



## Social Media and Tourism Industry: A Comparative Analysis of Effects of Facebook Pages of Tour Companies of Lahore on Tourism Promotion



Zowaina Azhar \*

Abdul Rehman Qaisar †

Misha Akash ‡

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**Abstract:** *The study attempts to assess the difference in the effect of social media content of tour companies of Lahore on promoting tourism. The study used a comparative research design in order to compare the effects of social media content, in particular Facebook. A detailed literature review was presented, and data was collected from the tourists who have used the Facebook pages of selected tour companies and used their services through a well-developed questionnaire, using purposive sampling, followed by convenience sampling. To conduct the study, a sample size of 320 respondents was chosen to get accurate findings. The findings of the study revealed that all four tour companies of Lahore equally promoted tourism through their Facebook pages. The Facebook pages are a reliable source of information that are trending and being used extensively by people. This showed that using such pages are ultimately contributing to the success and promotion of tourism in Pakistan.*

**Key Words:** Tourism Promotion through Facebook Pages, Social Media Marketing, Social Media use by Tour Companies

### Introduction

Moreover, the emergence of the internet, of social media has revolutionized all advancement in technologies and excessive use industries, including the tourism industry

\*Lecturer, Department of Communication and Media Studies, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan.

†Assistant Professor, Department of Communication and Media Studies, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: [abdulrehman.qaisar@uos.edu.pk](mailto:abdulrehman.qaisar@uos.edu.pk)

‡Lecturer (Visiting), Department of Communication and Media Studies, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan.

(Ráthonyi, 2013). Along with other industries, the tourism industry has become one of the world's greatest industries, which is growing at a faster speed. This has changed the tourists' behavior in terms of information gathering, decision making and planning to go on a trip (Ráthonyi, 2013).

Moreover, the tourism consumers who make use of ICTs are more informed and involved by sharing travelling experiences (Yilmaz, 2016). This means that in order to reach the customers, the service or tourism industry highly rely on social media (Seth, 2012). Keeping in view the scenario of Pakistan, the country is rich in natural beauty, has a historical background and distinctive handmade items, which are a great source of attraction to tourists, but there are certain factors such as security, safety, services etc. which may hinder the development of tourism (Khan, 2012). In order to cope up with such challenges and promote tourism in the country, there are several organizations and tourism companies which take advantage of social media to boost up tourism in Pakistan.

Therefore, this research does not only focus on how social media is promoting tourism in Pakistan, but it also emphasizes how different the major travel and tour companies of Lahore city make effective use of Facebook and influence their followers to use their services. The four major companies that are selected for the study include 'The Trekkerz', 'Adventure Treks and Tours', 'Green Tours' and 'My Planet Tourism'.

### **Problem Statement**

According to researchers, it is proved that the various social networking sites are frequently

accessed by individuals as well as the tourism industry (D. R. Buted et al., 2014). The service industry uses these networking sites as people have maximum reach to them (Seth, 2012).

However, no such study has been undertaken that reveals the role and difference in the effect of the tour companies and their social media usage in order to access people and promote tourism in Pakistan.

Therefore, it becomes imperative to study the role of social media in promoting tourism within the scenario of Pakistan. This study will be focusing on the effect of social media content of tour companies of Lahore on the audience and the difference in effect, if any.

### **Objectives**

1. To assess the overall effects of social media content of tour companies on tourism promotion in Pakistan.
2. To find out the differences in these effects of social media content of tour companies on tourism promotion in Pakistan.

### **Hypothesis**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is a difference in the effects of social media content of the selected tour companies on tourism promotion.

### **Research question**

**RQ:** Is there any difference in the effects of social media content of selected tour companies on tourism promotion?

### **Rationale/Significance of the Study**

The study will be highly important in terms of adding more knowledge to existing research as

previous studies focused on the overall impact of social media in promoting tourism or connecting the subject with other tools of communication such as print media, electronic media, word of mouth etc. Moreover, the research will be highly useful for both the tour companies and the people. On the one hand, it will provide the tour organizers with a complete set of information while on the other hand, it will help the tourists of tomorrow to decide and plan their trips with that tour company which has maximum positive response rate.

## Literature Review

### Background

Social media has given people a new platform to communicate with each other. The term social media has no single definition, and it becomes difficult to define it clearly due to emerging concepts such as Web 2.0 and others. With the advent of new communication methods such as Web 2.0 or new social media, information gathering has become easy by making communication more successful among the users.

### Social Media

Social media and traditional media both are types of media. According to research, both work as a vehicle to connect and inform the consumers (Seth, 2012). However, the research further highlights that what makes the two different is the ability of social media, allowing its users to actively participate and express their views. Various researchers have defined social media in different ways. For instance, Bruns and Bahnisch (as cited in Chernysheva, 2011) define social media as websites that are

developed on web 2.0 technologies in order to provide a platform for social communication, community development and project management. Social media include multiple things such as social networking sites etc., through which people connect and interact with each other (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014).

### Tourism/ Tour Companies

According to the UNWTO Report of 2013 (as cited in Alizadeh and Isa 2014), during the last six decades, the tourism industry has shown remarkable growth, thus becoming one of the world's leading industries. But with the advent of Information and Communication Technology, things have changed. Tourism, as being a sector, has a very close connection with advancements in information technology (Yilmaz, 2016). It is one of those sectors, which has gained many benefits from the internet and consequently, social media has become an important part of it for promoting tourism in any state of a country (Gohil, 2015). It is believed that promoting a destination is really challenging as it requires the marketing of numerous attributes of a destination, as well as serving and fulfilling the heterogeneous demands of the travellers (Buted et al., 2014). This includes e-ticketing, sales and promotion of hotels and tour companies and much more.

### Role of Social Media in the Tourism Industry

Conducting research on social travel networks and travel planning, the researcher concludes that traditionally, trips were planned by consulting a travel agent who would help the travellers organize their trips properly (Bashar, 2014). Moreover, destination marketing

organizations used brand advertising for the destination through one-way communication with their target audience (Sixt, 2013). But with the passage of time, things have become different due to the emergence of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) that have changed tourism (Bashar, 2014). The new media has provided new possibilities, opportunities and challenges for the people who are linked with tourism (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013).

### **Tourism in Pakistan**

Similarly, in Pakistan, online markets have given access to many startup ventures, which includes various sectors such as travel and tourism (Ali, 2016). Furthermore, this has also given rise to travel services like Uber, Careem etc., along with online hotel booking and similar facilities (Ali, 2016). But this is not limited to a certain boundary. Travel and tour managers and operators have started a new initiative with the help of social networking sites.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The uses and gratification theory seems to be relevant to the study. The creation of online technologies has brought a revolution in the application of uses and gratification theory for new media (Lineberry, 2012). One of the needs, defined in theory, i.e. tension release need, goes with the topic. According to the need, it helps the tourists to escape from their routine activities. Apart from this, another need, i.e. affective need, is also applicable to the study. People select a certain destination through a Facebook page and go on a tour to seek pleasure and get entertained. Lastly, the

integrative social need is gratified when people link up with each other using social networking sites. They socialize by interacting with each other and getting information. Therefore, the uses and gratification theory supports the study as tourists get their relevant needs gratified through social media content.

## **Methodology**

### **Study Design**

The purpose of the study is to compare and analyze the effects of social media content of four tour companies of Lahore with regard to the promotion of tourism in Pakistan, thus influencing tourists' behavior. Therefore, the comparative research design was applied to gain insight into the problem situation.

### **Population Under Survey**

Considering the population of the undertaken study as the tourists who have travelled with selected tour companies of Lahore at least once, a sample of 320 people was drawn from the population using the non-probability technique of sampling. Then 80 tourists from each tourist company were selected, which were equally divided on the basis of gender for selection.

### **Sampling Procedure and Sample Size**

The technique included purposive sampling first, where those respondents were selected who have interacted with Facebook pages of the selected tour companies and utilized their services. Later, convenience sampling was used where those respondents were drawn who was conveniently available to participate in the study. The unit of analysis was one individual

tourist who belongs to any city of Pakistan and has travelled with one of these selected travel companies.

found the behavior of tourists towards social media content, in particular Facebook.

### Data Collection Instrument

A well-designed questionnaire was developed and wet by a senior professor. Later, the study was conducted in the field. The questionnaire

### Data Collection and Data Analysis

On the collection of data, the responses were analyzed using data analysis software, i.e. IBM SPSS Version 21. The analysis helped to check that whether the hypothesis was rejected or not.

## Results, Data Analysis and Discussion

**Table 1.** Crosstab Tour Company \* Accuracy of Information provided

		The page Provided correct contact Information			
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Total
Tour Company	The Trekkerz	56 (17.5%)	21 (6.6%)	3 (0.9%)	80 (25.0%)
	Adventurer Treks and Tours	71 (22.2%)	9 (2.8%)	0 (0.0%)	80 (25.0%)
	The Green Tours	70 (21.9%)	10 (3.1%)	0 (0.0%)	80 (25.0%)
	My Planet Tourism services	72 (22.5%)	8 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)	80 (25.0%)
	Total	269 (84.1%)	48 (15.0%)	3 (0.9%)	320 (100%)

*P-Value = .002*

The above table shows cross-tabulation between ‘Tour Company’ and ‘The page provided correct contact information. The majority of the respondents (72, i.e. 22.5%, and 71, i.e.71%) agreed that My Planet Tourism

Services and Adventurer Treks and Tours provided correct contact information, respectively. The obtained P-Value is 0.002 is less than the level of significance (0.05), which means that the results are significant.

**Table 2.** Crosstab Tour Company \* Information match with Actual Services

		The information provided on the page was the same that was Provided by the owner of the company			
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Total
Tour Company	The Trekkerz	56 (17.5%)	21 (6.6%)	3 (0.9%)	80 (25.0%)
	Adventurer Treks and Tours	72 (22.5%)	8 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)	80 (25.0%)
	The Green Tours	68 (21.3%)	12 (3.8%)	0 (0.0%)	80 (25.0%)

	The information provided on the page was the same that was Provided by the owner of the company			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Total
My Planet Tourism services	69 (21.6%)	10 (3.1%)	1 (0.3%)	80 (25.0%)
Total	265 (82.8%)	51 (15.9%)	4 (1.3%)	320 (100%)

*P-Value = .014*

Cross-tabulation is applied between ‘Tour Company’ and ‘The information provided on the page was same that was provided by the owner of the company’. Among the 80 respondents of Adventurer Treks and Tours, the majority (72, i.e.22.5%) strongly agreed that information on the page and by owner

matched. Similarly, a big portion of respondents of My Planet Tourism Services (69, i.e. 21.6%) also agreed strongly that information from both the sources was the same. The Obtained p-value, 0.014, is less than the significant level (0.05), so the results are significant.

**Table 3.** Crosstab Tour Company \* Services Provided Accurately

	The Services Mentioned on the page were Provided on the Tour				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
The Trekkerz	55 (17.2%)	17 (5.3%)	2 (0.6%)	6 (1.9%)	80 (25.0%)
Adventurer Treks and Tours	58 (18.1%)	17 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (1.6%)	80 (25.0%)
Tour Company The Green Tours	50 (15.6%)	25 (7.8%)	2 (0.6%)	3 (0.9%)	80 (25.0%)
My Planet Tourism services	55 (17.2%)	24 (7.5%)	1 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	80 (25.0%)
Total	218 (68.1%)	83 (25.9%)	5 (1.6%)	14 (4.4%)	320 (100%)

*P-Value = .240*

The above table illustrates cross-tabulation between ‘Tour Company’ and ‘The services mentioned on the page were provided on tour’. It shows that the respondents of Adventurer Treks and Tours (58, i.e. 18.1%) strongly agreed that the services mentioned on

the page were provided on the Tour, followed by the respondents of The Trekkerz and My Planet Tourism services (55, i.e. 17.2%). The results are not significant as the obtained P-Value, i.e. 0.240, is greater than the level of significance (0.05).

**Table 4.** Crosstab Tour Company \* Travelling in Future

		I will like to travel again with this company					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Tour Company	The Trekkerz Adventurer Treks and Tours	55 (17.2%)	17 (5.3%)	2 (0.6%)	6 (1.9%)	0 (0.0%)	80 (25.0%)
	The Green Tours	59 (18.4%)	16 (5.0%)	2 (0.6%)	2 (0.6%)	1 (0.3%)	80 (25.0%)
	My Planet Tourism services	45 (15.1%)	29 (9.1%)	3 (0.9%)	3 (0.9%)	0 (0.0%)	80 (25.0%)
		60 (18.8%)	20 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	80 (25.0%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>219 (68.4%)</b>	<b>82 (25.6%)</b>	<b>7 (2.2%)</b>	<b>11 (3.4%)</b>	<b>1 (0.3%)</b>	<b>320 (100%)</b>

*P-Value* = .063

Cross-tabulation is shown between 'Tour Company' and 'I will like to travel again with this company'. The majority of the respondents of Adventurer Treks and Tours and My Planet Tourism Services (59, i.e. 18.4% and 60, i.e.

18.8% respectively) strongly agreed to travel again with the companies they have travelled to before. The obtained P-Value is 0.063 that is greater than the significant value (0.05). This means that the results are not significant

**Table 5.** Crosstab Tour Company \*Recommendation to Others

		I Will refer this Company to Family and Friends					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Tour Company	The Trekkerz Adventurer Treks and Tours	55 (17.2%)	17 (5.3%)	2 (0.6%)	6 (1.9%)	0 (0.0%)	80 (25.0%)
	The Green Tours	59 (18.4%)	16 (5.0%)	2 (0.6%)	2 (0.6%)	1 (0.3%)	80 (25.0%)
	My Planet Tourism services	45 (15.1%)	29 (9.1%)	3 (0.9%)	3 (0.9%)	0 (0.0%)	80 (25.0%)
		61 (19.1%)	19 (5.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	80 (25.0%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>220 (68.8%)</b>	<b>81 (25.3%)</b>	<b>7 (2.2%)</b>	<b>11 (3.4%)</b>	<b>1 (0.3%)</b>	<b>320 (100%)</b>

*P-Value* = 0.057

The cross-tabulation applied between ‘Tour Company’ and ‘I will refer this company to family and friends in the above-mentioned table shows that respondents from My Planet Tourism Services (61, i.e. 19.1%) and Adventurer Treks and Tours (59, i.e. 18.4%)

strongly agreed that they would refer the respective tour company to their family and friends. The results are not much significant as the obtained P-Value is 0.057, which is greater than the level of significance (0.05).

**Table 6.** Crosstab Tour Company \* Reason for Preferring Tour Company

		I Prefer a Specific tour Company because of				
		Name	Services	Packages	Friend's Recommendation	Total
Tour Company	The Trekkerz	17 (5.3%)	2 (0.6%)	6 (1.9%)	0 (0.0%)	80 (25.0%)
	Adventurer Treks and Tours	16 (5.0%)	2 (0.6%)	2 (0.6%)	1 (0.3%)	80 (25.0%)
	The Green Tours	29 (9.1%)	3 (0.9%)	3 (0.9%)	0 (0.0%)	80 (25.0%)
	My Planet Tourism services	19 (5.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	80 (25.0%)
	Total	81 (25.3%)	7 (2.2%)	11 (3.4%)	1 (0.3%)	320 (100%)

*P-Value = .000*

The table above shows cross-tabulation between ‘Tour Company’ and ‘I prefer a specific tour company because of’. According to the statistics, the majority of the respondents (144, i.e. 45%) said that they preferred a specific tour company because of the package that is provided. This included the highest

percentage of tourists from My Plant Tourism Services (51 i.e.15.9%), followed by tourists from The Green tours (38 i.e.11.9%). The obtained P-value is 0.000 that is less the level of significance (0.05), which shows the results are significant.

**Table 7.** Crosstab Tour Company \* Own visit

		Facebook page of Companies Motivate people to visit places on their Own				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Tour Company	The Trekkerz	8 (2.5%)	22 (6.9%)	36 (11.3%)	14 (4.4%)	80 (25.0%)



Facebook page of Companies Motivate people to visit places on their Own					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Adventurer Treks and Tours	8 (2.5%)	27 (8.4%)	33 (10.3%)	12 (3.8%)	80 (25.0%)
The Green Tours My Planet	6 (1.9%)	31 (9.7%)	32 (10.0%)	11 (3.4%)	80 (25.0%)
Tourism services	13 (4.1%)	34 (10.6%)	25 (7.8%)	8 (2.5%)	80 (25.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>35 (10.9%)</b>	<b>114 (35.6%)</b>	<b>126 (39.4%)</b>	<b>45 (14.1%)</b>	<b>320 (100%)</b>

*P-Value* = .381

Cross-tabulation is applied between ‘Tour Company’, and ‘Facebook page of companies motivate people to visit places on their own in the above-mentioned table. It shows that most of the respondents of The Trekkerz (36, i.e. 11.3%) held a neutral response towards their motivation of visiting the places on their own,

while the majority of the respondents of My Planet Tourism Services (34, i.e. 10.6) agreed that they get convinced through these pages of tour companies. The obtained p-value, i.e. 0.381, is greater than the significant value (0.05), which shows that the results are not significant.

**Table 8.** Crosstab Gender \* Liking Tourism pages on Facebook

		I have liked Tourism Pages on Face book		
		Yes	No	Total
Gender	Male	2 (0.6%)	1 (0.3%)	80 (25.0%)
	Female	3 (0.9%)	0 (0.0%)	80 (25.0%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>80 (25.0%)</b>

*P-Value* = .157

Above table 5.1 is the illustration of cross-tabulation between ‘Gender’ and ‘I have liked tourism pages on Facebook’. All of the male respondents (160, i.e. 50%) agreed that they had liked Tourism pages on Facebook, while

the majority of the female respondents also agreed (158, i.e. 49.5%) except 2-respondents. Obtained P-Value is 0.157 that is greater than our significance level (0.05), which means the results are not significant.

**Table 9.** Crosstab Gender \* Visiting Tourism pages on Face book

		I visit these pages to keep Myself Updated				Total
		Regularly	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	
Gender	Male	29 (9.1%)	70 (21.9%)	40 (12.5%)	21 (6.6%)	160 (50.0%)
	Female	12 (3.8%)	59 (18.5%)	72 (22.6%)	17 (5.3%)	160 (50.0%)

Total	41 (12.8%)	129 (40.3%)	112 (35.0%)	38 (11.9%)	320 (100%)
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*P-Value = .001*

The table above shows the cross-tabulation between ‘Gender’ and ‘I visit these pages to keep myself updated’. The majority of the male respondents (70, i.e. 21.9%) said that they visit the tourism pages frequently while others (40, i.e. 12.5%) visit these pages occasionally. However, the female respondents show

opposite results. A major part of these respondents (72, i.e. 22.6) visit the Facebook pages occasionally, whereas others (59, i.e. 18.5%) visit them frequently. Obtained P-value is .001 that is greater than the level of significance (0.05), means that the results are significant.

**Table 10.** Crosstab Gender \* Travelling through tour Companies

		I travel through tour Companies		
		Yes	No	Total
Gender	Male	154 (48.1%)	5 (1.6%)	160 (50.0%)
	Female	159 (49.7%)	1 (0.3%)	160 (50.0%)
	Total	313 (97.8%)	6 (1.9%)	320 (100%)

*P-Value = .154*

The table presents a cross-tabulation between ‘Gender’ and ‘I travel through tour companies. The majority of the male respondents (154, i.e. 48.1%) agreed that they travel through tour companies, while few of the respondents (5, i.e. 1.6) do not travel through these companies.

On the other hand, almost all the female's respondents (159, i.e. 49.7%) except for 1-respondent said that they travel with the travel companies. The results are not significant as the obtained P-Value (0.154) is greater than the significance value (0.05).

**Table 11.** Crosstab Gender \* Frequency of Travelling through Tour Companies

		I travel through tour Companies				
		Regularly	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Total
Gender	Male	28 (8.8%)	63 (19.7%)	46 (14.4%)	23 (7.2%)	160 (50.0%)
	Female	10 (3.1%)	51 (15.9%)	72 (22.5%)	27 (8.4%)	160 (50.0%)
	Total	38 (11.9%)	114 (35.6%)	118 (36.9%)	50 (15.6%)	320 (100%)

*P-Value = .001*

Cross-tabulation is applied between ‘Gender’ and ‘I travel through tour companies in the above-mentioned table. Among the male respondents, the majority of them (63, i.e.

19.7%) frequently travel through the tour companies while few other respondents (46, i.e. 14.4%) occasionally travel with the companies. On the part of females, a larger

portion of respondents (72, i.e. 22.5%) occasionally travel, whereas one of the minor portions of female respondents (51, i.e.15.9)

travel frequently. The obtained P-Value, i.e. 0.001, shows that the results are significant as it is less than the level of significance (0.05).

**Table 12.** Crosstab Gender \* Last visit to the Tourism Page

		I Last Visited a tour Company page			
		Last month	6 Months ago	1 Year ago	Total
Gender	Male	138 (43.1%)	21 (6.6%)	1 (0.3%)	160 (50.0%)
	Female	123 (38.4%)	36 (11.3%)	1 (0.3%)	160 (50.0%)
	Total	261 (81.6%)	57 (17.8%)	2 (0.6%)	320 (100%)

*P-Value* = .090

Cross-tabulation is shown in the above table between ‘Gender’ and ‘I last visited a tour company page’. Most of the male respondents (138 i.e. 43.1%) visited the tourism company page in the last month while the other male respondents (21 i.e. 6.6%), except for 1-respondent, last visited the page about 6 months ago. Among the female respondents,

the majority of them (123 i.e. 38.4%) last visited the page in the last month. The remaining female respondents (36 i.e. 11.3%) except 1-respondent, last visited it about 6 months ago. The results are not significant as the obtained P-Value is 0.090 which is more than the significance vale (0.05).

**Table 13.** Crosstab Gender \* Last travel through a tour Company

		I last Travelled through a tour Company				
		Last month	6 Months ago	1 Year ago	More than a year	Total
Gender	Male	104 (32.5%)	51 (15.9%)	5 (1.6%)	0 (0.0%)	160 (50.0%)
	Female	84 (26.3%)	64 (20.0%)	10 (3.1%)	2 (0.6%)	160 (50.0%)
	Total	188 (58.8%)	115 (35.9%)	15 (4.7%)	2 (0.6%)	320 (100%)

*P-Value* = .090

The above table shows a cross-tabulation between ‘Gender’ and ‘I last travelled with a tour company. The male respondents agreed that the majority of them (104 i.e. 32.5%) travelled in the last month with a tour company. Similarly, the majority of the females respondents (84 i.e. 26.3%) also said that they travelled in the last month with a tour

company. In the span of the last six months, more female respondents (64 i.e. 20.0%) travelled with a tour company as compared to the male respondents (51 i.e. 15.9%). The obtained P-Value is 0.090 is greater than the level of significance (0.05), which means that the results are not significant.

**Table 14.** Crosstab Gender \* Accuracy of Information Provided

		The page provided correct contact Information			
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Total
Gender	Male	142 (44.4%)	18 (5.6%)	0 (0.0%)	160 (50.0%)
	Female	127 (39.7%)	30 (9.4%)	3 (0.9%)	160 (50.0%)
	Total	269 (84.1%)	48 (15%)	3 (0.9%)	320 (100%)

**P-Value** = .033

The table above shows cross-tabulation between ‘Gender’ and ‘The page provided correct contact information. The statistics reveal that majority of the male and female respondents (142, i.e. 44.4%, and 127

i.e.39.7%, respectively) strongly agreed that the page provided correct contact information. The obtained p-value is 0.003 that is less than the level of significance (0.05), which shows that the results are significant.

**Table 15.** Crosstab Gender \* Information match with Services Provided

		The information Provided on the page was same that was Provided by the owner of the company			
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Total
Gender	Male	142 (44.4%)	18 (5.6%)	0 (0.0%)	160 (50.0%)
	Female	123 (38.4%)	33 (10.3%)	4 (1.3%)	160 (50.0%)
	Total	265 (82.8%)	51 (15.9%)	4 (1.3%)	320 (100%)

**P-Value** = .008

Cross-tabulation is applied between ‘Gender’ and ‘The information provided on the page was same that was provided by the owner of the company’. The above table shows that the majority of the male respondents (142 i.e.

44.4%) and female respondents (123 i.e.38.4%) strongly agreed that information provided on the page and that by the owner was same. The results are significant as the obtained p-value is less than significant value (0.05).

The main focus of the research was that ‘is there any difference in effects of social media content of selected tour companies on tourism promotion’. The findings revealed that the social media content of the tour companies almost induced the same effects on the promotion of tourism (Table-1.1 to Table-1.7). This meant that the pre-developed hypothesis that ‘there is a difference in effects of social media content of the selected tour companies, on tourism promotion’ was rejected. Almost all of the selected tour companies showed that

their social media content equally promoted tourism as the tourists ‘strongly agreed’ that the companies were successful in providing correct and authentic information (Table-1.1 and Table-1.2). They also believed that the promotion of tourism through these pages was much more appreciated when the facilities mentioned in the package were completely provided (Table-1.3). The strong agreement was shown by the majority of the respondents of all the tour companies, among which ‘Adventurer Treks and Tours’ got the highest

number of tourists, followed by 'My Planet Tourism Services' respondents. Moreover, this convinced the tourists to travel again with their respective tour companies and highly recommend them to their family and friends (Table-1.4 and Table-1.5).

In the case of visiting the places without hiring the services of the tour companies, the majority of the respondents showed a 'neutral' response towards it, with highest number of respondents of 'The Trekkerz' (Table-1.7). However, among the respondents of 'My Planet Tourism Services', majority of them 'agreed' that the Facebook pages motivate people to travel to various destinations on their own. Apart from this, while preferring a specific company, majority of the respondents believed that packages and services of tour companies help them choose the best company they could travel with (Table-1.6). Among the respondents of 'The Trekkerz' and 'Adventurer Treks and Tours', they preferred 'services' while selecting a tour company, whereas the respondents of 'The Green Tours' and 'My Planet Tourism Services' felt that 'packages' are the criteria for hiring the series of a particular tour company.

Comparing the findings and their analysis, with the literature review, it was seen that promotion of tourism through social media almost induces the same impact. People do hire the services of the tour companies when they come across social media content such as Facebook pages portraying pictures, videos, reviews, posts etc. These contents promote the places, attract the people and therefore, motivate them to travel along with the company. Researchers concluded that many Mediterranean countries make use of Facebook through which they promote the

brand destinations in the form of members, pictures, videos and much more ([Chernysheva, 2011](#); Skourtis, 2011; Assiouras, 2011; and Koniordos, 2011). Moreover, tour operators make use of social networking sites, especially Facebook, to market their product i.e. tourism as they believe that a great number of tourists actively make use of this application ([Otieno, 2014](#); and Madondo, 2016). Therefore, this showed that the tourism industry had gained much support through the internet, especially social media as it has provided an opportunity to tourism marketers to promote tourism ([Alizadeh, 2014](#); Isa, 2014; [Yazdanifard, 2014](#), Yee, 2014; and [Gohil, 2015](#)). This was the reason that majority of the respondents liked the tourism pages, especially that of the tourism companies, which fascinate and motivate them to buy the services, thus ultimately leading towards the promotion of tourism.

The study also determined that "do people perceive social media content of tour companies as a reliable source of information". The statistics confirmed that people considered the content of social media as a credible source of information (Table-1.8 to Table-1.15). As a result of this, the predetermined hypothesis that "there is no doubt that the social media content of tour companies is a reliable source of information" was accepted. The majority of the respondents have liked the tourism pages and tour companies pages on Facebook (Table-1.8 to Table-1.10).

In terms of their 'visit to tourism pages' and 'travel through tour companies, both genders showed a slight difference where males responded 'frequently' while females said that they 'occasionally' visit and travel (Table-1.9 and Table-1.11). This was much

supported when both the genders agreed that they last visited the pages of a tour company in the 'last month' and travelled in the same month too (Table-1.12 and Table-1.13). Moreover, both the genders 'strongly agreed that all the information, including the contacts, was the same that was provided by the tour company's owner later (Table-1.14 and Table-1.15).

Previously conducted studies also confirmed the findings. Researchers said everything that appears on social media; people consider it true and make their decisions accordingly (Manap, 2013; and Adzharudin, 2013). Other studies also approved that in terms of credibility, social media is considered an important source for acquiring information and utilizing it during the decision-making phase (Treer, 2010). Similarly, this led the tour companies to use these pages to present, promote and advertise their packages in order to grab their potential audience. Studies highlighted that social media proved to be a beneficial source for advertising, as compared to traditional media (Rahman, 2016).

The findings revealed that it was the trust of the people that they visited the tour companies' pages on Facebook, either frequently or occasionally. This further motivated them to even hire the services and travel with the tour companies because they felt that the pages provided correct information, services and benefits that they have already mentioned in the tour packages. The credibility of the tour companies was further easily analyzed when the respondents visited their pages on Facebook and made a quick decision to buy the services and travel at the same time.

## Limitations of the Study

Following were the limitations of the study:

1. Due to limited time, the sample size was kept small.
2. The study was only conducted in Lahore city, as access to other cities was difficult.
3. The research only covered Facebook content of tour companies.

## Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to the following points:

1. Participation in this study was delimited to the tourists who had travelled with one of the organizations mentioned in the study.
2. The study was delimited to the examination of tourists' behavior towards the Facebook content of the mentioned four tour companies of Lahore.

## Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The study showed an analysis of the role of social media content in promoting tourism especially through tour companies. The research undertook Facebook pages of four tourism companies of Lahore i.e. The Trekkerz, Adventurer Treks and Tours, The Green Tours and My Planet Tourism Services. It revealed that social networking sites, in particular Facebook, play a significant role in promoting tourism in Pakistan. Tour operators make use of Facebook pages in order to market and promote tourism. Similarly, people, on the other hand, also take advantage of these pages so as to find the best place and

company to travel with. The findings of the study highlighted that the social media content of the selected tour companies produce the same effects on tourism promotion. The social media content seems to be a credible source, which is highly appreciated and accepted by the people. This news trend of promoting tourism by social media has gained high peaks, which will be beneficial for the tour companies and for the economy of the country, at large, too

### **Recommendations for Industry**

Following recommendations may be proposed as the result of the findings:

1. Marketing and promotion, as being a part of advertising, are one of the flourishing sectors of Pakistan. Due to emergence of technology and a new mode of communication, it is challenging for the hospitality industry to grab and sustain the audience. So it is recommended that tour operators make use of well-designed communication and marketing tools in order to know

the needs of the public and respond to them in appropriate manner.

2. Apart from tour operators, the hotel management, transporters etc may also take advantage of social media and work in cooperation with the tour companies so that this may not only adds credibility to the content and attracts the tourists, but also boost up the business of the contributors.

### **Suggestions for future Researchers**

Forthcoming researchers may draw their attention on this area in following different dimensions by adopting various techniques:

1. A comparative analysis between tour companies of different cities of Pakistan may be conducted to study their use and effect of social media content on tourism.
2. A study may also be conducted on the effects of promoting tourism through social media content on both national and international audience.

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