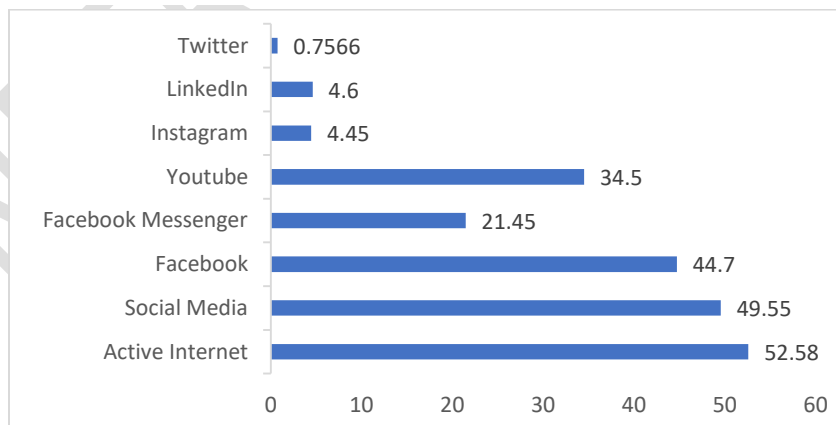
Figure 2: Percentage of Mobile, Internet & Social Media users of the World Population



Source: DataReportal, (2020; 2021)

Internet users spend almost 7hrs on the internet a day on an average basis, and nearly 90% of the internet users access the internet through their mobile devices (Laaper et al., 2018). In figures 2 and 3, it was discovered that almost 67% of the world population are mobile users, and around 63% use the internet. In terms of Bangladesh (figure 3), 52.58 million people are active internet users which is almost 33% of the population and 94% of them are social media users where a significant portion of them uses Facebook and YouTube (45m) and (36m) respectively, which indicates there is a large segment of consumer presence in social media in Bangladesh. This swift progress of the internet has offered individuals numerous additional purposes: collecting the required information and interacting across the borders, and today, social media helps to enunciate emotions and opinions (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). User-generated travel content focusing on mobile internet users can attract and influence mass users to make travel decisions to targeted destinations.

Figure 3: Internet and Social Media users of Bangladesh (2022) in million



Source: DataReportal, (2022)

Tourism is widely regarded as a data-driven sector, and a tourist's purchasing choice is also influenced by the data they have collected. As the nature of the tourism sector is impalpable, accurate on time fitting information and communication are the key factors that influence choosing a travel spot; therefore, digital technologies carry out a vital role by providing the required relevant data to make the traveling decisions

to the destination (Sinha et al., 2020; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). The adoption of digital technologies in the tourism industry will upsurge the service quality by digitalization, by making it attractive, and tourism enterprises will obtain increased profit through their operation (Natocheeva et al., 2020). The same study states that digital technology has become a strategic asset for tourism firms by creating a new tool to connect suppliers and customers. Digital technologies simplify the communication, transmission, and obtaining of data for businesses, which developed new methods for operation (Nosova & Norkina, 2021). Professionals in tourism and hospitality firms utilize emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, virtual realities, and AR wearable technology as a tactical instrument to preserve an edge over their competitors, build advertising techniques, and improve their cognitive functioning to ensure maximum customer satisfaction (Cai et al., 2019). The usage of digital maps may play a crucial role in travelers' attitudes, especially in their purchasing patterns and e - tourism promotions (Chung et al., 2011). These maps are a common way to show travel-related material on the internet (Buhalis and Law, 2008). The internet plays an indispensable part in the long-term viability of social media, where users can simply view tourism destinations and review tourist sites that were toured earlier, which provides a way for its users to get the most up-to-date data (Soegoto et al., 2018).

The tourist industry mostly counts on ICT infrastructure for marketing events, selling, and creating organizational relationships with clients, and the final destination decision of travelers comes from online (Živković et al., 2014); at the same time, ICT also addresses innovative ways of approaching sustainable tourism growth (Ali & Frew, 2014). Advertising costs focused on digital platforms are continuously increasing; marketers are ever more interested in creating a digital footprint, communicating to their customers, influencing their interactions, and even powering their opinions for a more robust market return (Lipsman et al., 2012). One of the reasons marketers choose social media is the power of word of mouth (Živković et al., 2014); people believe their friends and other netizens over the business (Gillin, 2007). For these reasons, businesses are gradually employing digital technology to respond to customer requests better while improving customer-side functions, and it also promotes consumer and commercial interests while also helping to generate sales and upsurge productivities by lowering expenses (Foroudi et al., 2017). Companies can use social media programs to better their operational processes, engage with customers, and cooperate with partners and distributors differently (Culnan et al., 2010).

Hristoforova et al., (2019) stated the importance of spending money on new digital communications channels with existing and prospective customers, making better relationships to identify novel opportunities, bidding compassionate payouts for the end-user pull, and creating an automated communications system for brand consolidation to maximize the productivity of advertisements in the tourism and hospitality sector, (Gupta, 2019) because people browse online and use numerous digital technologies before making any choice about their vacation spots, reservation modes, payment, accommodations to overnight, locations to tour, and so on. Travel-related decisions carry a significant risk for visitors; thus, they try to gather more precise information and meticulously plan choices among possibilities to reduce ambiguity (Ráthonyi, 2013). People love to share their travel photos, videos, and experiences on social media, which directly and indirectly influence others in making travel decisions (Ráthonyi, 2013), which offers a free-of-cost promotional tool for all tourism enterprises (Fotis et al. 2012). Internet and digital technologies have reinforced the value of the business by increasing their capabilities in four ways: it enables quick and easy access to the information that customer require, help them to compare and choose the best alternatives, address the customer need and fulfill the demand, and finally, it offers easy payment method to close the deal (Lumpkin & Dess, 2004). On the other hand, by increasing charges from manufacturers and forcing people to pay for accessing their Digital platforms, mediators might influence the ultimate rates for visitors, lowering the level of services (Vasylichak and Halachenko 2016); in this regard, companies can disseminate the intermediaries by adopting digital platforms and maintain goodwill and brand image.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study used a quantitative approach to gather data and measure the tourist intent to embrace digital platforms in evaluating travel products for their tour in Bangladesh. The study was conducted from October 2021 to March 2022. For the current study, 246 individuals were selected by the non-probability convenience sampling method. The sample covered Bangladeshi travelers. The inclusion criteria included

three parameters to pick the intended respondents: (i) respondents who are above 16 years of age (age of the respondents), (ii) whether or not the respondents have gone for a tour during the last four years (past travel history), and (iii) who is not directly or indirectly engaged with travel enterprise (involvement with travel enterprise). Travelers who were aged less than 16 years were excluded from the study as the safest age of having an own digital device is recommended at least 16 years (Research.com, 2021).

This study utilized both primary and secondary data. For collecting primary data, an online questionnaire was developed on Google Form. The entire questionnaire contained four sections covering nineteen questions in total. The first segment of the questionnaire was intended to analyze the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, the second segment was to understand their level of engagement with digital technologies, the third segment was to recognize their last tour travel shape, and the last segment was to measure their intention to use digital platforms while making travel decisions. There were nine different questions in the last segment. A five-point Likert scale was used to assess the respondents' responses ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) for the last segment (Likert, R. (1932)). The Cronbach's alpha test was used to assess the consistency of the items (i.e., Accessible travel information from online; social media stimulate travel; Booking online is hassle-free) used in the survey. The whole questionnaire was prepared in English first, and then for the convenience of the participants, it was interpreted in Bengali.

The questionnaire was circulated to the intended respondents through digital platforms Facebook, Mobile messaging and personal email. To participate in the survey, the respondent's informed consent was obtained. Only the completed questionnaires were taken for the further analysis of the study.

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v.26.0) was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics like frequency, mean, standard deviation, percentage etc., were used to describe the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Multiple Linear Regression and Pearson Correlation were used for examining the association between independent and dependents variables. A p -value less than 0.05 was considered as significant. To present collected data, bar chart and tables were used.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Socio-Demographic Profile

Table 1 represents the socio-demographic characteristics of the 246 respondents. The majority of the respondents were male (56.6%) and belonged to Gen Z (21-30 years, 56.8%) and Millennials (31-40 years, 26.4%). In terms of educational qualifications, all respondents had minimum academic literacy, where the majority of them had completed their graduate study and above (61.8%).

Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of the respondent

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Education	Frequency	Percentage
Male	139	56.5%	PhD	2	.8%
Female	107	43.5%	Masters	42	17.1%
Total	246	100%	Bachelors	108	43.9%
Age structure			HSC	91	37%
16-20 years	18	7.3%	SSC	3	1.2%
21-30 years	147	59.8%	No Education	0	0%
31-40 years	65	26.4%	Total	246	100%
41-50 years	13	5.3%			
Above 50 years	3	1.2%			
Total	246	100%			

4.2 Digital Engagement of The Respondents

Table 2 denotes the engagement of the respondents with digital technologies. None of them expressed they were ever in touch with digital technologies like Facebook, Google Maps and mobile phones. Around 96% of the respondents said they were actively and partially involved with these digital platforms; 80% had already used different online shopping services, and 63% of them followed travel groups and pages on social media sites.

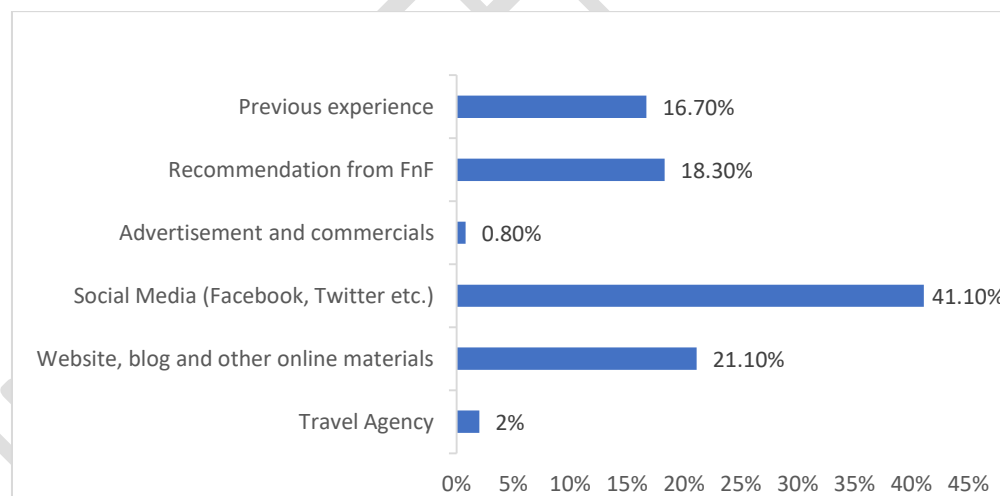
Table 2: Digital Engagement profile of the respondents

Items	Frequency (%)				
	Never	Rarely	Some Time	Mostly	Total
Engagement with digital technologies	-	3.3	15.4	81.3	100%
E-shopping behaviors	3.7	15.9	60.2	20.3	100%
Engagement with travel page or group on social media	10.2	15.9	41.1	32.9	100%

Source: Survey Data

4.3 Last Tour Travel Information

Figure 4 shows the respondents' sources of collection of travel information. Most of the respondents collected their last tour travel information from digital platforms. Around 62 percent of the respondents gathered their travel information from online (social media and websites). A significant portion of the respondents also collected travel information from recommendations from Friends and Family (18.30%).



*FnF= Friends and family
Source: Survey Data

Fig. 4: Sources of Last tours' travel information of the respondents

Table no 3 represents the respondent's reservation and payment experience from the last tour. The highest number of the respondents confirmed their reservations through friends and family (29%) and phone calls (27%). Although, the majority of the respondents (79%) expressed their positive opinion about the online payment method as a secured service, they had to make payments predominantly with cash (58%). A good number of respondents were found to use mobile financial services like bKash and Nagad (32%) for travel booking.

Table 3: last tour reservation and payment method

Item	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Reservation method of the last tour	Through Phone Call	67	27.2%
	Through Website	24	9.8%
	Through social media	28	11.4%
	Through Friends and Family	72	29.3%
	Physically Visiting Travel Agency	7	2.8%
	I didn't book earlier	48	19.5%
Total		246	100%
Payment mode of the last tour	Through Mobile Finance (bKash, Nagad)	81	32.9%
	Through Bank (Credit Card, Debit Card)	22	8.9%
	Cash Payment	143	58.1
Total		246	100%
Trustworthiness of online payment	Yes	194	78.9%
	No	52	21.1%
Total		246	100%

Source: Survey Data

4.4 Reliability of The Study

To assess the overall consistency of the items used in the survey, the Cronbach's alpha test was conducted, and the value of Cronbach's alpha was $\alpha = .847$ in terms of the internal consistency of the items. According to (Ursachi et al., 2015), the value of Cronbach's alpha is larger than 0.8 indicates very good (Table-4).

Table 4: Reliability Test

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.847	9

4.4.1 Descriptive Statistics of the variables

Table no 5 shows the inclusive scores of the 9 (nine) variables recognized to determine the respondents' perceptions regarding the usage of digital technologies in Bangladesh.

Table 5: Perceptions of the respondents of the factors

NO	Items	N	Mean	S. D	Variance
V1	Online Accessibility to travel information	246	4.03	.595	.354
V2	Convenience of offline travel information	246	4.03	.588	.346
V3	Hassle-free online booking	246	3.94	.833	.694
V4	Spotting near sites with digital map	246	4.12	.584	.341
V5	Travel stimulation by social media	246	4.24	.785	.616
V6	Distrust about online information and booking	246	2.74	.884	.781
V7	Online research for travel decisions	246	4.02	.648	.420
V8	Travel contents on social media	246	4.06	.777	.604
V9	Preference of digital platform to evaluate and select travel products	246	4.04	.966	.933

This paper examined that; 7 (seven) variables' mean score is more significant than 4.00 ($M > 4.00$) out of 9 (nine) factors. Among the other two elements, one factor's mean score is close to 4.00 ($M > 3.90$), and only one variable's score is below 3.00 ($M < 3$). The highest mean score ($M = 4.24$) represents the positive perception regarding the influence of social media to travel to a particular destination. Almost all the variables' scores represent the respondents' positive perception except V6, $M = 2.74$, where it denotes an adverse opinion regarding trusting online travel information, which is a positive perception of using digital platforms.

4.4.2 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is usually tested to examine the association between variables. In this study, the multiple linear regression evaluated the most precise association between variables and assessed the significance of choosing digital technologies to select travel-related products. Seven factors have been articulated relating to standardized factor scores (beta coefficients). Based on beta coefficients, relevant determinants that remained in the regression equation were ranked in order of importance. The dependent variables, preferring digital technologies platform for selecting travel products, were gauged on a five-point Likert scale.

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.737a	.543	.528	.664

Analysis of Variance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	124.128	8	15.516	35.230	.000b
Residual	104.380	237	.440		
Total	228.508	245			

Table no 6 highlights the regression score $R = .737$. The value of R is close to +1, which states that a significant association between dependent variables and independent variables also represents the positive affiliation and moderate correlation of choosing digital technologies in selecting travel products. Regardless, the value of $R^2 = .543$ expresses 54.3% of the variance in perception of adopting digital tech to select travel products. The F ratio is 35.230, which indicates whether the regression model results might have occurred by chance and the P -value is 0.000, indicating that the result is extremely significant. According to the R, R^2 , and F ratios, the regression model forecast the variance of preferring digital technologies in selecting travel products with a goodness-of-fit level of roughly 54.3%.

In Table no 7, The beta coefficients illustrate the comparative relevance of each of the eight crucial components (independent variables) is conducive to the variance of preferring digital technologies in selecting travel products in the regression analysis (dependent variable). In terms of determining the relevance of the eight crucial factors, variables such as V7: online research for travel decisions ($\beta = 1.214$, $P = .000$), V8: travel contents on social media ($\beta = .320$, $P = .001$), V5: travel stimulation by social media ($\beta = .243$, $P = .005$), V2: convenience of offline travel information ($\beta = -.526$, $P = .041$), V3: hassle-free online booking ($\beta = -.136$, $P = .018$) have the most impact and carry the most value on the uptake of adopting digital technologies for choosing tourism products. These five variables are linked in a significant way in using digital technologies for tourism products.

Table 7: Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.246	.391		.630	.529
Online Accessibility to travel information	-.276	.319	-.170	-.867	.387
Convenience of offline travel information	-.526	.255	-.321	-2.060	.041
Hassle-free online booking	-.136	.057	-.117	-2.381	.018
Spotting near sites with digital map	.074	.124	.045	.595	.552
Travel stimulation by social media	.243	.085	.197	2.861	.005
Distrust about online information and booking	.018	.049	.017	.374	.708
Online research for travel decisions	1.214	.257	.815	4.722	.000
Travel contents on social media	.320	.095	.258	3.354	.001
Dependent Variable: Preference of digital platform to evaluate and select travel products, *Represents $P < 0.05$					

When all other variables were held steady except V2: convenience of offline travel information, V3: hassle-free online booking, a one-unit rise in facilities with the V5: travel stimulation by social media, resulted in a .243-unit surge in digital technology usage. In contrast, the least significant variable, V6: distrust about online information and booking (beta=.018, $P=.708$). Although not all underpinning factors are equally important, they all have a substantial impact.

The standard coefficient beta value shows which independent variables have a more significant influence on the dependent variable. V7: online research for travel decisions and V2: convenience of offline travel information have the most important role (beta=.815 and -.321) in adopting digital technologies for travel products.

4.5 Discussion

Based on the research, digital technologies promoting and communicating with potential tourists can, significantly, influence them. The tourism business has massive opportunities for the usage of digital services (Polukhina et al., 2019). The majority of the survey participants believed digital technologies for selecting travel products are crucial as they research online before making any travel decisions. Digital platforms offer easy and accessible modes to gather and evaluate travel products. Almost 96 percent of the participants believed they are connected mainly with different digital technologies like Facebook, Google map, and mobile phones; another 80 percent of them are already customers of the various e-shopping sites, which indicates their online buying behaviors are more active. And again, 63 percent of them agreed they follow travel pages or travel groups on social media, and 41 percent also collected their last tour travel information from social media. Xiang & Gretzel (2010) also stated that travelers rely heavily on social media platforms to supply travel information. Another 21 percent gathered travel information from websites, blogs, and other online sites, whereas in total, 62 percent of the respondents agreed their source of travel information is from online.

The study also addressed the significance of the social media post of travel photos or videos that motivate users to travel and affect their travel destination choice. The upsurge in the number of internets, social and digital sites significantly change the attitudes of the tourist in selecting and evaluating travel products. Many areas of tourism, particularly data search and decision-making patterns, tourism promotion, and focusing on best practices for connecting with tourists, rely heavily on social media (Soegoto et al., 2018). The study also emphasized hassle-free online booking and reservation as a crucial factor in preferring digital technologies to select travel products. So, travel companies need to ensure the necessary infrastructural development for seamless booking and reservation methods for the customers.

On the other hand, gathering the travel information from offline brochures, leaflets, and magazines significantly influences travel decisions as not all the tourists are connected with digital technologies or are tech-friendly. Purely having an online existence is not enough to confirm that a company would benefit from social media; rather, three factors are required for effective application approaches: thoughtful adoption, communal development, and use of technological ability (Culnan et al., 2010). Hence, it is essential to maintain both the online and offline presence of the business to attract more and more tourists. This insignificant case was also observed from the last tour booking and reservation modes and payment methods of the respondents, while combinedly, 56 percent of them preferred phone calls and friends and family to confirm the reservation, and 58 percent of them used cash payment for their last tour booking payment, but 78 percent of them feel online payment method is secure and safe, which specifies an infrastructural lacking in the devolvement of available and accessible payment methods. Though users use these digital platforms to collect and evaluate their travel products, a gap between tourists and available payment and booking gateway couldn't make it a one-stop service for tourists. Buhalis and Law, (2008) stated the importance of user-based technologies that will enable travel firms to interact with their customers actively with the evolution of the internet. So, it is significant to ensure the availability of online and digital presence of the travel suppliers with accessible reservation methods of hotels, resorts, travel, and tour companies to provide accurate and timely information about the products and services. Policymakers should encourage travel suppliers to embrace emerging digital trends to attract more customers to their destinations and attractions.

5. CONCLUSION

Due to globalization and the development of information technology, the tourism industry is expanding worldwide, which is not exceptional for Bangladesh as well. In recent years, the Tourism industry in Bangladesh has been booming and contributing to the GDP significantly. So, this is high time to give attention to the travelers' aspects. The preference of digital technologies to select travel products depends on the participants' practice of sharing their travel stories on social media sites, doing their own research online, influencing their social network's posts and stories, and the availability of hassle-free reservation and booking systems. Still, collecting travel information from offline materials affects the customers' travel decisions. The current study's last tours' travel information of the participants addressed the significance of the online availability besides the offline presence of the travel companies. The tourism suppliers of Bangladesh should maintain a web presence along with physical outlets. A smooth and user-friendly website must be installed for the one-stop reservation service. The policymakers should take necessary steps to establish a central online network for all the tourism products in Bangladesh with accessible reservation modes and diversified payment methods with multiple language translations, including Bengali.

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