The Influence of Instagram Reels as a Driving Force for Motivating Millennial Solo Travellers

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Abstract: The paper particularly analyzes how millennial solo travellers perceive their destinations about the availability of information on Instagram. The sample framework includes respondents born between 1981 and 1996, who use Instagram as a motivational social media platform for travel decisions or information gathering. Using an analytical survey method, data were collected from 50 respondents through a structured questionnaire, concentrating on the relationships between the key variables using multiple linear regression (MLR) analysis. The results show a significant positive correlation between the availability of information and travel motivation, as it is a major factor in decision-making. Although destination image is positively associated with motivation, it bears less degree of impact. Thus, observations under this study conclude that good marketing strategies through social media such as Instagram can enhance the travel experiences of millennial solo travellers by providing quality information and cultivating community engagement.

Keywords: Millennial solo travellers, Social media, Instagram, Motivation, Destination image, Availability of information

1. Introduction

The concept of marketing is no longer limited to commercial industries, but it has also extended its reach into the tourism sector (Lim et al., 2012; Munar, 2012; Munar & Jacobsen, 2013; Oliveira & Panyik, 2014). The traditional way of advertising and promotion has been replaced with advanced social media marketing (Basit et al., 2020). This kind of marketing has been used by the tourism industry to captivate the attention of tourists, increase the sale of destination products and services, and generate committed consumers (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014).

The burgeoning popularity of social media has made it possible for several individuals to utilize online platforms for both sharing and receiving travel details related to products, prices, and accessibility (Buhalis & Foerste, 2015; Lund et al., 2019). It has gained a 75% rating as the influencing factor for a destination choice-making approach (Hinton, 2024). According to research conducted by Lund et al. (2018), 93 per cent of potential tourists read online reviews to change their travel impressions and 80 per cent of them seek feedback

from friends on social media. Effective consciousness through positive stories and eWOM (electronic word-of-mouth) are important in influencing tourists' behavioural intentions (Reza et al., 2012; Lee & Lee, 2009).

For middle-aged adults, often termed as Millennials (1981-1996), travelling is considered the most favourable significance of life. Such groups of people are observed to be frequent leisure travellers. As per facts, the rate of millennial travellers has increased by 28 per cent within the global context (Hinton, 2024). The concept of 'solo travelling' is a popular trend in current times where an individual decides to travel and explore the destinations all alone (Yang et al., 2019).

2. Conceptual Framework

In today's world of advanced technology, it has become imperative for the tourism sector to adapt itself to the dynamic electronic mediums because of their astounding marketing impacts on the destination image (Chu et al., 2020). Social media platforms have been a perfect precedent portraying how the image of a destination can be influenced by the content shown to the viewers (Li et al., 2021; Du et al., 2020; Su et al., 2020). Such an image might be both positive and negative depending upon the influence it flings on the audience (Trusov et al., 2009). While positively it can upgrade the economic condition of the destination, negatively it may also bring tourist overcrowding, pollution, clogged traffic and damage to the destination's property (Wengel et al., 2022).

Destination image as an idea first came up during the 1970s (Hunt, 1975), marking the beginning of scholarly exploration into how tourists perceive destinations. The term was defined by Crompton (1979) as the tourist's beliefs, ideas, and evaluations based on their perceptions regarding a destination. Building on this idea, Mak (2017) described destination image as the overall perception and attributes associated with a specific location.

The motivation of the solo travellers comes from the choice of destination and the implications of their experience gathering attribute. In this context, 30 per cent of the French respondents have mentioned the rising popularity of Instagram as a source of information regarding travelling spots (Hinton, 2024). Thus, this proves the importance of Instagram in increasing the possibilities of inclusive tourism facets. Instagram reels (short videos of 90 seconds) were first introduced in the year 2020 across 50 countries. It is a short vertical video available on Instagram itself (Instagram, 2020). The platform has a wide range of filters, audio, video and augmented reality effects (Menon, 2022).

The dependency on Instagram has been mostly found among the new generation of travellers who are believed to be easily influenced by the social media stories and travel blogs posted by companies as a marketing strategy. Millennial travellers persuade themselves to visit different tourist destinations based on the strength of Instagram pages that maintain higher social engagement. The parasocial relationship is positively affected by the viewer's emotional

attachment to short videos or vlogs. This can be attained when travel vloggers generate strong entertainment motivation. These videos can influence the tourist's purchasing power by building their willingness/intention to share the video, building trust in the information provided and recommending the same to others (Zhao et al.,2022; Lim et al. (2012); Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Nur'afifah & Prihantoro (2021) have said that millennials are more interested towards visiting new destinations based on inspirational social media images. These contents provide wider knowledge regarding the cultural aspects of the particular tourist destination. Such contents contribute more to positive tourism experience resulting in increased demand within the tourism sector (Hinton, 2024).

There are various studies on the consumer behaviour of Millennials. One such study conducted by Schiopu et al. (2016) has stated that Millennials travel on various grounds such as gaining experience; getting knowledge about the art, culture and local people; searching for jobs or education; visiting family and friends; and entertainment such as festivals, shows and concerts. Millennials are more seekers than travellers. It is seen that their travelling decisions are very complicated owing to the pile of information they gather to make a purchase decision (Starčević & Konjikušić, 2013). This age group of people are more likely to take feedback from both online and offline sources before travelling.

The study conducted by Lewis et al. (2021) has revealed that the lack of information about the tourism destination can create communication issues among travellers that disrupt transparency within the travelling process. There are several challenges and issues that millennial solo travellers experience on self-trips that are further complicated by the use of Instagram. The pursuit of "Instagrammable" moments may result in disappointment when the reality fails to meet the idealized images that are viewed online. Another problem is security concerns, particularly for women and LGBTQ+ tourists, since navigating new places alone may be dangerous (Otegui-Carles et al., 2022). Social isolation is also frequent, with solitary travellers often failing to interact despite the digital contact provided by Instagram. Also, there is the necessity to capture the experience for social media, which could be demotivating to the experience of the trip. Expenses, in terms of fees like accommodation and activities, are also daunting not to mention travel budgets that do not come with group saving bonuses (Zhong et al., 2024). Finally, cultural irony might involve using looks and beauty when selecting attractions without regard for the cultural values of the country being toured by the traveller.

Thus, based on the above literature, the study aims to study the influence of Instagram reels as a motivating factor for increasing the rate of millennial solo travelling.

Research Gap

The following gaps have been identified:

- Several scholars have been researching tourists' intentions to travel to specific destinations through social media platforms like Facebook,

YouTube and Twitter. However, there is no research considering the promotion through Instagram Reel, as these Millennial-age groups are more inclined to use Instagram. The banning of TikTok has shifted most of its users to using Instagram reels (Meng & Leung, 2021). It has also been reported that the average Indian spends 3.5% more time on Instagram as soon as reels are launched (Menon, 2022).

- The motivational factor of the millennial age group is still largely unexamined. About one-third of this generation has already graduated and are independent earners in society (Dimitriou & Abouelgheit, 2019). Soon this generation will be the main consumers of the tourism industry (Robinson & Schänzel, 2019) because they have a predominant purchasing power (Tiago & Tiago, 1970). At present, they are establishing a relationship with the brands that will reflect their purchasing behaviour shortly.

3. Methodology

The research considers an analytical survey method. The data was collected through a structured questionnaire. Based on the collected data, the study is both exploratory and explanatory in nature. The primary goal is to determine the extent to which variations in one factor are related to one or more other factors, as measured by the correlation coefficient. A quantitative approach is employed, focusing on numerical analysis to examine the phenomenon under investigation. Borrelli et al., (2021) have stated that the inclusion of statistical analysis processes ensures scientific underpinning regarding the predictions based on research questions and problem statements. Establishing a relationship based on the above literature, our research is based on the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). There is a positive association between the Motivation of millennial solo travellers and Destination Images on Instagram reels.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). There is a positive association between the Motivation of millennial solo travellers and the Availability of Information on Instagram reels.
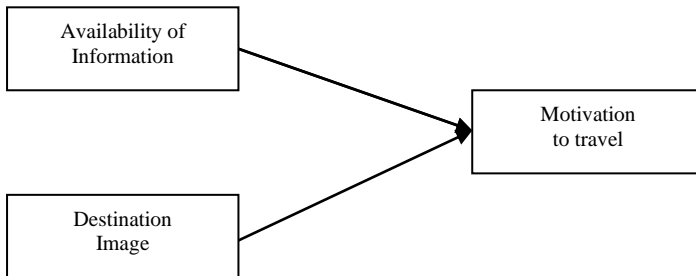

Figure 1. Relationship between the variables

The current research intends in this regard to evaluate the feasibility of information availability and destination image towards the travel motivation of

millennial solo travellers. It also tries to determine factors such as how these variables affect their overall perceptions and decision-making processes concerning travel destinations using the MLR analysis.

A. *Population and sample*

The population in this study is solo millennial travellers who use Instagram as a source of motivation to make travel decisions. The age group considered is between 28 and 43 (as of 2024). This research has included a primary quantitative data collection process. Kwok et al. (2022) have suggested that primary quantitative data collection helps identify the current trends or patterns of the market. This figure is used as a basis for determining the demographic details of the total population.

The sample size considered for the study is 50 (Table 1). The respondents were equally divided between both genders to measure their behavioural intentions without any biases. The results declare that about 14% of the respondents have a secondary education, 40% of them hold a Bachelor's degree, and the highest numbers of respondents (44%) are postgraduates, while only 2% of them have doctorates. In terms of income, 46% of the respondents earn an average annual income of about 500000 or below, and the other 46% earn about 500000-100000. Only 8% of the respondents have a higher standard of living with an average annual income of about 1000000-1500000.

Table 1. Socio-demographic Characteristics.

	Frequency	Percentage of Frequency
Gender		
Male	25	50.0%
Female	25	50.0%
Qualification Level		
Secondary education	7	14.0%
Bachelor's degree	20	40.0%
Postgraduate	22	44.0%
Doctorate	1	2.0%
Average Annual Income		
500000 or Below	23	46.0%
500000-1000000	23	46.0%
1000000-1500000	4	8.0%

Sampling has been considered a crucial factor in methodology that helps analytics make inferences regarding entire populations quickly compared to observations manually (Kend and Nguyen, 2020). The sampling method employed is non-probability sampling, which involves intentionally selecting participants who meet the specific criteria of the research. The sampling technique used was purposive since it is particularly effective for studies focusing on a niche group. Introducing non-probability purposive sampling has helped in identifying millennial solo travellers over Instagram in a time-convenient and budget-friendly process by using Instagram pages and posts

related to travel and tourism. The data collection process took place from January 2024 to June 2024.

B. Test Instruments

In this study, the validity and reliability of the instrument were assessed with a sample of 50 respondents. The validity of the research data is upheld because the measurement scale employed was derived from established studies and thoroughly evaluated by field experts, who affirmed its relevance and suitability for the current context. As a result, each item within the question variables is deemed valid and appropriate for use in the research questionnaire.

In this research, reliability testing is conducted using the one-shot method, employing the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient as the assessment tool. The formula used for calculating the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient concludes that the outcome from the instrument reliability tests shows an overall Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.844, with each instrument also exceeding the minimum reliability threshold of 0.7. This validates that all the variables used in this research are reliable.

C. Classical Assumption Test

The normality of the dependent variable, i.e., motivation, influenced by different levels of the independent variables, namely, availability of information and destination image, were assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. These tests evaluate whether the data follows a normal distribution, a key assumption for parametric statistical analyses like regression.

Availability of Information:

Both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests indicate that for most levels of availability of information (e.g., 4.00, 4.50, 5.25, 5.50), the p-values exceed 0.05, suggesting the data does not deviate significantly from normality. However, at certain levels like 5.00 and 5.75, the p-values are closer to the 0.05 threshold (e.g., p = 0.089 for 5.00), implying some deviation from normality, though not statistically significant. Data for some levels (e.g., 1.75, 2.00, 3.00) were omitted due to constant values for motivation, making normality assessment impossible.

Destination Image:

Similar to the results for availability of information, most levels of destination image (e.g., 4.00, 4.25, and 4.75) exhibited p-values greater than 0.05 in both tests, confirming normality. However, at destination image = 4.50, the p-value was 0.007, indicating a significant deviation from normality, requiring caution when interpreting this subset of data. Some levels (e.g., 1.75, 3.50) were also omitted due to constant values of motivation.

The multicollinearity test is conducted to determine whether a high correlation exists between independent variables in a multiple linear regression

model, as such correlations can distort the interpretation of relationships between independent and dependent variables. Multicollinearity can be assessed using two primary indicators:

- Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance: A model is considered free from multicollinearity if the VIF value is below 10 and the Tolerance value exceeds 0.10. Since VIF and Tolerance are inversely related (VIF = 1 / Tolerance), a higher VIF indicates a lower Tolerance value. In this study, all Tolerance values were greater than 0.10, suggesting no significant correlation between independent variables. Furthermore, no VIF values exceeded 10, confirming the absence of multicollinearity.

- Correlation Coefficient: A correlation coefficient below 0.70 between any pair of independent variables also indicates the absence of multicollinearity. The results revealed that all correlation coefficients were below 0.70, further verifying that no strong correlations exist between the independent variables.

Thus, based on the VIF and correlation coefficient values, it can be concluded that multicollinearity is not present in this regression model.

4. Data Analysis

Table 2. Correlation table

		Motivation	Availability of Information	Destination Image
Motivation	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 50	.638** .000 50	-.017 .908 50
Availability of Information	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N		1 50	-.067 .644 50
Destination Image	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N			1 50

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between the composite variables for motivation, availability of information, and destination image was examined through a correlation analysis. Establishing the reliability, normality, and correlation among these variables is crucial, as they are foundational assumptions for regression analysis. The results showed a correlation of 0.638 between motivation and availability of information, while the correlation between motivation and destination image was -0.17. Additionally, the availability of information and destination image were correlated at -0.067. These correlation values are within an acceptable range, indicating a relationship exists between the variables. Moreover, the relatively

low correlations between independent variables suggest that multicollinearity is not a concern in this data set.

B. Analysis of Multiple Linear Regression

Furthermore, the test continued with MLR (Multiple Regression Analysis) which serves as a powerful statistical method for researchers to analyze how changes in independent variables influence a dependent variable.

Table 3. Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.638[a]	.407	.382	.86536

a. Predictors: (Constant), Destination Image, Availability of Information

The results from the regression analysis indicate that the destination image, availability of information, and motivation of millennial solo travellers have a strong relationship. The correlation coefficient (R-value) is 0.638, indicating a fairly strong positive correlation between the variables. The results show that the coefficient of determination (R Square) is equal to 0.407 which means the destination image and availability of information accounted for 40.7% of the variance of motivation of millennial solo travellers. The adjusted R Square is crucial to count the number of predictors included in the model, giving a better estimate of the model's explanatory power. The standard error of the estimate indicates the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line. These findings further add to the premise that destination image and information availability are pivotal predictors of travel motivation among millennial solo travellers.

Table 4. ANOVA[a] table

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.157	2	12.099	16.156	0.000[b]
	Residual	35.196	47	.749		
	Total	59.393	49			

a. Dependent Variable: Motivation

b. Predictors: (Constant), Destination Image, Availability of Information

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) table helps to determine the performance of the model. Regression analysis states that approximately 63.8% of the variance in motivation can be explained through destination image and availability of information. This table is intended to measure the overall goodness of fit of the fitted regression model. Importantly, one can note the F-statistic P-value = 0.00 which is much lower than any level of significance (α = 0.05); thus the model is significant. Such findings indicate that the regression model is deemed reliable for constructing a relationship between variables under study.

Table 5. Coefficients^a table

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.118	.956		1.170	.248
Availability of	.671	.118	.639	5.682	.000
Information	.037	.161	.026	.231	.818
Destination Image					

a. Dependent Variable: Motivation

The table of coefficients from regression analysis indicates how independent variables, such as availability of information and destination image, influence the dependent variable: motivation. It uses these two independent variables to predict tourist's levels of motivation. The unstandardized coefficients indicate a constant (intercept) of 1.118 and predict the motivation score when both independent variables are equal to zero, acting as a baseline. It indicates that for every one-increased unit of availability, while the destination image is constant, motivation scores will increase by a value of 0.671. The implication is that there is a strong positive relationship between the availability of information and motivation. The coefficient for destination image, however, has a value of 0.037, signifying that an increase of one unit in destination image only causes an increase of 0.037 unit in motivation, which implies a very weak positive correlation. The standardized coefficients (Beta) make it possible to compare the relative importance of each independent variable. The Beta for availability of information is 0.639 indicating a strong positive impact on motivation, as such it ranks as one of the significant predictors in the model. But, for destination image which has a Beta of 0.026, has little effect on motivation indicating its lower importance when compared with availability. These findings are further supported by the t-statistics and significant values. For information availability, the t-statistic is found to be 5.682, with a significance value of 0.000, indicating a significant influence on motivation. In contrast, the t-statistic for the destination image is 0.231 with a significance value of 0.818, thereby indicating that it does not have a significant influence concerning the token model. Hence, using these coefficients, the regression equation is established as:

$$\hat{Y} = 1.118 + 0.671\,X_1 + 0.037X_2$$

Therefore, it has been confirmed in the analysis that the availability of information is a significant predictor of motivation for millennial solo travellers, while destination image plays a very minor role. Availability of information carries such a strong influence that it points towards the importance of travel motivation, which is pertinent information for marketers and destination planners focusing on this target group.

These data demonstrate with 95% confidence that Instagram plays a fundamental role in determining motivation for solo travel. It helps people plan trips by providing destination recommendations, valuable information, and

experiences shared by other travellers. Furthermore, it greatly influences the decisions and choices of destinations for solo travellers by providing insights into adventurous and exciting activities, travel experiences, and memories. Instagram assists solo travellers in meeting new people, breaking away from their everyday routines, overcoming obstacles in travel, finding some intellectual enrichments, and fulfilling lifelong dreams through shared experiences concerning food, lodging, aspirations, and travel.

5. Discussion of Result

The regression analysis results indicate a strong relationship between the destination image, availability of information, and the motivation of millennial solo travellers. Travel motivation relies heavily on the destination image and availability of information to help confirm their importance in travel decisions among this demographic. Importantly, the availability of information is shown to be a more critical predictor of motivation, indicating how substantial the role of platforms like Instagram can be in spurring millennial travellers' motivation. The recommendations, tips, and experiences shared on social media thus have a combined effect of informing and motivating potential travellers, making them feel connected to others. In the survey, Instagram was identified as a tool that helps users discover exciting activities, share their stories of travel, and build new contacts. Thus, it enhances both social engagement and the travel experience.

Comparatively, the destination image is also positively related to motivation, though to a lesser degree. The results incline to that of Basit et al. (2020). He has analyzed in his study that the contents posted on Instagram are incapable of building the image of tourist destinations. His results show that there is no relation between Instagram/Facebook and its influence on destination image, recognition and differentiation.

While Instagram generally provides positive images of a destination, it does not fulfil the same role in driving motivation as the information spread throughout a traveller's network. Items about destination image suggest that social media does create favourable perceptions of destinations and the kind of facilities they offer, but overall, the primary effect on travel motivation is still derived from internal channels.

These results point out the requirement for strategic marketing and information-sharing efforts on the side of travel brands and destination planners. By harnessing the power of platforms such as Instagram, marketers can achieve optimal targeting of millennial solo travellers through a well-structured tapestry of engaging content, and user-generated experiences, as well as showcasing unique elements of destinations. These findings are consistent with those of Lewis et al. (2021), who indicated how social media advertisements have culture-inclusiveness by emphasizing people's cultures at tourist spots. It is also stressed by Monaco & Sacchi (2023) about influencer marketing in social media,

which significantly influences solo travellers in their travel decision-making. The most important factor Richards & Morrill (2020) advocated is that an absence of cultural information can be a barrier for millennial solo travellers. All in all, creating adequate information and developing a vibrant online community are two major aspects of boosting motivation and having millennials travel independently for new experiences. This understanding allows travel industry stakeholders to formulate focused and effective strategies that coincide well with this expanding demographic and their travel inspirations.

6. Practical Implication

The study offers valuable practical insights for marketers, planners of the destination, and stakeholders in tourism, as they seek to align their services to meet the needs of millennial solo travellers. It also discusses how the interaction among different elements, which includes information available, destination image, and motivation, can influence stakeholders' activities in formulating strategies that target improving travel experiences. Marketers are expected to use social media such as Instagram to make visual content and other types of user-generated input into the community. Most importantly, ensuring that use is made of wide-ranging and well-informed sources to access information about travel helps in giving confidence to the users. Although the effect of destination image was relatively weaker, what would still be valuable was creating good quality material for highlighting specific destination features. Direct engagement with the target audience through surveys, likes, and views will provide metrics of the audience's preferences, thus allowing highly personalized marketing campaigns. Creating community platforms would go a long way in facilitating the experience but safety and support should play a key role in alleviating concerns in solo travelling. They are all very important in motivating a millennial to pursue opportunities for solo travel.

7. Conclusion

The study makes important contributions towards the implications instrumented for marketers, destination planners, and stakeholders in the travel industry related to how these end users can practically engage millennial solo travellers. Conditions for information availability, its image, and motivation form their core interaction which allows various stakeholders to come up with appropriate strategies to meet travel experience enhancement. Marketers should capitalize on social media to vividly communicate and encourage user-generated contributions through Instagram, nurturing a feeling of community.

When it comes to enabling tourists to make an informed decision, nothing beats providing user-friendly information via as many online channels as one can. The image of a destination might not be the strongest influence, but it does warrant the production and maintenance of high-quality content aimed at promoting destination peculiarities. Surveying the target audience may help track their preferences for possible future marketing campaigns. Moreover, provision

may be made for community engagement platforms that would enhance the collective travel experience but also underscore security and assurance for the solo travel experience. Within all these lies very important elements that motivate youth to take up opportunities for travelling alone.

8. Limitations and Future Scope

The research has faced limitations due to the lack of time and financial resources that have created issues within the process of assessing a larger sampling size for the research. The current study has not been involved in understanding the negative impacts of Instagram that hinder the perspectives of solo travellers. The lack of secondary information has also limited the research within the process of determining the accuracy of the research process due to the lack of alignment with the peer-reviewed information. However, this research has future scopes in identifying the role of social media platforms to ensure the viability of the travelling decisions that are essential for increasing travellers' satisfaction via conducting primary qualitative research.

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