

The Perception of Tourists on the Ethical Issues of Social Media Marketing: Bangladesh Perspective

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Abstract: *Social media marketing technologies have become a crucial tool in the tourism industry, connecting individuals worldwide and encouraging networking. The research aims to assess the ethical issues related to tourism promotion in Bangladesh through social media marketing. A cross-sectional research design and qualitative research method have been used to conduct the study, involving 30 participants, including tourist and local individuals, faculty members, and travel agents. The qualitative data from interviews are analyzed through inductive thematic analysis. The study found that social media marketing of tourism in Bangladesh raises ethical issues such as avoiding social sensitivity, disregarding privacy, and devaluing environmental sustainability. It identifies social sensitivity issues arising from social media tourism marketing, such as intolerance, cultural disrespect, and legacy preservation. Privacy and transparency problems include breaching people's privacy and information security, and promotions of unauthorized and financially irregular activities. The study highlights the negative impacts of over-tourism, unsustainable practices, and environmental degradation. It suggests establishing regulatory frameworks, stakeholder education, and responsible tourism practices. The findings will guide social media marketers and stakeholders in adhering to ethical marketing rules, privacy and transparency policies, and diversified cultural and environmental considerations.*

Keywords: Social Media, Tourism Marketing, Tourist Perception, Ethical Issues, Social Sensitivity, Privacy Issues, Environmental Sustainability.

1. Introduction

Social media platforms have become crucial for disseminating information about tourism locations, and influencing tourists' vacation plans as well as tourist behavior. Tourism and hospitality enterprises are increasingly incorporating social media platforms to meet evolving customer demands and preferences (Tham et al., 2020). Social media marketing helps tourists plan vacations and influences their behavior, with business and leisure tourists using social media differently (Javed et al., 2020). Tourism promotion requires understanding tourist behavior and visitor analytics to design activities that affect tourist behavior and quality (Zhang et al., 2019). Social media bridges tourism business knowledge gaps, sharing tourist destination images, videos,

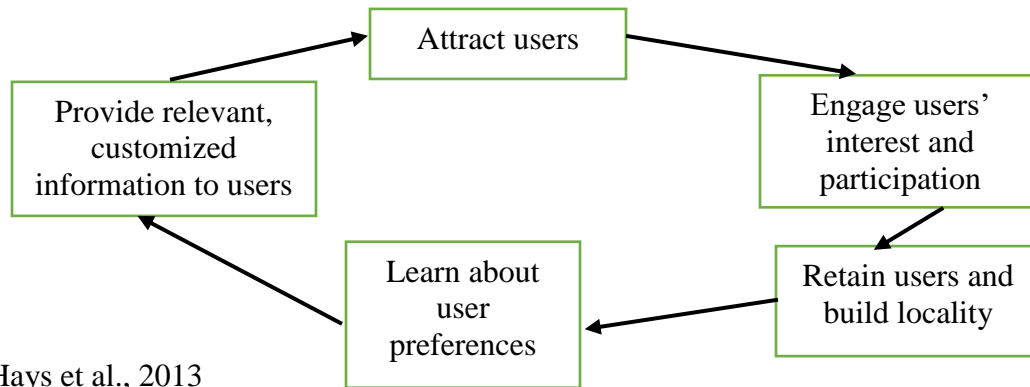
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and stories (Sotiriadis, 2017). The tour agencies in Bangladesh promote its tourist attractions through social media, connecting individuals worldwide and making the world feel smaller (Uddin et al., 2021). As social media is dynamic and encourages networking and social involvement, the tourism industry especially the tour agents are increasingly using more social channels to reach their audience, the tourists (Tarannum, 2020). The tourism sector has undergone significant developments in promotion through the use of social media marketing which must consider sustainable tourism management, cross-cultural adjustment, respect for diversity, stakeholder engagement, and society-oriented components of tourism (Pesonen & Komppula, 2015). According to the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, the ethical issues in this tourism promotion include the avoidance of social sensitivity, disregarding privacy and transparency, devaluing environmental sustainability in a broader sense (Holder et al., 2021; Roblek et al., 2021). Researchers have examined how tourism influences local livelihood, tourism, community perception, and other relationships (Stone & Nyaupane, 2016; Wang et al., 2021). Though tourism promotion and its influences on tourist behavior have been investigated in several studies, the ethical issues of social media marketing have not been studied as per requirements especially in the context of Bangladesh (Rahman, 2021; Tarannum, 2020). Thus, this study is expected to fulfill that evident gap in the Bangladesh context. Therefore, the objective of this research endeavor is to gain an understanding of the impact of social media marketing of tourist sites on the ethical issues within the context of tourism in Bangladesh.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is the use of social media platforms to enhance brand recognition, boost sales, and increase website traffic (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012). The most dominant platforms include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Snapchat. Social media management solutions like Buffer help organizations improve their use of these platforms (Wilson, 2020). Businesses use social media monitor consumer sentiments, evaluate performance and target specific demographics (Blackburn & Boris, 2020). Social media platforms have evolved significantly since their launch, offering various content formats (Lieb, 2012). Social media advertising allows businesses to reach more people than just their followers, targeting audiences based on demographics, interests, and activities (Pradiptarini, 2011). A successful social media campaign involves updating profiles, setting targets, sharing brand-representative visual content, responding to feedback, and actively following and interacting with customers, influencers, and brand advocates (Dagnew, 2014). Paid social media advertising allows companies to reach large numbers of people interested in their products or services (Taylor, 2013).

Figure 1: Role of Social Media

Source: Hays et al., 2013

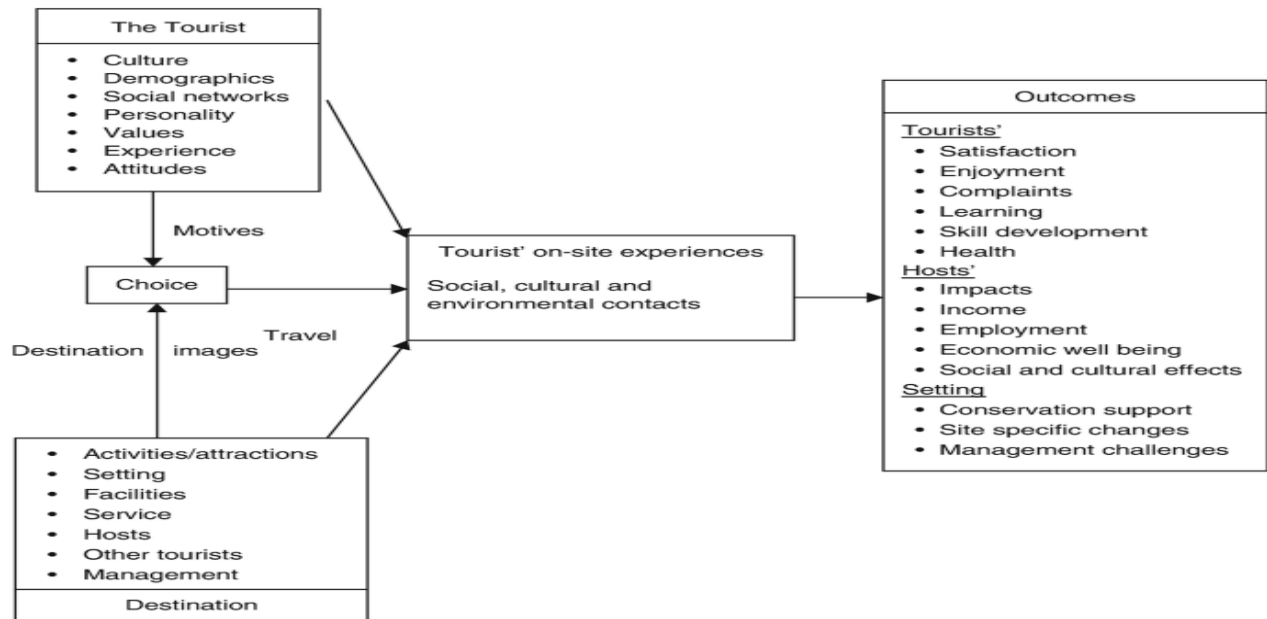
2.2 Social Media Marketing of Tourism in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has the potential to become a top tourist destination due to its strong tourism industry (Uddin et al., 2021). Social media has become the fastest way for information to be communicated, with Bangladeshi people actively sharing their experiences and opinions (Yamin, 2017). Travel agencies in Bangladesh play a significant role in promoting the industry, but people are less concerned about their influence (Sharmin et al., 2020a). Restaurants also have positive responses, with people sharing their opinions and suggestions on social media. Quality service at restaurants builds a positive image and ensures smooth business operations (Shetu, 2020). Hotels are also crucial for overnight stays, and social networks greatly impact the hotel, food and beverage industry (Sanchez-Casado et al., 2019). People's interest in a destination motivates them to visit and share their experiences, influencing others (Figure 1). Social media users can serve as brand ambassadors, shaping the image of a destination for both domestic and international tourists (Nowreen & Hossain, 2021; Pestana et al., 2020).

2.3 Tourist Behavior

Tourist behavior refers to the predisposition or feelings travelers have towards a tourist spot and its tourism services (Ballantyne et al., 2018). The "theory of planned behavior" is used to examine the correlation between tourists' psychological tendencies and their evaluation of specific behaviors. This theory suggests that perceived control over a behavior and intention to engage in it can predict behavioral success (Pereira et al., 2022). Consumer behavior is a highly researched subject within the tourism sector which denotes the factors influencing tourists' decision-making process and motivational drivers shaping their travel preferences (Han, 2021; Horner & Swarbrooke, 2020). Geographical variables, social factors, region of origin, and tourism destination all significantly influence travelers' choices. Physical factors like weather, services, and marketing strategies influence tourists' decisions (Figure 2). Social networks provide preliminary insights, while the region of origin influences tourist behavior (Boniface et al., 2016; Gidebo, 2021; Rakib et al., 2021).

Figure 2: Tourist Behavior

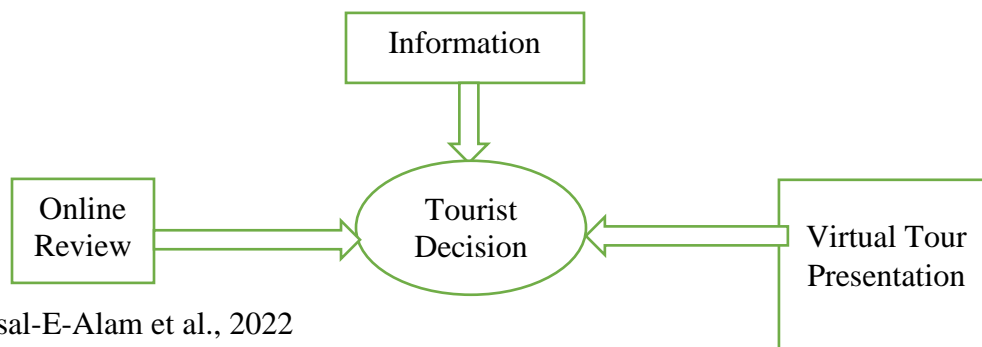


Source: Rakib et al., 2021

2.4 Tourism Marketing on Social media influencing the Tourist Behavior

The emergence of social media has resulted in significant changes in the marketing procedures and promotional endeavors of the tourism sector, engendering heightened doubt and diminishing the sway of conventional mass communication outlets (Gretzel & Yoo, 2014 ;Kalasi, 2014). Social media influences the behavior and decision-making dynamics of tourists, with the nature of this effect depending on their travel motives and goals (Faisal-E-Alam et al., 2022; Fotis, 2015; Pop et al., 2022) (Figure 3). The increasing incidence of social media and mobile Internet usage among the youth population is a significant phenomenon, with the impact of social media influencers on the behavioral intentions of millennials well-documented in existing literature (Duffett, 2015; Reena & Udit, 2020). The integration of communication features has rendered social media a potent platform for the promotion of travel, and tourism professionals have revamped their marketing strategies to target a wider audience by incorporating social media exclusively within the tourism industry (Hays et al., 2013; Leung et al., 2013; Sigala et al., 2012).

Figure 3: Social Media Marketing on Tourist Behavior



Source: Faisal-E-Alam et al., 2022

2.5 Ethical Concerns in Tourism Promotion through Social Media Marketing

The tourism sector has undergone significant developments since the start of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) (Tenhunen, 2023). Social media marketing for the tourism sector is primarily focused on sustainable tourism management, cross-cultural adjustment and respect for diversity, stakeholder engagement, and society-oriented components of tourism (Pesonen & Komppula, 2015). The World Committee on Tourism Ethics, which operates as a subsidiary organ of the UNWTO General Assembly, has identified various ethical considerations (e.g. social sensitivity, privacy and transparency, and environmental sustainability) pertaining to the promotion of tourism in accordance with the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (Laksmidewi, 2022). The ethical violations in this regard include the avoidance of social sensitivity, disregarding privacy and transparency, devaluing environmental sustainability in a broader sense (Holder et al., 2021; Roblek et al., 2021).

Table 1: Conceptual Framework of Social Media Marketing On Tourist Perception in Terms of the Ethical Issues

<p>Social media marketing →</p>	<p>Tourist perception to tourism →</p>	<p>Ethical issues</p>	<p>Avoiding Social sensitivity</p>	<p>(Hvass & Munar, 2012; Hysa et al., 2022; Mar García-de los Salmones et al., 2021)</p>
			<p>Disregarding Privacy</p>	<p>(Mar García-de los Salmones et al., 2021; Pan et al., 2021)</p>
			<p>Disrespecting Transparency</p>	<p>(Pan et al., 2021)</p>
			<p>Devaluing environmental Sustainability</p>	<p>(Harbor & Hunt, 2021; Mkono, 2016; Ramukumba, 2022).</p>

Source: Authors' Compilation

2.5.1 Avoiding Social Sensitivity

Promoting tourism through social media can result in ethical violations such as influencing attitudes of intolerance, disrespecting diverse religious, philosophical, and moral beliefs, spreading contempt for social and cultural traditions and practices, disrupting the harmony of the artistic, archaeological, and cultural heritage of tourist destinations, disregarding the lifestyles, tastes, and livelihoods of local residents, displaying offensive content, and violating human rights, particularly of vulnerable groups (Hvass & Munar, 2012; Hysa et al., 2022; Mar García-de los Salmones et al., 2021).

2.5.2 Disregarding Privacy and Transparency

Ignoring the safety of information, prevention, security, insurance and assistance, overlooking the maintenance of laws, practices and customs, promoting the trafficking in arms, antiquities, protected species and products, and normalizing the exploitation of species can be ethical issues

arise by the social media marketing of the tourism (Mar García-de los Salmones et al., 2021; Pan et al., 2021).

2.5.3 Devaluing the Sustainability of Environment

The ethical breach of social media marketing for tourist destinations can involve the promotion of activities that harm the natural environment, disrespect the natural heritage comprised of ecosystems and biodiversity, endanger wildlife species, depict the destruction of nature reserves or protected areas, and compromise the maintenance, preservation, development, and enhancement of these sites (Harbor & Hunt, 2021; Mkono, 2016; Ramukumba, 2022) (Table 1).

3. Methodology

The research employs a qualitative method, examining human experiences, behaviors, and social phenomena through interviews, and document analysis (Mohajan, 2018). It employs different paradigms like Interpretivism, and Phenomenology, emphasizing subjective interpretation of experiences and social constructionist views aligning with the researcher's epistemological and ontological views for a more comprehensive understanding and analysis (Hiller, 2016; Hussain et al., 2013; Ormston et al., 2014). This study used a cross-sectional research time horizon to assess the prevalence of a perceptual outcome in a specific period of time (Zangirolami-Raimundo et al., 2018). The researcher used inductive logical reasoning to analyze study participants' thoughts, feelings, and statements and gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter, focusing on the ethical dimensions of the responses of the study participants (Alase, 2017; Azungah, 2018; Liu, 2016).

3.1 Data Collection Methods

The study utilized both the primary and secondary methods for data collection, utilizing In-depth Interviews (IDIs) and Key-informant interviews (KIIs) as primary methods (Mazhar et al., 2021). The interviews were documented, evaluated, and presented in a rigorous manner (Turner III & Hagstrom-Schmidt, 2022). This study used semi-structured interviews with the study participants to understand the behavioral components of the ethical considerations in promoting tourism through the social media platforms (Magaldi & Berler, 2020). Considering the experiences and expertise of the participants, the researchers selected 30 key informants, including 5 faculty members, 5 travel agents, 15 tourists and 5 host community people, through purposive sampling for conducting Key-informant interviews (KIIs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs). The researcher informed the participants of the purpose of the study and assured them regarding anonymity and confidentiality, and then sought consent both in an oral and written manner and then started collecting data through interviews. The predetermined sample size accurately reached the data saturation points and provided a comprehensive understanding of the situation and its underlying factors of ethical issues related to the social media marketing of tourism in Bangladesh (Guarte & Barrios, 2006) (Table 2). Such as:

Table 2: Sampling Strategy of This Study

SL No.	Sample size	Classification of sample	Mode of Data collection
1	5	Faculty members	KII
2	5	Travel Agents	KII
3	15	Tourists	IDI
4	5	Host community People	IDI
Total	30 respondents		

Source: Authors' Estimation

3.2 Data Analysis Methods

During data processing, the researchers have included examining the information gathered and correcting any mistakes they found. To facilitate accurate coding of variables during the cleaning and tabulation process, the researcher collected data in chronological order according to the structure of the interview guideline (Bazeley, 2020). The inductive thematic analysis method was employed to analyze the qualitative data to effectively collate and synthesize the collected data (Kyngäs, 2020).

3.3 Reliability and Validity

The researchers have utilized member checking to validate participant interpretations and triangulation across data sources to ensure the internal and external validity of their qualitative research (Noble & Smith, 2015). For reliability, they have maintained credibility through prolonged engagement and peer debriefing sessions, ensuring research transparency. Reflexivity has been practised to address biases, and an independent audit has confirmed the research's validity (Golafshani, 2003).

3.4 Ethical Considerations

This research adheres to ethical standards, ensuring participants' informed consent, privacy, and anonymity. It has assessed potential harm to participants and the community, respects Bangladeshi values, and discloses potential conflicts of interest (Pietilä et al., 2020). The study's results have been objectively reported. Continuous ethical reflection has been integrated into the process to address any ethical issues (Arifin, 2018).

3.5 Limitations

The study has several limitations, including a specific context, selection bias, participant bias, and difficulty in capturing real-time interactions due to social media and tourism which all may limit its generalizability. The subjective interpretation of qualitative data introduces bias, and these limitations must be acknowledged for accurate interpretation and future research (Queirós et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2015).

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Ethical Issues in Social Media Marketing of Tourism in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, the key ethical problems that arise in the context of promoting tourism via social media include concerns about misrepresentation, insensitivity to other cultures, degrading impacts on the environment, a lack of transparency, and potential threats to one's privacy. False or misleading information by the tourism promoter i.e. the social media marketer of tourism significantly impacts a location's appeal to tourists, with manipulated photos and overstated explanations often causing disappointment. Scams, such as misleading advertisements and concealed fees, also sometimes jeopardize consumer financial stability. Social media influencers often exaggerate or fabricate experiences to attract more people, causing ethical issues such as disrespecting local customs and behavior. Over-tourism leads to pollution, animal rights, and depletion of natural resources, causing congestion and environmental degradation which is randomly being promoted by social media tourism promotion in Bangladesh. Social media marketing also engages in exploitative advertising, such as breaching indigenous communities' privacy or using animals for entertainment. False information and fake news spread due to a lack of understanding of social media guidelines, and tourists can be swayed by this false information. Responsible tourist marketing faces challenges due to a lack of accountability in both promotion and handling ethical problems. Tourists' security is often overlooked in remote mountainous and tribal regions, and their survival and well-being may be jeopardized if their right to privacy is violated through social media.

A key informant has stated,

“Ethical issues in tourist marketing through social media in Bangladesh are varied such as- Misrepresentation, insensitivity to cultures, negative environmental effects, lack of openness, and security concerns are all significant concerns.” (KII NO. 05, November 10, 2023)

The study identifies ethical issues in Bangladesh's tourism promotion through social media including avoiding social insensitivity, respecting privacy, and devaluing environmental sustainability. Marketers must be aware of diverse beliefs, customs, and sensitivities, particularly cultural sensitivity. Privacy and transparency violations are ethical concerns here, and strict guidelines for photography and video recording in public spaces are essentially needed. Environmental degradation with habitat destruction and increased pollution in ecologically sensitive areas is another concern. To achieve sustainable tourism, Islam (2015) stresses the need to consider tourist perception, garbage disposal, and disruption of animal nesting (Islam et al., 2021). According to Rahman (2021), policy interventions are needed since the current tourism strategy in Bangladesh is likely not inclusive enough to enable sustainable and ethical tourism growth (Rahman, 2021). Investigating how social media may be used to promote and manage tourism sites raises concerns about how well it can be used to share information and communicate between authorities and stakeholders (Deb et al., 2022). With a focus on the relevance of cognitive and emotional triggers in forming environmental concerns and attitudes, Studies investigate the impact of user-generated material on the responsible environmental perception of tourists (Sharmin et al., 2020b).

4.2 Avoiding Social Sensitivity

The social media marketing of Tourism in Bangladesh avoids social sensitivity through misrepresentation of local customs, disrespecting their traditions, disregarding their ecosystems, and the promotion of irresponsible travel practices. However, over-tourism leads to other negative consequences, such as straining resources and disrupting the daily lives of local residents and thus, social media marketing of tourism promotion avoids these ethical norms of tourism promotion lacking the social sensitivity. Irresponsible social media marketing practices include unauthentic representation, affecting cultural norms, and community endangerment. Hence, tourism promotion in Bangladesh through social media marketing lacks the authenticity to maintain social sensitivity and maintain tourists' expectations. Disrespecting cultural norms through these social media campaigns fosterer misunderstanding, harming cultural empathy and causing community disharmony concerns. Challenges and responsibilities for tour operators and travel agencies also include maintaining ethical boundaries, raising awareness about cultural and social nuances, and implementing government regulations.

A tourist has said in this regard,

“Social media marketing has a significant impact on social sensitivity in Bangladesh through irresponsible marketing, fake representation, affecting cultural norms, and disrespecting community rituals avoiding preserving and respecting social sensitivity.” (IDI No. 12, November 24, 2023)

A university faculty member claimed,

“In Bangladesh, tourism through social media marketing affects social sensitivity, through disseminating information about conservation issues, affecting Emotional connections, violating Cultural norms, promoting exploitative practices, etc.” (KII No. 03, November 8, 2023)

Tourism promotion in Bangladesh on social media causes intolerance, disrespect, and disruption of cultural heritage, leading to cultural tensions and alienation among indigenous populations. It also disrupts heritage sites and disregards local lifestyles and livelihoods. Sometimes promotional contents are offensive, affecting public sentiments and harming tourist destinations' reputations. Violation of community standards, particularly for vulnerable groups, also occurs through social media campaigns. Alonso-Almeida et al. (2019) highlight the negative externalities of social media for tourist marketing and management in terms of avoiding social sensitiveness (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2019). Hysa et al. (2021) discuss the negative aspects of using the internet for tourist promotion in terms of potential drawbacks for cultural sites and local populations (Hysa et al., 2021). Dedeoğlu et al. (2020) review the use of social media in tourist efforts in promoting tourist sites with specific negative consequences in terms of social insensitivities.

4.3 Disregarding the Privacy of People

In recent days, a major concern in tourism promotion in Bangladesh is sharing over social media the photos or videos of locals without their consent, which invades privacy and raises ethical concerns. Sometimes, sharing exact locations on social media compromises tourists' safety and privacy. Geotagging also expose tourist plans and locations, increasing vulnerability to stalking and security risks. Sharing images or videos that unintentionally exposes important locations or private residences compromises security and invades privacy. Data privacy and security issues include data collection and breaches. Social media platforms collect personal data, including travel

plans and preferences, without full user consent. Privacy breaches, data mining, and third-party data sharing often result in identity theft and unwanted marketing. Cybersecurity concerns, including Privacy control, hacking, cyberbullying, and phishing scams, are major risks as social media utilization for tourism makes people vulnerable to cyberattacks. Sharing sensitive content without consent, especially related to sacred places, can harm cultural interests and raise ethical concerns. Harassment and cyberbullying, i.e. derogatory or hurtful content about customs or cultures on social media, can cause harassment and cyberbullying. This behavior breaches privacy and violates ethical standards.

A local civil society representative has claimed,

“Tourism promotion through social media raises privacy concerns due to sharing local photos and videos without consent, geotagging locations, increasing vulnerability to stalking and security risks, data privacy issues, cybersecurity risks, and cultural interests harm”. (IDI NO. 17, November 28, 2023)

Tourism promotion through social media acknowledges the importance of prioritizing safety measures, prevention, security, insurance, and assistance for tourists and local communities. It suggests that tourism authorities and businesses should prioritize tourist safety and well-being, implementing stringent safety regulations, staff emergency response training, and comprehensive insurance coverage. There is a need to respect local laws, customs, and cultural practices in tourism campaigns. The insensitive portrayal of traditions can offend locals and cause resentment. It suggests that tourism boards and marketing agencies should research the cultural nuances of destinations and work with local influencers and content creators familiar with cultural heritage to ensure authenticity and respect in promotional campaigns. Mongwaketse (2021) emphasizes the significant role of social media in tourism promotion, highlighting its impact on the privacy of tourists (Mongwaketse, 2021). Nzeku (2020) explores the interactive nature of tourist complaints on social media regarding the potential for breaching tourists’ privacy while depicting tourist sites (Nzeku, 2020). Turna (2022) discusses the use of digital media, such as social platforms, for communicating responsible tourism management without breaching anyone’s privacy and security (Turna, 2022).

4.4 Contemplating Transparency

The transparency issues in social media tourism promotion in Bangladesh include misleading content, hidden costs, filtered experiences, undisclosed sponsorships, fake reviews, data privacy concerns, and governance challenges. Misleading content led to unrealistic expectations and disappointment among travelers, while hidden costs cause dissatisfaction and mistrust. Filtered experiences often mislead travelers about actual experiences, while undisclosed sponsorships blur the line between recommendations and advertisements. Fake reviews frequently damage the credibility of online recommendations, while data privacy concerns arise when personal data is collected and used for targeted advertising without permission. Unauthorized promotions with wrong or misleading information compromise transparency and ethical standards. Directorial bodies on social media marketing agencies of tourism companies also worsen the problem by spreading false information, propaganda, or unwanted issues for personal interests.

A tourist has opined that

“Transparency issues in social media tourism promotion in Bangladesh include lack of responsible practices, inaccurate information sharing, and improper adherence to ethical guidelines” (IDI NO. 10, November 8, 2023)

One of the key informants said,

“Tourism promotion through social media involves sponsored or branded content which is not explicitly disclosed to the audience, misleading information, and information asymmetry i.e. filtered or fabricated information or misinformation.” (KII NO. 04, November 9, 2023)

The study explores tourism promotion regarding Contemplating Transparency including misleading content, hidden costs, influencer marketing, environmental impact, and sustainability. Misleading contents harm visitors' experiences and industry trust, while hidden costs lead to unrealistic expectations and negative experiences. Wanner et al. (2020) suggest ethical tourism promotion requires open communication, accurate information, and collaboration with local historians, experts, and community members (Wanner et al., 2020). However, according to Weeden (2013), unexpected fees are also an ethical issue, as not disclosing all travel package costs leads to tourist dissatisfaction and mistrust, where as financial transparency is crucial for ethical tourism, and travel package costs should be disclosed upfront to build tourist trust (Weeden, 2013). Marin-Pantelescu et al., (2019) suggest that tourism agencies and marketers should promote ethics and transparency, allowing tourists to make informed decisions (Marin-Pantelescu et al., 2019).

4.5 Devaluing Environmental Sustainability

The over-tourism and environmental strain are caused by focusing too much on popular tourist spots, which can harm ecosystems and reduce biodiversity. Social media promotion also overcrowds natural habitats, stressing ecosystems and disrupting local flora and fauna. Additionally, social media distort destination portrayal, creating unrealistic expectations and causing harm to the environment. The short-term profit focus of businesses neglects long-term environmental sustainability. Social media promotions lead to negative environmental impacts, such as improper waste disposal or disturbance of sensitive habitats. Mass tourism fueled by social media marketing increases carbon emissions, worsening environmental challenges. Sustainable tourism regulations are often overlooked in social media marketing, leading to exploitation and environmental harm. However, social media can raise environmental awareness and promote responsible tourism, emphasizing conservation and sustainability.

A key informant has stated said,

“Social media tourism marketing devalues the sustainability of the environment through the Overemphasis on popular destinations, Unbalanced portrayal, Disconnection from local communities, Unregulated encounters, etc.” (KII No. 01, November 01, 2023)

This study highlights the detrimental effects of social media promotion on ecosystems and the environment, including over-tourism, soil erosion, pollution, habitat loss, and endangered species threats. Social media influencers often cause environmental damage by damaging natural areas or disturbing ecosystems. Additionally, promotional content often leads tourists to disregard

sustainable practices like off-road biking, ecosystem disturbance, and improper waste disposal are common, causing long-term harm to ecosystems, and instigating further harm. social media marketing presenting over-tourism depicting more water use, more trash, and more pollution are some of the negative effects of tourism that are discussed by Taiminen (2018). Using the example of the food and beverage sector, Martínez-Navalón et al. (2019) examine the effect of social media marketing on environmental sustainability, and highlight the need to develop communication strategies to address these issues (Martínez-Navalón et al., 2019). To travel safety, Mitra (2018) acknowledges the growing trend of "influencer tourism" and stresses the significance of safeguarding both the travelers and the places they visit (Mitra, 2018). Ebrahimi et al. (2020) investigate the impact of social media on environmental protection focusing on the platform's capacity to increase public awareness and encourage action towards bettering the environment (Ebrahimi et al., 2020).

4.6 Suggestions Based on the Discussion of the Findings

For addressing ethical issues in social media tourism promotion in Bangladesh, Key strategies include disclosing affiliations, promoting authentic representations of tourist destinations, and discouraging disrespectful content creation. Data privacy and security are crucial for maintaining trust in travel and social media platforms. Community-based tourism initiatives can uplift local communities, boost the local economy, and protect cultural assets. Sustainable tourism practices should be promoted, emphasizing environmental conservation and responsible travel. Tourists should be educated about ethical concerns in tourism, encouraging responsible tour operators and destinations. Regulatory oversight should be created to regulate and enforce ethical standards for influencers and marketers. Collaboration efforts should be promoted among authorities, local communities, travel agencies, and influencers to address ethical issues and promote cooperation in ethical tourism promotion. Feedback mechanisms should be used to assess the impact of social media tourism promotions, and awareness campaigns should be conducted to educate the public about responsible social media use. To create sustainable and ethical tourism in Bangladesh, it is essential to foster collaboration, promote ethical guidelines, and preserve cultural heritage and natural resources for future generations. Implementing these strategies collectively can create sustainable and ethical tourism in Bangladesh. The experts i.e. the tourism faculty members recommends that both tourists and tourism businesses need to be educated about the cultural and social nuances of the destinations they engage with, leading to more responsible behavior. Governments can also play a role in regulating social media marketing practices in the tourism sector to ensure ethical promotion while safeguarding social sensitivity.

This study emphasizes the need for clear regulations and guidelines in tourism marketing, including transparency, respect, and community engagement. It suggests that misinformation and cultural insensitivity can lead to ethical violations. Education on ethics can be provided through workshops, training, awareness campaigns, and collaboration with institutions, NGOs, and cultural organizations. Transparency and respect are crucial for influencers and marketers to accurately represent destinations and respect local culture. A comprehensive code of ethics is necessary for tourism social media marketing, addressing cultural sensitivity, environmental impact, and community involvement Jamal et al. (2011) emphasize the significance of community and environmental ethics in tourist development, stressing the need of include locals in policymaking (Jamal et al., 2011). Fennell and Malloy (2007) investigate the nature of tourist sector codes of ethics and find that they are mostly deontological (Fennell & Malloy, 2007). Mossaz and Coghlan

(2019) analyse the cultural influences on the ethical stances of tourist marketers from across the world (Mossaz & Coghlan, 2019). To preserve the sustainability of the tourist resource, Weeden (2008) highlights the importance of ethics in marketing tourism and stresses the necessity for open discussion and examination of ethical concerns (Weeden, 2008).

5. Conclusion

Social media marketing for tourism in Bangladesh raises ethical issues such as avoiding social sensitivity, disregarding privacy and transparency, and devaluing environmental sustainability. The potential for fraudulent content, propagation of false information, and amplification of extremist ideologies can lead to harm to third parties or stakeholders. Social media marketing also undermines the sustainability of the natural environment due to factors like overemphasis on popular destinations, unbalanced portrayals of tourist experiences, lack of engagement with local communities, and lack of regulation in unethical tourism promotion encounters. Though most issues occur unintentionally. It highlights risks associated with tourism promotion, such as intolerance, cultural disrespect, and community privacy violations. The study recommends regulating, educating influencers, and promoting culturally sensitive content to mitigate these risks. Privacy and transparency issues are to be addressed through enforcing laws, raising awareness, and making social media marketing transparent. The study also recommends responsible travel, working with local communities, and raising environmental awareness. This research is focuses notably on social sensitivity, privacy, transparency, and environmental sustainability, which is very novel. It offers a holistic view of these issues, relevant to policy, and practical implications for businesses, influencers, and tourism authorities. The research integrates global ethical standards with Bangladesh's socio-cultural context, following the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. However, it has limitations such as limited generalizability, challenges in data collection, and time constraints.

Future research can focus on cross-cultural comparative studies, i.e. examining ethical issues in social media tourism marketing across different cultures longitudinal studies, i.e. tracking social media marketing practices and ethical implications over time technological integration, i.e. examining the ethical implications of augmented reality, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence in tourism promotion and impact assessment, i.e. assess the efficacy of tourism industry ethical guidelines and regulations.

5.1 Implications

The study reveals that ethical issues in social media tourism promotion are a significant issue in Bangladesh. It highlights the need for a comprehensive approach involving various stakeholders to address these challenges. The following key actors should implement the suggestions of this study to address the ethical issues of social media marketing of tourism in Bangladesh:

Table 3: Implications of this Study

Actor	Strategies to be implemented
Government	Developing and enforcing clear regulations and guidelines for ethical social media tourism promotion.
	Establishing regulatory body to oversee these regulations' implementation.
	Collaborating with tourism businesses, local communities, and influencers to develop ethical standards.

	Supporting education and awareness campaigns about ethical tourism.
	Promoting sustainable tourism practices and protecting cultural heritage.
Tourism Businesses	Developing and implementing internal ethical guidelines for social media marketing.
	Ensuring transparency in advertising and promotions.
	Ensuring respect for local cultures and traditions in marketing materials.
	Collaborating with local communities to develop tourism products.
	Prioritize sustainable tourism practices
Influencers	Adhering to the ethical guidelines.
	Creating authentic and respectful content that accurately represents the destination.
	Avoiding promoting irresponsible or harmful tourism practices.
Local Communities	Participating in tourism planning and development
	Benefitting from tourism revenue through community-based initiatives
	Protecting cultural heritage and natural resources.
Tourists	Educating themselves about the destination's culture and customs.
	Respecting local traditions and environment.
	Choosing responsible tour operators.

Source: Authors' Compilation

Therefore, the government of Bangladesh, the tourism businesses, the social media influencers, the local communities and the tourists themselves can create a sustainable and ethical tourism industry by implementing comprehensive suggestions with actionable strategies that benefit both visitors and local communities (Table 3).

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Demographic Data

Name:

Email:

Phone Number:

Your Designation:

- Faculty of University
- Travel Agent
- Tourist
- Civil Society/Student/Host community

Descriptive Data

- 1) You know, several ways can violate ethical provisions while promoting tourism through social media. Of them, what are the dominant issues in Bangladesh, according to you?
- 2) What are the privacy issues while promoting tourism through social media?
- 3) To what extent do you think social media marketing of tourism affects social sensitivity?
- 4) What are the transparency issues while promoting tourism through social media?
- 5) How does social media tourism marketing devalue the sustainability of the environment?
- 6) How can the ethical issues of the social media marketing of the tourism in Bangladesh be addressed?