Impact of Social Media on Youths to Enhance the Tourism in Bangladesh

By Nadia Nahrin Rahman & Monira Begum
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Abstract- The impact of social media in tourism is emerging with technological development in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has many natural beauty sites and potentials but lack of proper infrastructural organization while tourism has not emerged as a developed industry. There are many travel places that are still not utilized as tourist destinations or recognized by their natural beauty. Thus social media can bring a change in this present context. Internet users are sharing their views of different places via Web 2.0 that were not acknowledged before. So the importance of social media is expanding in the realm of the traveling industry. The aim of this study is to find out the impact of this public network, specifically on the young generation that may promote the tourism industry of Bangladesh in the global sphere. A survey method is conducted on 160 students as respondents from different universities to analyze the effect of social media in tourism. Finally, some suggestions have been referred to implement by the tourist agencies to develop the marketing sphere as well as this global tourism epoch.

Keywords: social media, tourism, impact, agencies, public platform, marketing.

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Abstract - The impact of social media in tourism is emerging with technological development in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has many natural beauty sites and potentials but lack of proper infrastructural organization while tourism has not emerged as a developed industry. There are many travel places that are still not utilized as tourist destinations or recognized by their natural beauty. Thus social media can bring a change in this present context. Internet users are sharing their views of different places via Web 2.0 that were not acknowledged before. The importance of social media is expanding in the realm of the traveling industry. The aim of this study is to find out the impact of this public network, specifically on the young generation that may promote the tourism industry of Bangladesh in the global sphere. A survey method is conducted on 160 students as respondents from different universities to analyze the effect of social media in tourism. Finally, some suggestions have been referred to implement by the tourist agencies to develop the marketing sphere as well as this global tourism epoch.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Websites and social media have connected new channels of communication and information. Tourists often use web 2.0 based platforms for selecting their destination, seeking information to decision-making. Different tourism websites, agencies, groups share their review, facility, property, and other information utilizing this social media. Web 2.0 is changing the pattern by which tourists used to search, evaluate, and share information about different tourist places. Here tourists are becoming consumers as well as producers by generating their posts, blogs on tourist spots. This also increases the marketing of the tourism industry, advertising firms, and their products. The online comments, pictures, and captions of tourist spots, profiles and facts with different experiences shared by the tourists generate trust and eagerness among the new users. Travelers are becoming co-marketers by sharing their information on tickets, costs, evaluation, suggestions that create attention, the desire among the others to visit the places. At the same time, it helps the tourist agencies and groups to enhance their business sphere. In Bangladesh, the scenery is also taking the same place. A survey is conducted to portray the present scenario of social media impact in the tourism industry and travelers. The result shows that 97.26% of respondents shared their opinion by claiming the positivity of social media's impact on tourism. Almost 30.5 million people in Bangladesh are using Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and social blogs in their daily lives for different gratifications, including tourism and seeking travel information. Bangladesh, as natural attractions sites it has a huge capability. In 2005 according to the World Travel and Tourism Council the contribution of the tourism industry to country GDP was 1.9%, holding the total amount of BDT 296.6 billion (KARIM, 2018). But comparing to the other countries and their tourism, this portion is not sufficient in the international sphere. According to the Johannesburg Summit of 2005, tourism can help to build the infrastructure of a country and the local community (KARIM, 2018). And following the present situation and technological significance, social media can help to develop tourism and traveling by turning it into a well-built industry.

a) Objectives of the study

The aims and objectives of this article are to develop a theoretical framework for the understanding of how social media are promoting tourism and traveling places among the users specifically, the young generation. The role and effect of this public platform on tourists tend to seek information about a travel place, facilities, and cost and share their feedback to influence others. After finding out the results, the second objective would be to provide suggestions to the tourist agencies, advertising firms to implement the strategies to develop tourism in Bangladesh. Any further services they can provide by employing social media.

b) Research questions

To finding out the impact of social media in the tourism of Bangladesh, there are some basic purposive questions of this research. These are as follows:

a. How this social platform is influencing the youths? And also
b. Enhancing tourism in Bangladesh?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

a) Social Media in the Tourism Industry

The innovation and dissemination of the Internet and the other information communication technologies
introduced a new era in our everyday lives. Social media, one of the most powerful networking tools, has been ushering the interactions among mass people to share, create, exchange their opinions, views through the various virtual communities (Zeng, 2013). This medium has become a foremost part of our economy along with daily social life. It includes not only the virtual community or various group pages, also includes blogs, micro blogs, wikis, networking, content community sites. It is more than only a way of interaction among people but indicating an entirely online environment where we can share our views constructing words, posts, images and videos. Tourism is also not an exception. Social media plays an increasingly salient role in tourism, including getting the information, sharing along creating a perception of a spot, and finally the promotion of different tourist spots. Many countries consider social media as a major agency to promote its tourism industry. A good example can be ‘Tourism Australia,’ an Australian government based tour agency. This agency is inspiring the operators to promote their tourist business and activities through their Facebook page (Zeng, 2013). In 2009 Facebook has achieved the third position to be the most popular website in the global market and fourth in the United States. Not only Tourism in Australia, but also the Australian National Online Strategy Committee developed a ‘Tourism e-Kit’ package where the main aim is to promote ’social media for tourism.’ Here are several contents on how to search, get involved, share opinions through Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Group Buying, and various apps only to generate customers interest for tourism (Zeng, 2013). Another largest Web 2.0 travel site of the world is Trip advisor, which serves more than 74 million users on every month basis (Rathonyi). These users use this travel site to seek advice on their travel plans and guidelines where authentic information is provided by the trusted tourists (www.tripadvisor.com) (Rathonyi). Research survey findings can also be noted that tourists have been more active since the emergence of Web 2.0, including more than 50% (information of 2014) travel fond people search their travel places and information through various travel applications in their mobile phone (Zivkovic, Brdar, & Gajic, 2014). An infographics Funsherpa analyzed how tourism travel sites on social media influence travelers of the United States, recommending that about more than 52% of travelers change their plans being influenced by the information and posts getting from different travel sites (Rathonyi). Developed countries like the United States, United Kingdom, and France are earning their 38% foreign currency through this dominated tourism business (Karim, 2018). Around 83% of these developed nations are earning their benefits from tourism industry. Not only that, during traveling, 70% of the travelers update their vacation information on social sites, 76% about their post-vacation and 46% do post their hotel reviews, which influence the other travelers. Another survey result by Mandala Research LCC showed that social media connections influence its consumers more on selecting commerce decisions including 83% share the good sides of a product with their friends; 90% do recommend about the products to their groups, and finally, 90% trust the suggestions of their peer groups which led them to buying or taking a decision (Rathoryi).

In the world of technology and marketing, it is considered that social media is a big trend (Kamal, 2017). Social media plays an effective role promoting business and trends over the traditional marketing approach. It is also considered as one of the competitive tools to promote the tourism industry. Tourism needs the involvement of tourists from various places to be connected via this social media where they can share and exchange their views, opinions and recommend the positive experience of a place. Utilizing the effectiveness of social media, tourist agencies and companies can transmit messages to their targeted consumers or other tourists. Why the tourists as well consumers depend on social media content? It is like online product services where consumers seek suggestions, and experience from others so that they can also buy and utilize the product. After utilizing the positive sides of that product the consumers also share their experience through social media. That is how social media works by sharing and exchanging opinions. It is like the digitized opinion leaders who also influence others. So, a specific message gets spread to the targeted audience or consumers. To know about the destination area and to lessen the uncertainty, tourists need a reliable source where they can find authentic information. It has been analyzed that the internet consumers give importance to the comments done by others in social media for selecting destination area and organizing the travel plans (Kamal, 2017). In business context, social media applies four different approaches; these are communication, collaboration, education, and last entertainment (Camillo, 2015). It is also analyzed that social media directly plays a major role in launching products. People engage their selves to get these four various benefits; it may be their educational purpose or entertainment. Consumers can search via search engines, review sites, different comments and opinions. In developing tourism in Bangladesh, social media is playing the role by applying all of these especially collaboration and communication.

b) How social media influences to make decision

Social media here implies the strategies of marketing following some specific stages. It starts with identification, then searching authentic information, evaluation of those facts and figures, selecting other alternatives, then purchasing, and the post purchasing stage. In tourism, it starts with selecting a destination
area then using the Internet to know details about that spot. And then comes seeking information, evaluation, selecting any alternative, and finally visiting that place (Camillo, 2015). It all includes planning, development of that plan, and consumption and post-purchase facilities for the tourists. The tourists first seek information from the conversation on different social platforms, then they select their decisions. After that, it includes utilizing that product, or at tourism, it is visiting that tourist area and finally again forming an opinion on this social media (Camillo, 2015).

**c) Impact of Social Media Tourism in Bangladesh**

Globalization and technological advancement are not unconventional in developing countries like Bangladesh. Different social networks, including Facebook, blogs, Youtube, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn are becoming popular along with necessary for daily life purposes in this country. Currently, 94.54% of people in Bangladesh are using Facebook through their pocket mobile phones (Social Media Stats in Bangladesh- July 2019). It is also stated that at least 30 million people of Bangladesh are using social media among 81.66 million internet users. The other 1.80 million people are using Instagram, and the percentage of using Youtube channel is 6%. It seems that social media Facebook has the highest amount of users. In this technological advancement, social media sites can be used as a useful marketing instrument to promote our tourism (Karim, 2018). The Vision of 2021 taken by the government is also consistent with the social media platform to stimulate tourism. Bangladesh is a South-Asian country having different seasonal varieties and diverse archaeological, historical, natural, as well as human made traveling places (Karim, 2018). Hospitality is another attribute of this country to attract foreign tourists. It indicates that we have the opportunity to promote its tourism business by attracting its locals along with foreign tourists.

### III. Theoretical Framework

**a) Opinion Leader in Social Media and making decisions**

In 1944 Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernerd Berelson and Hazel Gaudet established the thought of opinion leader during the election period of the United States (Nisber & Kotcher, 2009). An opinion leader is an active media user who influences others more specifically than three people for making a decision. During the election period and afterward Lazarsfels, Berelson and Gaudet had observed that these opinion leaders influence other voters to select their candidates. This impact continues from selecting a fashion brand to voting a national candidate. Opinion leaders are found to play important roles in consumer’s decision making. But how an opinion leader influences to make decisions? An opinion leader is an active media user, and s/he interprets media messages to others. Since opinion leaders are relevant to influence consumer’s decision making, this theory is directly situated to marketing approach as well as emphasizing tourism. Jamrozy et al. found conducted a study on tourism and making opinions (1994) and had found that opinion leaders who share their ideas and experience tend to travel more and involve themselves in nature-tourism. It was also found that opinion leadership and frequent traveling are connected (Nisber & Kotcher, 2009).

**b) McLuhan’s Media is the Message**

‘Medium is the message’ this phrase was first coined by the Canadian communication scholar Marshal McLuhan in his book ‘Understanding Media: The Extension of Man’ in 1964. This communication scholar has emphasized more on the media rather than its content. It prioritizes the way we communicate with any other using media as a tool than the information itself. The way media represents its contents, and we interpret it is more important than the message of the information. The same message can be framed in different ways by different media following its targeted audience. The same news incident or any product information can be represented differently by two various media houses. And it will determine how the audiences are receiving that information. In social media, audiences do not only receive the information, but it has generated a platform to participate by being ‘Pro-sumer’ where these audiences can act both as consumers as well as producers. They participate in the commentary section, share their own opinion, and know newer information. It creates global platforms that indicate another term coined by Marshal McLuhan ‘Global Village’ (1964). This pro-sumer concept refers to the continuous and reciprocal feedback communication and collaboration of different people around the globe. That is why this social media is known as a democratic platform where different terms are developing like ‘Citizen Journalism.’ Comparing to the TV or radio medium, the activity of an audience was bound to a consumer where s/he has to receive the information than participating in the content-generating process. Spaces of sharing knowledge, information, or any experience were limited and not continuous.

Utilizing this social media platform, different e-commerce is now emerging as well as the tourism industry in countries. Tourists or opinion leaders who tend to share their experience use this media where other targeted audiences can be connected at the same time. The two-way communication process takes place among different targeted audiences where they can participate by generating content as well as satisfying their needs about the destination area.
IV. Metho

The main purpose of this paper is to understand the effects and consequences of social media in tourism and its marketing sphere of Bangladesh. Following the aim, a quantitative approach is followed in this study. A survey is conducted on 160 journalism students who are students of public (50%) and private (50%) universities and active user of tourist pages and different sites in social media. They also act their roles as opinion leaders by influencing others. Respondents share their views that some of them use social media-based tourist sites to share their profiles and others take those facts, opinions for selecting their destination place. A questionnaire is provided to the respondents through the Google survey form. A qualitative method through interviews was also conducted on three tourist agencies that mainly focused on the social media platform to understand the response of the tourists seeking information from the social media-based contents.

The universities selected as sample (Following the establishment year of the Dept.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the University</th>
<th>Ranking Position (2019)</th>
<th>Name of the Department</th>
<th>Establishment Year of the Dept.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. University of Dhaka</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>Dept. of Mass Communication &amp; Journalism</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rajshahi University</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>Dept. of Mass Communication &amp; Journalism</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. University of Chittagong</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dept. of Communication &amp; Journalism</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Jahangirnagar University</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Dept. of Journalism &amp; Media Studies</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Private Universities of Bangladesh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the University</th>
<th>Ranking Position</th>
<th>Name of the Department</th>
<th>Establishment Year of the Dept.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Stamford University of Bangladesh</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Department of Journalism and Media Studies</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Daffodil International University</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>Department of Journalism and Mass Communication</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Independent University, Bangladesh</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Media and Communication</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. University of Liberal Arts-Bangladesh</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Media Studies and Journalism</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
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</table>

V. Findings and Analysis

a) Using social media to search for places for traveling

Respondents of this study are asked how much time they spend in social media platform to search tourist places for their tour, while 90.6% of students from public universities point out that they spend most of the time in this regards. A less number of percentages are found where 4.7% of students use social media sometimes in searching for places for traveling. In contrast, the same percentages of students never use social media in doing this. On the other hand, in private universities, 94% of students usually waste most of the time on social media platforms. In comparison, 3% of students search social media sometimes to get information about any tourist place but again, the same percentage of students never use the platform for searching tourist place.
b) Using social media platforms to follow tourism pages

Respondents of this study show different types of social media, which they follow for getting information about tourist places and also tourist pages or sites. The study reveals that majority students around 76.5% use Facebook. In comparison, 18.8% of students use YouTube for searching tourist places, but the minimal percentage of 2.4%, 1.2%, and 1.2% goes for Instagram, Twitter, and others social platform respectively in public universities. Close-ratio percentages are found here in private universities in this regard. The higher percentage covers 65.7% of students who use Facebook, whereas 28.4% and 4.5% of students seem to like to use You Tube and Instagram. Only 1.5% of students use other media as well.

c) Getting local travel agencies’ information through social media

Respondents give their views on the statement of “I usually get the details of local travel agencies through social media rather than visiting their office’, 54.8% of students agree the statement, while 31% stay neutral, and 14.3% of students disagree in this issue. The same scenario reveals in private universities whereas, 55.4% of students agrees on the statement, while 35.4% stay neutral, but only 9.2% disagree in this regard.
d) Seeking information from travel agencies through social media

Students are likely to seek information on tourist spots from travel agencies through social media platforms, as the agencies provide lots of pages and groups related to tourism. In public universities, results show that 51.7% of students use social media most of the time to seek information where 67% of private university students do the same as well. But 36.5% of students in public universities use social media sometimes to get information while others 11.8% of students never use social media in this regard. Compared to private universities, 31% of students use social media sometimes, whereas 2% never search social media to get information from agencies.

![Local travel agencies’ information through social media](image)

**Figure 3**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Local travel agencies’ information through social media</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Universities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree: 54.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral: 31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree: 14.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private Universities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree: 55.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral: 35.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree: 9.20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Seeking information from travel agencies through social media](image)

**Figure 4**

<table>
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<th>Seeking information from travel agencies through social media</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>public Universities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time: 51.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes: 36.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never: 11.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private Universities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time: 67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes: 31.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never: 2%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

e) Learning tourist attraction and information through social media and getting ready for tour

Respondents show their impulsiveness to traveling any tourist place after learning lots of information about tourist spots and attractions in this study. All the respondents give their answers against the statement of ‘I usually learn about tourist attractions and related information through social media, and have the impulse to travel.’ 67.9% of students from public universities say that they usually learn tourist attraction and related information through social media and decide to travel later, while 58.2% of students from private universities reply to the same answer as well. Moreover, in public universities, 31% of students stay neutral, and 1.2% of students disagree in this regard. Still, in private universities, 37.3% of students stay in the midst answering while 4.5% of students disagree in terms of this discussion.
f) Seeking information about food, accommodation, travel, shopping, and entertainment in social media-based tourism pages

Following the statement of 'I seek information about food, accommodation, travel, shopping, and entertainment in social media,' Most of the respondents give their views on searching contents in social media regarding tourism. 82.4% of students from public universities are likely to use social media to get information about food, accommodation, travel, shopping, and entertainment as well where, in private universities, 65.7% of students use social media to get that information. 15.3% of students stay in neutral but 2.4% of students disagree in this regard while in private universities, 31.3% of students disagree in this regard while in private universities, 31.3% of students stay neutral and 3% of students disagree too.

g) Searching other tourists' reviews and notes in social media before traveling

The study finds that before getting ready for travel or tour, respondents are fond of searching other tourist’s reviews and notes on social media. The responses regarding the statements of ‘Before traveling, I search for other tourists’ reviews on the destination or read relevant travel notes on social media which I find helpful,’ 81.2% and 77.6% of students from public and private universities search-relevant travel information and read reviews on the destination before going any tourist spot, while 15.3% and 20.9% of public and private universities students stay in the midst answering, but 3.5% and 1.5% of students of public and private universities argue that they don’t search anything in social media in this regard.
h) Visiting the head office of tourism pages or groups to seek information

Respondents mainly focus on visiting social media pages than visiting the head offices to seek information. 43.4% and 40.3% of students of public and private universities prefer social media platform rather than visiting head office of tourism pages and groups physically. In comparison, 26.5% and 28.4% of students of public and private universities like to visit the social platform and head office both but giving priority to visiting social media first. Almost the same percentage are seen where 30.1% and 31.3% of students of public and private universities rarely visit those places.

Trust on the management of tourism pages or sites

The study finds that in public universities, 89.2% of students believe the tourism pages and their management, while 10.8% of students don’t believe so. On the contrary, in private universities, a huge percentage of 97% covers students’ belief on tourism sites or pages and their management, but only 3% of students say that they have no belief in this regard.
j) Are Social media Easier and helpful than traditional sources of tourism?

The study finds the arguments of respondents regarding the question about easily accesses and usefulness of social media platforms for tourism or traditional sources of tourism. 69.4% of students of public universities agree that social media seems more helpful and easier than traditional sources of tourism, while 25.9% of students stay neutral in comparison, and 4.7% of students disagree with this statement. On the other hand, in private universities, 71.2% of students support and agree as social media helps more than traditional source and organization, where 25.8% of students stay neutral on answering this question and only 3% of students disagree on this matter.

k) Sharing experience in social media platforms

Traveler, especially Students are likely to share their experience, photos, and videos in social media platforms most. The study finds that in public universities, most of the students of 76.5% like to share their travelling photos, posts and experience in social media platform. In contrast, in private universities, 89.6% of students love this sharing. On the other hand, 23.5% of students of public universities refrain themselves sharing posts, photos and experience, while 10.4% of students do same thing.
Spending the time in social media on getting ideas for the next travel

The study gives very positive results regarding the respondent’s inspiration for the next travel. Data shows that 57.6% and 71.2% of students of public and private universities use social media always to get help or to search for ideas for the next tour, while 38.8% and 25.8% of students of public and private universities visit social media sometimes to get ideas for next tour. A very few percentages are found where 3.5% and 3% of students of public and private universities don’t like to visit social media in this case.

In-depth Interview Analysis

Three tourist agencies, ‘Intelligent Tourists Aid’ (ITA), ‘River and Green Tours’ and ‘Hotelswave.com’, are interviewed in this study to analyzing their promising activity and perceive them as a rising and potential platform for the tourism. All of these three agencies have continued their work more than eight years on average. All agencies focus on the Facebook platforms mostly to ran their work smoothly and comfortably because of the huge attachment of people with this site but also keeping touch with LinkedIn, You Tube and Instagram in case of disseminating all kinds of information and travel plans for tourists. On behalf of the River and Green Tours, one of representative says that they have connected 23 thousand peoples of different ages through Facebook groups and pages. In contrast, Intelligent Tourist Aid (ITA) connects almost 25 thousand tourists and tourism lover people, while Hotelswave.com engages 20 thousand tourists with them.

All tourist agencies deal with tourists not only through social media but also giving focusing on documents. The representative of ITA opines that their works actually prefer the man to man marketing rather than social media marketing, but they use the website for promotion largely. All of tourists’ contracts or their tour plans give importance to documents carefully than virtual contracts. On the other hand, River and Green Tours are strict in documents only in this regard, while Hotelswave.com prefers social media more than
documents, and work with their website to promote their offers through social media.

With the help of social media, tourist agencies are getting more benefits than their previous work systems, and their successes are growing faster. The representative of River and Green Tour advocates, ‘Social Media is a strong platform for promotion and marketing; it is very effective tools for business development. But earlier, we didn’t focus and transform our traditional approach to digital. Now we are planning to transform’. Hotelswave.com advocates social media’s help quoting, ‘Most of the people are connected with social media at least 2-4 hours a day, so it is easy to reach people through social media with low cost and labor’. On the other hand, the representative of ITA argues, ‘Social media is effective, but we prefer the man to man marketing of physical visit for corporate dealings as we prefer group tour and corporate tour.’

When asking about the trustworthiness of people on these agencies, the representative of ITA gives a very positive answer saying, ‘Yes, people believe us that is why we are the only company having 5 out of 5 for more than 1500 reviews. Customer satisfaction is our priority, and we also focus on security and cost-effectiveness.’ The same answer is received from the representative of Hotelswave.com, ‘We use our online payment system for the booing, and it helps the customers to believe our establishment. We send a confirmation text after all booking made by our customers; it makes them confident about their booking.’ In this case, the representative of River and Green Tour replies, ‘We are planning to way forward with an expert opinion now.’

Agencies opine that tourist’ activities of posting photos, videos, or text in social media help them to get positive reviews, and this activity has a great impact on agencies. ITA representative agrees that as social media has become easy access to the information, people are now more interested in visiting home and abroad. So, these activities of tourists work like the agencies are getting positive customer reviews. Agreeing with ITA, River and Green Tour representative says that these promoting activities of tourists show their trust and reliability on agencies and motivate them to travel more in new destinations. On the contrary, Hotelswave.com finds tourists’ activities of posting impacting on their way of agency promotion also says, ‘people are traveling more after seeing and getting information through these social media sites now’.

At the end of the interview, agencies representatives showed hope in social media platforms as a potential part of promoting tourism in Bangladesh. ITA representative thinks so but with mentioning some weak points which should be worked on. ITA representative says, ‘social media may increase some of our local tourists, but for large scale of the international tour we need to develop our tourist attractions by facilities, transportation, security and culture.’ River and Green Tour representative agree slightly but also have their arguments, ‘Tourism sites development as the product is different. Social media can only promote and connect destination or product with the target audience. It may create awareness in different aspect only.’ Hotelswave.com representative gives importance on three things saying, ‘Communication, Transportation and awareness can take our tourism to the next level.’

VI. Discussion and Conclusion

With the advancement of technologies and the availability of internet access, people willingly or unwillingly have to stay connected and updated with social media. People are getting more interested in breaking their monotonous life before, and their stimulation comes because of having all advantages of traveling. The study shows that among all students, almost 92.3% of students on average of public and private universities use social media to search places for traveling, while most the students of the 71.1% spend the time on Facebook mostly in both universities averagely. These results show the dependency of students on social media and tourism pages respectively.

On average, 55.1% of students of both universities agree that they get the details of local travel agencies through social media rather than visiting their office, and around 59.35% of students on both universities are likely to seek information of tourist spots from travel agencies through the social media platform. Almost 69.3% of students of both universities mainly focus on visiting social media pages but also visiting head offices to seek information. 74.05% of students agree that they seek information about food, accommodation, travel, shopping and entertainment in social media. The study also finds that before getting ready for travel or tour, 79.4% of students seem fond of searching other tourist’s reviews and notes on social media. All the percentages are discussed here show that most of the students search for everything in social media-based tourism pages before planning or going any tour.

Tourists, especially students, like to share experiences through texts, photos and videos on social media platforms after tour. The study reveals that almost 83.05% of students seem to like this sharing in social media. As a social media opinion leader, students influence others to plan the tour. Results show that 63.05% of students show their impulsiveness to traveling to any tourist places after learning lots of information about tourist spots and attractions through social media. 64.4% of students of public and private universities use social media always to get help or to search for ideas for the next tour. Moreover, the study finds that 93.1% of students have trust in the tourism
pages and their management, while almost 96.15% of students have a positive view on social media as easier, and more useful media than all traditional means of tourism.

From the in-depth interviews of Intelligent Tourists Aid (ITA), River and Green Tours and Hotelswave.com, results show that all the agencies have lots of working experiences with the a huge number of tourists’ involvement. Along with having lots of advantages of saving labor and money, these agencies have gained peoples’ trustiness more than before.

From the views of students and tourists agencies, the study finally finds social media as a strong tool in expanding tourism in Bangladesh. But considering some arguments of the representatives of agencies, more attention should be focused on the representation of tourism internationally, not only locally. And most important, there should be more attention to communication, transportation, and awareness for tourists simultaneously.

**References Références Referencias**