

COCREATION A NEW EMBRYO TO ENHANCE TOURISM EXPERIENCE USING SOCIAL MEDIA : A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

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Abstract

In today's economy those businesses will survive who are continuously reinventing and adapting themselves in dynamic and complex market realities. Markets are segmented and consumers have unlimited access to information. Advancement in technology has enabled innovation and involvement that encourages higher participation and collaboration from the customers. Experiences inspire, motivate and form a significant notion in the perspective of tourism. Social media is emerging as a notable platform for sharing travel experiences and aspirations. Co-creation in tourism is emerging as it proactively involves customers and creates high value for the tourist. It is an upcoming challenge for the organizations to find customers, who are willing to participate, contribute and share their tourism experiences. Social media with large user base allows these organizations to find those customers who want to participate actively in tourism co creation. As the tourism products are experiential in nature companies are using social media to co-create the virtual tourism experiences. These experiences are not passively gained but actively shaped with more and more integration of technology thus resulting in high intensity of value creation. This paper conceptualizes the social media and co creation participation matrix and suggests that higher participation in co-creation activity and on social media helps to create better customer value and experience. The paper discusses some of the existing co-creation activities conducted using social media by various tourism related organizations. The paper further relates these examples with the different quadrants of the participation matrix to derive the co creation and social media role in enhancing and enriching the customer experience.

Keywords: Social media, Co-creation, experience, participation matrix

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PARADIGM SHIFT IN TOURISM EXPERIENCE

Tourism is emerging as the fastest growing industry globally and also contributes heavily in several economies. As per United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) the tourism industry is experiencing a persistent escalation in the past few decades. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) which is the global authority on social and economic influence of travel and tourism industry, estimates a contribution of 9.2% by the industry in the global GDP. The total contribution of the travel and tourism industry in the global economy in 2013 was US\$7 trillion and this is expected to grow by 4.2% in the year 2014. Usually Europe and America are considered to be the most promising international tourist destinations, but experts are predicting a high growth of the international tourists in the emerging markets as well over the next decade.

India has a momentous prospective to become a favorite tourist destination globally. In India, tourism is one of the key service industries in terms of its contribution to GDP and foreign exchange. In 2013, the total contribution of travel and tourism industry to the Indian economy was 6631.6 billion. WTTCs Annual Report for India states that there was a rise of 5.1% in the domestic revenue and 6.2% in the International revenue generated by the tourism industry in 2013.

EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

'Experience economy' is one of the significant fundamental changes that the society has gone all the way through during the last years (Pine and Gilmore 1999). The present economy experiences abundance through different category of products and services making it difficult for the customers to differentiate between them. Tourism industry is no exception either and it is also facing the same problem (Esther Binkhorst). Every stakeholder in the tourism sector is trying to explore new alternatives to serve the tech savvy tourists who now have access to almost every bit of information. One cannot simply stage the tourism offerings to them; rather there is a striving need to sell the experiences (Pine and Gilmore 1999) as experiences are more valuable than actual products and services. Hence creating and selling experiences is the solution for the industry to survive and continuously grow in this competitive market.

Tourism experience is a vital element (Ellis & Rossman, 2008; Mossberg, 2007; Kastenholz et al., 2012a) and the most important concept while studying tourism research. Tourists look for attractive, exclusive and memorable experiences and these experiences are shaped by prior expectations (Kastenholz and Lima, 2013). Experiences can be defined as personal and highly emotional occurrences (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). In tourism context they are obtained by consuming tourism products or services which ultimately lead to gain tourism experience. Emergence of experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) suggests that, experiences represent an important component and has gained significant attention especially in tourism.

Co-creating and delivering experiences will add value and create competitive advantage (Grönroos, 2000) for those companies who want to sustain and survive in the long run. The odds need to be transformed into services which in turn should be converted into experiences thus delivering higher value to the customers (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). Experience production is emerging as an important concept (Darmer & Sundbo, 2008) and consumers are willing to pay high price for better customer value and experience.

The new social and economic scenarios, rising competition and advancement of technology is providing opportunities for business to explore and reinvent themselves. Dynamic and complex markets are encouraging organizations to develop experience for the customers. Game changer technology has made these consumers more aware and informed. They have unlimited access of information and their increasing demand for high level of personalization place businesses under pressure to involve and collaborate with them. Co-creation involves customers and transforms them into active partners to build future value. This mutual relationship results in value and experience creation

Tourism industry aims at creating memorable experiences and tourists always look for rich and terrific experiences but experience is not unstructured. It is intangible but real and tourism companies need to shift themselves from selling services to selling experiences (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). Traditional way of creating experiences has been transformed by the concept of co-creation (Prahalad&Ramaswamy, 2004). Modern day customers are informative and empowered, traditional way of experience creation is no longer perceived as customer centric. (Boswijk, Thijssen&Peelen, 2007) and therefore today companies focus on co-creating experiences.

TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED VALUE CREATION

The recent advancement in information and communication technologies (ICTs) field has significantly changed the creation and sharing of tourism experiences (Tussyadiah&Fesenmaier, 2007). These experiences are co-created as well as technology-enabled (Tussyadiah&Fesenmaier, 2007; Tussyadiah&Fesenmaier, 2009; Tussyadiah& Zach, 2011). Advancement of technology has paved new ways for the organizations to connect with their customers and social media has emerged as notable platform for sharing travel experiences and aspirations. Social Media like Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube etc are used by different organizations to connect with their existing and prospective customers. Social media is transforming social landscape by changing the conversation into interactions and unidirectional flow of information into bi-directional flow. Co-creation along with Social Media can even transform participation into partnership thereby creating rich, delightful and memorable experience.

Conventional one directional company centric approach was earlier used to create the experiences for the consumers. Today they produce the experiences with the focus on selling the experiences as dematerialized commodity just to increase the turnover (Stamboulis and Skayannis, 2003; Darmer and Sundbo, 2008). With the change in marketing from company centric to consumer centric the traditional views have been challenged and the approach is transformed making the customer and human experience the focal point of development (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a). The recent researches in the field of marketing and tourism have talked about the positive effect of value co-creation on inspiring and increasing the consumer experience value of the various tour and travel offers and packages (Prebensen, Woo and Chen, 2013; Prebensen, Woo, Chen and Uysal, 2012; Vargo and Lusch, 2008). Higher the level of tourist involvement, higher is the potential to enhance the tourist experience through co-creation (Prebensen, Woo, and Uysal, 2013). Thus, the tourist firms need to rethink on how to develop their

offerings such that the tourists are encouraged to participate in the fabrication of their experiences to have an ever lasting impact on their memories. This would result in an increase in the value together for the firm and the tourist (Prebensen, Vittersø, et al., 2013).

The proliferation of Internet has made the consumer more active, informed and demanding. Further web 2.0 has empowered the consumer with so many platforms such as facebook, twitter, etc. making them powerful and involved not only in the consumption of products but in their production as well leading to the flourishing of a “prosumer society” (Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010). The technology advancements have made the tourists powerful enough to not only co-create their experiences but also make them more and richer (Gretzel and Jamal, 2009).

Tourism experiences in relation to co-creation and social media constitutes as a major gap as the combine effect of both of them emerges as an important element for enhancement of experiences. This paper discusses how social media is evolving as an important source for performing co-creation leading to enriched experience and enhanced tourism. For this purpose, this paper reviews the latest developments of co-creation and ICTs and then sheds light on their role in the enhancement of experiences and value. It then presents a Tourism Experience Value Matrix which conceptually differentiates between four types of tourism experiences, to provide a better understanding and clearer picture of value maximization in the context of tourism experiences

1.2. EXPERIENCE ECONOMY INDIAN TOURISM CONTEXT

India as a tourist attraction is rich in traditional heritage in the form of splendid monuments and wonderful architectural style. To add on to this, India has a varied landscape including hills, desert and vast coastline which offers one of the finest places in the world to rejuvenate one’s mind, body and soul. Liberalization has brought a new range of opportunities in the tourism industry (Abdul Sofique). The number of business and professional travelers from other countries have increased drastically. Even the Indian middle class has come forward as an important tourist segment. All these tourists are well acquainted with the technology advancements and are equally active on the most popular network of this century i.e. the social media network. So in this changing socio-economic environment the tourist planners are not in a position to neglect the social media. They have already included it as a new channel for marketing their products and services. Those tourism businesses that are further utilizing the social media to build a relationship with the tourist and to provide them with a platform to co-create their experiences are no doubt having an edge over the others who do not.

1.3. CO-CREATING EXPERIENCES

Co-creation allows customers to co-create those experiences that suits to their requirement. Today consumers are more aware, active and controlling, the conventional way of creating travel experiences has undergone a change (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004). The traditional process of creating experience was unidirectional, profit-oriented and highly outward which cannot prevail in today’s scenario. Customers are highly empowered (Boswijk, Thijssen & Peelen, 2007) and they know their desires.

Co-creation provides that platform to the companies where they can focus on value and experience creation; it makes them to leave the contemporary approach. It is a paradigm shift (Neuhof, Buhali & Ladkin, 2013) which promote development, modernism and competitive advantage (Shaw, Bailey & Williams, 2011). Advancement in technology allows consumers to be participative and proactively involved in co-creating experiences (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004). As ICT plays an important role in facilitating co-creation (Neuhof, Buhali & Ladkin, 2013 ; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) and reconcile the tourism experience (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2007; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009; Wang, Park & Fesenmaier, 2012), social media is also emerging as an important facilitator for such co-creation initiatives.

As could be inferred by the above stated thoughts, the traditional way of social ruling is getting swapped by self steering communicative approach (Cornelis 1988). The top down approach of the companies to make decisions, produce goods and services and force them on the customers does not work anymore. The association between companies and customers is changing, a tremendous raise is being observed in the interactions between the two. The power of the customer is growing, he is getting more control and say in the decisions the companies make in designing their products (Florida 2002, Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004). Co-creation could be seen as the future of innovation with customer centric value creation (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004) and tourism in particular is one such sector where people create their own sole stories based on their experiences. These experiences can serve as a very good base for the development and creation of value experiences in tourism industry. On the contrary the experience creators often do not include the tourists in the designing process and depends heavily on the intuition and other environmental conditions.

1.4. CO-CREATING VALUE AND EXPERIENCE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Information and communication technology has created a huge impact on not only individuals but also on society and companies (Neuhofer, Buhalis and Ladkin, 2013). These technologies have changed the way companies communicate with their customers and further social media has opened customer experience to engagement and fan groups. Social media is an online shared consumer generated content (S. Hays et al., 2012, Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009; Stankov, Lazic, & Dragicevic, 2010; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). "It is 'participatory', 'conversational', and 'fluid' online communities" (S. Hays et al., 2012; Qualman, 2009; Tuten, 2008). Social media is an interaction platform for modern tourism industry (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Schmallegger & Carson, 2008). It has altered the way tourism is experienced (Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009) and developed a wide platform for collaboration, sharing and experiencing. Consumers collect, share and disseminate information and experiences (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Companies dealing in tourism should involve these consumers to recreate and share experiences (McCarthy & Wright, 2004) thereby creating a mutual relationship, consumer and company together co-creating the experiences. Companies need to embrace this media to interact with their customers, increase mindshare and further use such platform to co-create memorable experiences for their customers. As a part of social media this paper focuses only on Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and travel blogs.

2. CO-CREATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA COLLABORATION

With the emergence of Web 2.0 social media has been identified as participative platform for the consumers to share their experience, express their opinion and search for information. Consumers use this media to spread social and electronic word of mouth (Tussiyadiah & Zach, 2013; Bronner & de Hoog, 2010; Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2007), to plan and execute their travel and it is not restricted to planning but even after travel they post their experiences, share their photos and review destinations, brands and services received to influence others, thereby, making social media a perfect platform for sharing, contributing, transferring knowledge and spreading online social influence (Tussiyadiah & Zach, 2013). The social media has highly influenced the success of tourism organizations as it has emerged an important and direct communication platform between consumers and tourism service providers. It allows consumers to discuss their expectations, requirement with respect to tourism services and experiences with these service providers. Tourism organizations should observe, listen and respond to customers on social media, they need to harvest content generated by consumers for taking competitive advantages (Tussiyadiah & Zach, 2013; Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2007). In India, many tourism service providers as a part of their marketing strategy are using social media to co-create tourism experience by encouraging consumer participation for product awareness, promotion and brand building. Consumers co-create value with these service providers by such participation and collaboration on social media. Hence, it is consumer empowerment (Hoyer et al., 2010) which social media is providing in collaboration with co-creation and thereby offering a platform of experience and value creation to tourism organizations.

2.1. ENRICHED EXPERIENCE THROUGH COLLABORATION

Enriched tourism experience could be created with the help of technologies, and Internet has become an important tool to empower individuals while they search for tourism destinations and experiences (Buhalis & Law, 2008). At the same time it enables the organisations to create amazing experience and value for the customers. The tourist no more remain the simple consumer of traditional products or packages offered, the WWW has converted them into online consumers who are always connected and want to revisit the virtual experiences visited on Internet (Andersson, 2007; Tsiotso & Ratten, 2010; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). The social media online applications namely Facebook, YouTube Twitter or Tripadvisor help the tourists to instantly post their photos, videos and reviews from their smartphones during the travel (Wang et al., 2012).

Planning the holiday has always been socially intense activity particularly in the pre and post stages of travel holiday (Neuhofer, Buhalis & Ladkin, 2013; Gretzel & Jamal, 2009). The tourist search for holiday destinations online, ask for suggestions and post their reviews on social media. Hence it has become essential for the organizations to be active on social media so as to co-create the valuable tourism experience. ICT empower the businesses with multiple platforms to load their tourist with virtual pre and post tourism experiences (Neuhofer, Buhalis & Ladkin, 2013; Huang et al., 2010). Many companies have already extended their domain to the virtual space to carry forward different activities in order to enhance and co-create tourism experience virtually. The need for continuous improvement in the tourism experience could be very well achieved by the businesses with the help of social media where the consumers are equally active and willing to participate in the co-creation activities.

According to Ramaswamy and Gouillart co-creation is composed of four principles i.e. experience mind-set, context of interaction, engagement platform, and network relationships. Figure 1 depicts use of social media to liberate the power of these co-creation principles. Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Tripadvisor and blogs are the engagement platforms where people meet and co-create the tourism experience. Context of interaction are various co-creation initiatives (campaign, suggestions etc) taken by various tourism organizations to interact, engage and co-create with their customers. Tourism organizations and customers are the experience mindsets.

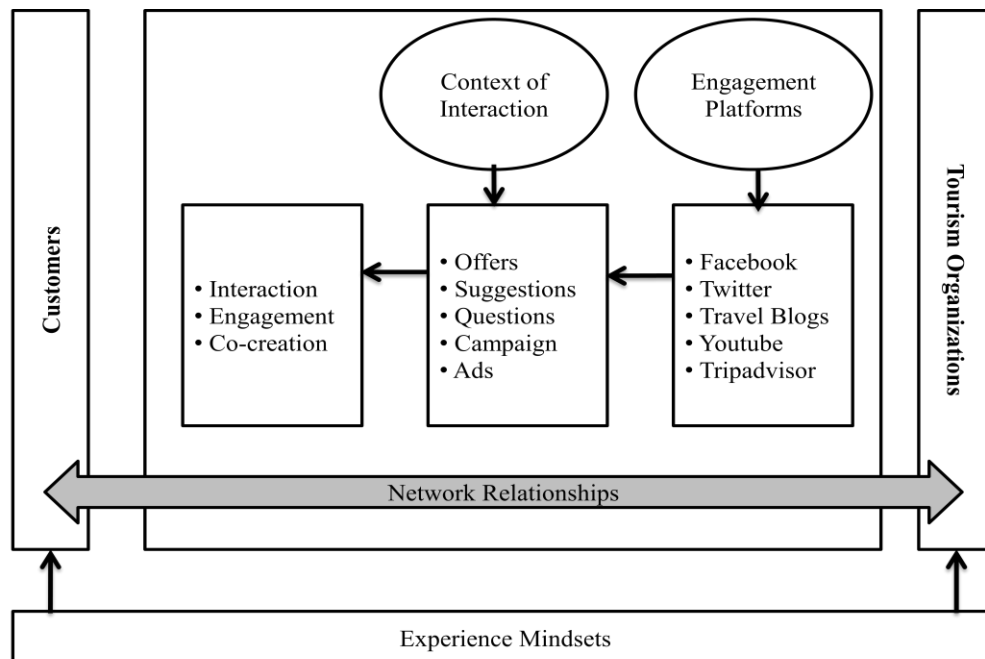


Fig-1: Graphical representation of social media collaboration with Co-creation Principles

2.2. PARTICIPATION MATRIX

Tourism organizations in India are exploring the opportunities to enhance the tourism experience. They are continuously looking for new mediums to contact their customers and continuously designing new propositions so that they can deliver delightful experience, create long term relationships and add value to their experience. Neuhofer, Buhalis and Ladkin (2013) have developed a value matrix that provides tourism organizations a better understanding to enhance tourism experience and value. They suggest that higher level of co-creation and technology are capable of delivering highest level of value to the customers. This means that tourism organizations should utilize technological advancement along with co-creation in order to create enhanced tourism experience and value. Web 2.0 has emerged with the ability to collaborate and bring people on one platform and thus has the capability to get combined with co-creation to achieve higher level of experience and value creation.

The paper conceptualizes a participation matrix to strategically identify the level of a tourism business in creating a valuable tourism experiences. The matrix differentiates the business on the basis of their participation on social media and co-creation initiatives taken by them. It depicts four major categories in which the business could fall based on the intensity of the two axis (x-axis is represented by Co-creation and y-axis is represented by Social Media). The matrix in figure 2 identifies four types of organization which are Inactive, Collector, Critic, and Creator.

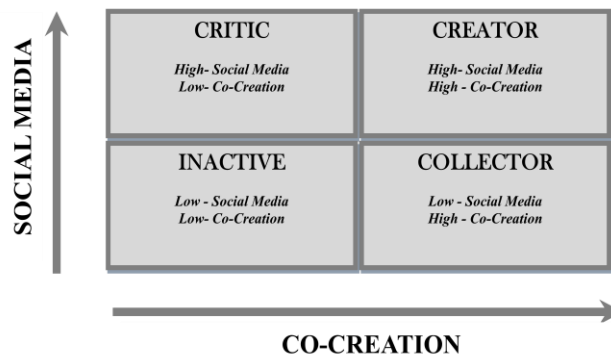


Fig-2: Participation Matrix

Inactive

The conventional business organizations which are neither active on social media nor they try to co-create the tourism experience for their customers. They simply follow a company-centric approach by serving the passive customers with their pre-designed packages. The social media plays no role in either creation or in the consumption of the experience. So the inactive creates the least value for the tourists.

Critic

The tourism organizations which are highly dynamic on social media but do not try to reap the benefit by engaging the customers in co-creating their own experiences. Undoubtedly the company is determined to have an active presence on social media but due to lack of consumer involvement they remain company-centric and is unable create a valuable tourism experience.

Collectors

These businesses try to co-create experiences for the customers but the activities are mainly confined to the real world interactions and engagements. Most of the time this limits the company to the feedback forms filled by the customers. Undoubtedly these organizations try to co-create the tourism products based on the consumer inputs only but they lack in the virtual existence. The potential of the social media is ignored as a result they are not able to co-create the valuable virtual tourism experience for the consumers which plays a very important role in the pre phase of travel.

Creator

The ultimate objective of the business organizations is to achieve the highest value for the customer experience. The technology helps in generating a staged experience (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) and with co-creation the businesses

can yield yet superior value for consumers (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009). This paper suggests that by continuously increasing the intensity of co-creation using social media the businesses can reach the creator stage. Using social media the interactive aspect of co-creation can be realized where the tourist becomes highly involved in co-creating their own experiences. This paper suggests that tourism organizations should try to reach at this stage in order to achieve higher level of tourism experience and value.

2.3. EXPERIENCES AND VALUE CREATION INSTANCES

Different travel brands are using co-creation and social media in order to create value (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) and enhance tourism experience. Customers are highly active on social media and they are willing to participate in various co-creation initiatives in order to gain maximum benefit. Collaboration of both will create differentiation for the customers in terms of smart buying and companies will become superefficient. Companies are looking forward to co-create experiences with customers through personalized interactions between the company and the customers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). The paper further discusses examples of few such organizations from travel industry in India which are co-creating experiences in alliance with social media. Further these examples are also linked with different quadrants of the participation matrix.

Grab Your Dream

Cox & Kings carried a co-creation activity called “Grab Your Dream” on Facebook in May 2014. It was India's biggest online search for adventurers. The main objective of the company was to hunt for 50 travel adventurers who could serve as travel ambassadors for Cox & Kings. The contest is divided into four seasons and 12 winners will be chosen from each season who will get the chance to travel on an all-expenses-paid holiday to some of the most exciting places on earth. The participants were asked to send a photograph or video of how they have done adventure differently or which reveals an unusual and adventurous face of their personality. The winners would get a chance to visit few of the most exciting places in the world. The contest got an overwhelming response as many facebook users commented positively. Following are few comments on the facebook page of Cox and Kings India:

I think this will be the amazing trip for me if I won

Pack your enthusiasm and #GrabYourDream

I think this will be the amazing trip for me if I won .And best of luck to the people who are the adventure lovers like me.....

Time to #GrabYourDream NOW ! Once in a lifetime opportunity with an all expense paid trip to anywhere in the world. Powered by @gadventures

My Way on Highway

Makemytrip India's leading travel online company hosted an initiative titled “MyWayOnHighway”. In this they have taken a road trip covering 10,000 km and 40 cities across India. The contest revolved around asking for suggestions for preparing the itinerary and eatery for the ambassador including some unusual and unexplored places to visit and local food to eat. The company got an overwhelming response especially on Twitter flooding the traveler with varied suggestions. Example tweets are given in table-1, through such initiatives the companies gives the customer a chance to experience virtual tourism and also to co-create their own experiences.

Description	Example Tweets
As the road trip entered Kerala one of the followers of this campaign tweeted them to watch the dance form of Kerala	<i>Don't miss Kathakali, ancient form of dance-drama that's traditional to Kerala</i>
Organizers involved the followers on twitter by asking them to tell what they should see, do and eat in Kochi.	<i>Stay at the Gorgeous Leela. With breathtaking views & a private beach!</i>
MakeMyTrip ran various contest for this campaign in which they involved the people by asking them to win free goodies just by giving suggestions when the road trip enters Udaipur	<i>Try Boating on chetak circle Must visit city palace A romantic lakeside candlelight dinner at Ambrai Restaurant near Lake Pichola #Udaipur ! Puppet Show at Lok Kala Mandal... Amaze at the world biggest Turban! Bagore Ki Haveli....</i>

Table-1: Tweets on twitter account of Makemytrip.com #MyWayOnHighway

Kerala Tourism off season campaign

IndiaTourPlanner.com started Kerala Tourism off season campaign on April 25, 2014. In this they asked the tourists to post their travel plans in Kerala after which the travel agents would get in touch in with them to execute their plans. The company posted the promotion on facebook thus making a good use of the most popular social media in India but at the same time it lagged behind in co-creating the experience for the customers.

Create a Video

Indiandiplomacy invited the participants to make a three minute creative video featuring the 10,000 year old civilization, thus involving the customers to co-create the experience. The video would definitely serve as a good source to identify what the tourist want to see and experience.

Questions

All the leading businesses including D'Paul, Thomas Cook, Cox & Kings etc. in the field of tour and travel try to involve the customer over social media by posting different questions. Such ideas motivate the customers to look for answers and finally end up with the customers exploring for options to visit those or some other places.

Youtube Video Channel

Incredibleindia.org the official website has launched a channel on YouTube showing a whole variety of videos which depicts almost about all the state of the country and shows India's rich culture and heritage which awakens the hidden feelings to explore India.

Total number of subscribers	125
Total number of views	13568
Total number of videos	213

Table-2: Analysis of Youtube Channel of Incredible India as on 14th July, 2014

These instances show that various tourism organizations in India are making their presence felt on social media along with various co-creation initiatives. These organizations have identified the opportunities and efficiently used social media for effective building of tourism experience. These initiatives lead these organizations to occupy one of the quadrants from participation matrix. The table in figure 3 describes the intensity of participation on social media and co-creation activities taken up by these organizations. To strengthen their implications this paper further draws the attention to numerous industry examples. Makemytrip.com and Cox & Kings focuses on consumer co-creation while using social media as an effective tool to reach, create awareness, engage them and create tourism experiences. Such organizations have creator quadrant active and they should focus on to retain it as this has the maximum potential to gain high tourism experience. Canada Tourism integrated social media component and launched a website called Explore Canada Like a Local. This website is exactly how travelers see Canada. It lets tourists to collect advice from those travelers and locals who know Canada. It was a successful initiative as it exposed unexplored parts and experiences of Canada (McCullough, 2011). According to Tussyadiah and Zach social media and co-creation strategy positively process customer knowledge into important assets and increases organization's performance. Organizations with critic quadrant should inculcate the co-creation initiatives as they already have huge fan following on social media, so engaging them with such activities will foster a new relationship with their customers. D Paul and Thomas Cook engages customers on social media by asking questions

related to holiday destinations but they are appointing them to co-create their own experiences. Involving these customers in co-creation initiatives will lead them to move from critic to creator quadrant. Collectors need to make them strong from technological viewpoint as they have already started building an emotional bond with their customers to understand their requirements and create value accordingly. Thailand DMO's website practices technology enabled activities to encourage individuals to share their personal experiences including videos, images, and stories (Neuhofer, Buhalis & Ladkin, 2013). These tools enhance travel experiences of others and such co-creation activities will more exposed and successful when combined with social media, thereby leading it to move to Creator quadrant. Inactive organizations should start changing themselves according to the changing global scenario because to stay and survive in the current competitive environment social media and co-creation are the forefront medium in tourism experience and value creation.












Examples	India's Tourism Organizations						
	Makemy trip	Cox & Kings	Incredible India	D'Paul	Thomas Cook	IndiaTour Planner	Indian diplomacy
MyWayOn Highway							
Grab Your Dream							
Channel on YouTube							
Questions on Social Networking Sites							
Kerala off season campaign							
Video on civilization							

Fig-3: Tabular representation of tourism organization's co creation initiatives and active quadrant of participation matrix

3. CONCLUSION

This conceptual paper provides a new perspective to the tourism organizations to identify their position in terms of the optimal usage of social media and co-creation initiatives to enhance tourism experience. The idea of creating an everlasting tourism experience has become the most important mantra for success in the travel business. The paper discusses how the Indian tourism organizations are making use of social media to co-create the tourism experience for the tourists. The paper conceptualizes the collaboration of social media and co-creation principle given by Ramaswamy and Gouillart. The alliance of these two (social media and co-creation) is giving wonderful results in terms of serving the ever increasing demands of today's tech savvy and always online customers of the tourism industry. The customers these days are very active on social media and at the same time they willing participate in the co-creation activities as by doing so they get a feeling of creating their own experiences and more satisfaction in the end.

The paper further contributes by developing a participation matrix to analyze tourism businesses in terms of their presence on social media and co-creation initiatives taken. The matrix differentiate between four major types of tourism businesses namely- inactive, critic, collector and creator. Out of these creator is the one which every organization should aim for in order to create a better experience value for its customers. To give more clarity on the different quadrants of the matrix, different examples from Indian tourism sites are quoted which fall in one or the other quadrants. As shown in the table most of the organizations are running different activities which made fall in the critic quadrant which is just one step below the creator- which every organization aspires to be. The matrix presents a suitable tool for the companies to spot their present position and work on their future strategies to extend

their prospective and enhance tourism experience so as to emerge as a market leader. For future research empirical testing of organization tourism matrix is required. Further examples could be discussed to develop a better understanding on the usage of social media in co-creation activities for creating ever-lasting and innovative experiences for the tourists.

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