



Optimizing Decision-making in Travel through an Information Literacy Approach

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Abstract

In the digital age, where there is a wealth of frequently unreliable information, information literacy is essential to tourists' decision-making processes. This study aims to examine the importance of information literacy in relation to travel decisions and the variables that affect them. Using a qualitative approach through literature review, this study gathered and analyzed various relevant sources about information literacy and tourist behavior. The findings indicate that tourists with higher levels of information literacy are better equipped to evaluate the credibility of sources, make informed decisions, and understand sustainability aspects that influence conservation behavior. Therefore, improving information literacy in tourism is crucial and should involve cooperation with educational institutions to enhance tourist experiences and promote sustainable tourism.

Keywords

Information literacy, decision-making, travel

Abstrak

Di era digital yang penuh dengan informasi yang sering kali tidak dapat diandalkan, literasi informasi menjadi hal penting dalam proses pengambilan keputusan wisatawan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pentingnya literasi informasi dalam kaitannya dengan keputusan berwisata serta variabel-variabel yang memengaruhinya. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif melalui kajian pustaka, penelitian ini mengumpulkan dan menganalisis berbagai sumber relevan mengenai literasi informasi dan perilaku wisatawan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa wisatawan dengan tingkat literasi informasi tinggi lebih mampu menilai kredibilitas sumber, membuat keputusan yang tepat, serta memahami aspek keberlanjutan yang mendorong perilaku konservasi. Oleh karena itu, peningkatan literasi informasi di bidang pariwisata perlu dilakukan melalui kerja sama dengan lembaga pendidikan untuk meningkatkan kualitas pengalaman wisata dan mendukung keberlanjutan pariwisata.

Kata Kunci

Literasi informasi, pengambilan keputusan, perjalanan

Introduction

Since information is easily accessible through a variety of platforms in the digital age, information literacy has emerged as a crucial component. When making decisions, a person's capacity search, evaluate, and use information effectively is essential (Zhu & Lim, 2024). This ability is essential as the abundance of information available in the current digital world is not necessarily trustworthy (Ardyawin & Habiburrahman, 2024). In the context of tourism, tourists now have a wide range of information sources at their disposal, including social media, tourism websites, and user reviews. They run the danger of selecting the incorrect travel destination or

service, though, because their ability to filter and comprehend pertinent and accurate information is frequently subpar.

When holiday makers are faced with the possibility that they might want to go to two or three tourist attractions at the same time with only limited time and money, the decision-making process becomes increasingly difficult (Rachmadi, 2016). Making travel decisions is a complicated process that involves many factors, such as desired experiences, finances, and places. Information serves as the primary foundation for developing tourists preferences and selections during this procedure. But not all tourists are able to evaluate the reliability and correctness of the information they come across. This may lead to choices that fall short of expectations, which may eventually impact the entire travel experience. As a result, information literacy becomes crucial to raising the standard of tourism decision-making. Information serves as the primary foundation for developing tourists preferences and selections during this procedure. But not all tourists are able to evaluate the reliability and correctness of the information they come across. This may lead to choices that fall short of expectations, which may eventually impact the entire travel experience. As a result, information literacy becomes crucial to raising the standard of tourism decision-making.

Tourists now have more access to information because to the advancements in information and communication technologies, but there is also a greater chance that inaccurate or false information may proliferate. Information-illiterate tourists are more susceptible to scams and misleading information that might sway their judgment. Conversely, the possession of information literacy skills is essential for successfully sifting through the volume of digital information and recognizing credible sources of information amid this chaos (Adams, 2025). This covers user evaluations, pricing details, and sociopolitical situations at the location in addition to destination information and so on.

The growing complexity of information that tourists need to comprehend is another factor that contributes to the significance of information literacy in tourism (Wang et al., 2023). With the expansion of digital information platforms, tourists are presented with a plethora of often perplexing options. In addition to assessing the facts on the trip, they also need to comprehend other elements including local health problems, security, and travel laws. Accurately processing and evaluating information becomes a very useful skill in this scenario. Furthermore, the sustainability of tourism itself is impacted by information literacy. Making decisions as tourists based on accurate and pertinent information might promote more conscientious travel habits. On the other hand, choices made on the basis of inaccurate or deceptive information may lead to social issues at the destination, environmental harm, and a decline in the quality of the destination. Thus, promoting information literacy among tourists is a calculated move toward developing ethical and sustainable travel.

Sorting out the right information is becoming increasingly important in an age where information flows so quickly. Many tourists base their judgments on advice and reviews they find online from unreliable sources, which can have adverse effects. This highlights the importance of improving information literacy, especially when it comes to making travel decisions. Tourists who have strong information literacy are better able to make informed judgments and reduce the likelihood of a bad trip. Consumer behavior in a variety of industries,



including tourism, is significantly influenced by information literacy. Tourists who possess strong information literacy abilities are more likely to be pickier about where they travel, more skeptical of the information they are given, and more adept at organizing trips that live up to their expectations. Thus, it is impossible to overlook the importance of information literacy in the tourist sector, particularly in light of the growing volume of digitally accessible information.

The tourist industry itself benefits from information literacy as well. The tourism sector can more successfully deliver services that satisfy consumer demands if tourists are more educated. Tourists with strong information literacy may make the most of the information provided by tourism service providers, fostering a beneficial relationship between service providers and tourists. As a result, information literacy is crucial for both tourists and the long-term viability of the travel sector overall. Thus, it is anticipated that this study would offer fresh perspectives on the significance of information literacy when it comes to making travel decisions. In addition to offering suggestions for destination managers and tourism service providers looking to improve their communication tactics, the study's findings are anticipated to serve as a foundation for the creation of information literacy education programs for tourists. In addition to enhancing the quality of the tourists experience, increased information literacy will support the long-term viability of the travel industry.

Various academic contexts have defined information literacy as the capacity to identify information requirements, access, assess, and use information efficiently. Information literacy, defined as the ability to access, evaluate, use and communicate information in various forms, has particular importance in every period of an individual's life (Seckin-Kapucu, 2023). Information literacy is also a skill that requires people to be aware of the information that is needed and to have the ability to memorize information, process information already obtained, and utilize information already obtained (Rachmawati & Agustine, 2021). This skill is particularly important in the tourism industry as tourists encounter a variety of sources of information, including physical and online media. Types of literacy, such as media literacy and the newly coined term metaliteracy, provide frameworks for identifying the skills needed to participate in and manage information in digital and multimedia settings (Paor & Heravi, 2020).

Decision-making in tourism cannot be separated from the process of effective information search. Studies such as those conducted by, for example, emphasize how effective information search plays a vital role in decision-making and reduces uncertainty while improving the quality of travel. Tourists with better information literacy are able to evaluate destinations more critically and choose options that suit their preferences and needs. Media literacy and digital skills are closely linked to information literacy in the digital world. Understanding, interpreting, critical analysis, and drawing conclusions from texts to be used as research subjects in a variety of fields, including communication, literature, culture, economics, history, general study knowledge, and of course, media, are all part of media literacy (Restianty 2018). This is crucial, especially in the context of contemporary travel, where tourists frequently rely on social media and user reviews as their primary information sources. Nowadays, in line with the development of information dissemination media, many tourists rely on social media to make travel decisions. As a result, social media can offer more precise information about travel to assist tourists in making decisions (A. E. Putri et al., 2019).

The quality of the information gathered frequently affects consumer behavior while making decisions (Petcharat & Leelasantitham, 2021). Thus, in the same manner as better-informed tourists are more likely to make sensible choices and reduce potential hazards while traveling. Information literacy can assist tourists in navigating the intricate decision-making process in this situation. In the meantime, literature on tourism also emphasizes how difficult it is for tourists to find trustworthy and accurate information. For instance, bias or financial interests frequently affect online evaluations, which may mislead prospective tourists. A destination's image is greatly influenced by online travel reviews (Guo & Pesonen, 2022). Tourists use a wide range of information sources, such as websites, pamphlets, and referrals from friends and relatives. However, the ability of tourists to assess information from different sources is a major factor in the quality of their selections. To make sure that tourists can choose the information that best meets their needs and make wiser decisions, information literacy is crucial (Majeed et al., 2020).

Furthermore, information literacy contributes to the sustainability of tourism. More knowledgeable tourists are more likely to choose locations that prioritize sustainability, support the local economy, and travel responsibly (Gomes & Lopes, 2023). This demonstrates that information literacy has wider ramifications for the travel industry and the environment in addition to being crucial for tourists individual decisions. Growing information literacy in the digital age is also a problem in research on false information and hoaxes, particularly when it comes to travel. Social media hoaxes have the power to greatly affect tourist choices (K. Y. S. Putri et al., 2022). Information literacy is necessary in this case to spot and steer clear of false information, allowing tourists to make better educated and logical choices. All things considered, the body of research indicates that information literacy plays a significant role in tourists decision-making. Tourists may enhance their experiences, reduce needless dangers, and encourage more ethical tourism activities by being well-informed. This review of the literature supports the significance of information literacy in the travel industry and offers a solid foundation for future studies in this field.

Method

In order to comprehend the importance of information literacy when making travel decisions, this study uses a qualitative methodology and data collection methods from literature reviews. Without the necessity for actual data collecting, this approach enables researchers to investigate a range of viewpoints and theories found in pertinent literature. In order to find pertinent prior research on information literacy and travel decision-making, literature study procedures involve gathering and analyzing academic literature, such as books, scientific journals, and the like. The secondary literature used as data sources was chosen based on the reliability and applicability of book sources, journal articles, and similar materials. Finding keywords is the first step in the data collection process, which is then followed by literature searches and assessments. Content analysis is used to analyze data in order to find new topics and trends. Strict source triangulation and literature selection improve data validity. The presenting of the findings from researchers' readings of literature is the fundamental component of literary studies (Afrizal, 2017).



Result and Discussion

Result

The study's findings indicate that tourists' decision-making process heavily relies on information literacy. According to the results of the literature review, tourists who possess a high degree of information literacy are often better equipped to critically assess information sources. They can avoid inaccurate or biased information thanks to this capacity, which enables them to make better and more informed judgments. Given the abundance of options available in the current digital era, information literacy also aids tourists in selecting places according to their requirements and tastes (Rivai et al., 2024). As a result, the tourism sector should encourage tourists to become more information literate. Additionally, this study demonstrates that a number of factors impact tourists information literacy levels, including education and digital experience (Amelia & Prasetyo, 2023). More information technology-savvy tourists are typically better at finding and analyzing information. Furthermore, formal education helps people develop their information literacy abilities; those with more education have a better grasp of how to use information efficiently. The social environment is also significant, since interactions with family members or friends can positively impact the pursuit of information.

Social media is one of the primary information sources that tourists use when making decisions. Social media serves as the main information source for tourists at every stage of the decision-making process (Acharjee & Ahmed, 2023). Destination selections and activities are often influenced by reviews and suggestions found on these sites. Not many tourists, nevertheless, are able to evaluate the reliability of information found on social media. Consequently, it is essential to enhance information literacy, which includes knowing how to evaluate the accuracy and dependability of data from different sources. This research emphasizes how crucial media literacy instruction is in assisting tourists in navigating the accessible information. Additionally, this study highlights the connection between information literacy and sustainable tourism (Luna-Cortes, 2024). Better information-literate tourists are more likely to choose sustainable travel places and to be conscious of the environmental effects of their choices. This implies that more information literacy promotes more ethical tourist behaviors in addition to helping individuals. As a result, it is anticipated that the tourist sector would work with academic institutions to incorporate information literacy instruction into pertinent courses.

Discussion

In the discussion of the results of this paper, the relevance of information literacy on tourism consumption decisions is evident. It plays a role in the quality of choices made by tourists with high information literacy who are better equipped to assess information sources critically. Thus, relying on whatever information they receive is probably biased or misleading in this digital age. This reinforces the idea that the availability of quality information has a direct impact on the satisfaction and experience, tourist, e.g. As a result, the travel and tourism sector must act proactively to encourage tourists information literacy, particularly by means of training and awareness-raising initiatives. The availability of programs to increase information literacy skills

would help tourists make smarter decisions. This demonstrates that information literacy is not just a personal ability but also a shared duty of the travel and tourist sector.

The tourists' level of information literacy is also influenced by digital experience and educational background. According to this study, more information technology experience results in greater ability to search and evaluate information. Formal education is also significant, with the better educated best understanding the use of information. The interaction with family and friends in the social environment, conversely, has a beneficial effect on information literacy behavior. Our findings highlight the importance of implementing intervention methods in this area of researching education and tourism, which is required in order to enhance tourist knowledge while travelling, particularly for tourists with a low level of formal education. One approach toward a public good of increased information literacy of the community has been building a community of information literacy learning.

From the source of information standpoint, the current study depicts that social media is one of the main platforms for tourists in decision-making. Social media reviews and recommendations have a huge influence on destination and activity selection. But this finding also raises the issue that not all tourists can assess the credibility of information obtained through these platforms. So, we need to promote better understanding of information literacy which means knowing how to evaluate the quality and reliability of sources. Tourists need media literacy education that can help them understand the need to cross these sources and destinations of information. The findings of this study signal the need for educational institutions and tourism organizations to develop joint programs centered around information literacy in the digital age.

Information literacy stands as an essential constituent element of tourism sustainability. Beyond literacy, more enlightened tourists also become more knowledgeable about the environmental impact of their travel choices and via green and eco-friendly localities they make travel decisions that are eco-friendly. Research indicates that more information literacy will not only provoke the discussion but will also motivate more responsible and sustainable tourism practices. Thus, not only will society benefit from it, but it will be a means to keep the natural environment and culture safe as well. Thus, cooperation between tourist and expert schools stands as the most crucial tool to deliver information literacy education that supports environmental awareness. By means of a good education, the decision-making process of tourists can be framed in such a manner that they not only think about themselves but also society and the environment.

This process also filled one hole in the related literature on information literacy and tourism decision-making. In the information literacy field, there has been a lot of research, but still, there is a limited focus on how it can affect the tourism context. This result represents a fresh contribution to the literature by taking a closer look at the role of information literacy for tourists. Through these aspects, the study is envisaged to be the springboard for the future, more compact, and targeted researches. As for the matters of previous studies, they are also suggesting the need of more research that will tackle the topic of the relationship between information literacy and tourism in a more illustrated manner. Academic scholars are



encouraged by this study to continue delving into this field so they can find out more about the role of information literacy in the context of tourism.

All things considered, the study's findings support the idea that information literacy plays a critical role in making travel decisions. In addition to choosing reliable information, tourists who possess strong information literacy abilities are also better equipped to make informed choices. This highlights how crucial it is to fund information literacy initiatives in order to raise the standard of the travel experience. Designing programs that promote information literacy among tourists also requires a multi-stakeholder strategy that includes the government, academic institutions, and the travel and tourism sector. It is anticipated that information literacy would be prioritized in the creation of tourist policies through efficient collaboration. As a result, this study offers helpful suggestions for enhancing information literacy as a crucial component of initiatives for the development of sustainable tourism.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates how crucial information literacy is when making travel decisions. The results demonstrate that tourists who possess a high degree of information literacy are more equipped to assess and choose reliable information sources, which enhances the caliber of their choices. Information literacy abilities are also influenced by elements including formal education, social support, and digital experience. Given the growing use of social media as a key information source, it is critical for tourists to be able to evaluate the reliability of the information they are given. This research underscores that information literacy is positively correlated with tourism sustainability which indicates that tourists who are better educated make more sustainable tourism decisions. For that reason, improving information literacy among tourists should become an active pursuit for the tourism sector and stakeholders involved in tourism.

The present study provides significant evidence for the need to improve information literacy in the tourism context. By identifying limitations in the literature, this study opens avenues to research the interaction between information literacy and tourism more extensively. This study identifies practical solutions to improve information literacy within tourism contexts, including partnerships between government, educators, and the tourism businesses, to create appropriate educational opportunities. Investment in information literacy education hopes to enrich tourism experiences and lead to sustainable tourism practices. This study illustrates the need for information literacy in tourism but also demonstrates the potential of more effective tourism policies and strategies.

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