Tourists' Propensity for WOM and E-WOM across Selective Destinations of India

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This paper seeks to explore the consumers' propensity for WOM and e-WOM in Indian settings which (despite its vast potential) is under researched. Further, it attempts to discern the impact of socio-demographic variables on the same. Based on an empirical investigation of 853 respondents across five selected tourists destinations; the study reports that the domestic tourists have a high propensity for both WOM and e-WOM, albeit with a limited impact of socio-demographic variables. Eventually, the implications that follow provide a pragmatic approach for Indian tourism marketers.

Keywords: Word of mouth, electronic word of mouth, India.

1. Introduction

Marketers may spend millions of dollars on elaborately conceived advertising campaigns, yet often what really makes up a consumer's mind is a word-of-mouth (WOM) recommendation from a trusted source (www.mckinsey.com). As consumers overwhelmed by product choices tune out the ever-growing barrage of traditional marketing, word of mouth cuts through the noise quickly and effectively (www.mckinsey.com). The strength of Word-of-mouth is greater than that of conventional advertising in terms of its ability to create negative or positive attitudes of consumers (Park et al., 2011 as cited in Albarq, 2014). In the era of e-commerce; the rapid development of the internet has enabled consumers to easily share their opinions of products or services with a potentially wide audience (Albarq, 2014). The traditional advertising has been adequately studied in the marketing literature (Villanueva et al., 2008). A few research studies have focused on the word of mouth as a means of finding and keeping customers (Duhan et al., 1997; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012a). Practically, WOM is a key to an organization's success as it plays an important role in consumers' buying process. (Richins, 1983; Tucker, 2011). Additionally, the emergence of new forms of e-commerce has altered the world economy (Chen & Chang, 2003; Manthiou & Schrier (2012). The digital version of WOM is considered to provide a wealth of new opportunities and possibilities to reach market segments that would have been hard to access otherwise (Dellarocas, 2003; Litvin et al., 2006; Baggio et al. 2009). Various studies on the effects of e-WOM have been conducted in terms of sales and marketing; they seem to agree that positive e-WOM can increase sales volume (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Davis & Khazanchi, 2008; Ye et al., 2009). Recently, also in the tourism industry the emergence of WOM and e-WOM has been seen. In the previous research the focus of studying WOM and e-WOM in tourism studies was mainly on pre-visit decision making. Our study analyzes the impact of socio-demographic variables for the tourists' propensity for WOM and e-WOM (post visit). We investigated this at five hill stations i.e. Shimla, Manali, Mussoorie, Mount Abu & Ooty. The following sections present the background of the study, the methodology and followed with the findings and discussion & conclusions.

2. Background of the Study

2.1 Domestic Tourism in India

The travel and tourism industry has emerged as one of the fastest growing sectors contributing significantly to global economic growth and development (KPMG, 2013). The international and domestic tourism both contributes to the growth of tourism industry. In present scenario, the global domestic tourism flows are at least ten times greater than international tourism flows WTO (2013). Specifically, In India tourism industry contributes for 6.8% share in GDP (Gross Domestic Product). The size of international and domestic market is growing but domestic market is growing at much higher pace. Domestic tourism contributes to three-fourths of the tourism economy (http://www. make inindia.com/sector/tourism-hospitality/). The size of the domestic market has been consistently growing: from 63 million in 1990 to 210 million in 2000 and then to an estimated 740 million in 2010 (ten times increase in volume in two decades (DoT, 2010 as cited in WTO, 2013). Recently, the number count of domestic tourist visits in India during 2012 was 1,036.3 Million as compared to 864.53 Million in 2011, recording a growth rate of 19.9% (http:// www.makeinindia.com/sector/tourism-hospitality/). The domestic travelers in India now seen as potential tourism segment because of several industry drivers such as government initiatives, diverse product offerings, growing economy, increasing disposable income levels and marketing initiatives along with key trends such as increasing number of women and senior citizen travelers, multiple short trips and weekend holidays,

introduction of innovative tourism concepts and customized tour packages etc (KPMG, 2013). Most importantly the young travelers in India contribute majorly to domestic tourism (KPMG, 2013). These factors necessitate the need of improving the domestic tourism in the country. For better targeting, we need segmentation on the basis of various characteristics of tourists'. In the present study we would like know the impact of socio-demographic variables on the propensity for WOM and EWOM. So, that it will be helpful in segmentation and have implications for tourism marketers.

2.2 WOM and e-WOM

2.2.a) WOM

Word of mouth (WOM) communication is a form of personal communication in which an individual receives information directly from another individual (Arndt, 1967 as cited in Manthiou & Schrier (2012). Westbrook (1987, p. 261) described WOM more broadly, to include "all informal communications directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services or their sellers" (cited in Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012a). Word of mouth (WOM) is communication about products and services between people who are perceived to be independent of the company providing the product or service, this informal communication is among people who have little commercial vested interest in persuading someone else to use the product and therefore no particular incentive to distort the truth in favor of the product or service (Silverman, 2001: 25 as cited in Fakharyan et al., 2012). Described as WOM communication, the process allows consumers to share information and opinions that direct buyers towards and away from specific products, brands, and services (Hawkins et al., 2004; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012a).

If a trusted friend tells you how good a product is, you are much more likely to act on that recommendation more quickly than if you saw an advertisement. This is because your friend is a source you can believe and trust and the "indirect experience" they have provided has made your decision to purchase easier (Roberts, 2009)

Villanueva et al. (2008) concluded that the lifetime value of customers acquired through WOM is twice as great as that acquired through traditional marketing tools (cited in Chen et al., 2012). Similarly Trusov et al. (2009) pointed out that WOM in website member acquisition is 30 times higher than media appearances (cited in Chen et al., 2012). It is stated in the past literature that WOM is important and helpful in buyer's decision making not only for durable goods (Mahajan et al., 1990; Kiel & Layton, 1981) but also in case of service providers whose offerings are largely intangible, and experience or credence based (Ng et al., 2011; Chen et al., 2012)

2.2 b) E-WOM

e-WOM involves consumers' comments about products and services posted on the Internet (Brooner & Hoog, 2011).

e-WOM cab be defined as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company which is made available to multitude of the people and institutes via the Internet" (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012b). e-WOM "as all informal communications directed at consumers through internet-based technology related to the usage or characteristics of particular goods and services, or their seller (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012b). Online word of mouth is called viral marketing and was coined as long ago as 1996 by Rayport at Harvard (cited in Roberts, 2009). Viral marketing describes any strategy that encourages individuals to pass on a marketing message to others, creating the potential for exponential growth in the message's exposure and influence (Roberts, 2009).

2.3 Importance of WOM and e-WOM in Tourism Industry

In the past literature it is persistent that WOM is also important to lure tourists and an effective measure to get multiplier impact (Reingen and Kernan, 1986; Duhan et al., 1997 as cited in Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012a). WOM is important in the hospitality and tourism industry, whose intangible products are difficult to evaluate prior to their consumption. WOM refers to traditional offline interpersonal information sources; for example, as regards holiday choice, asking a friend to recommend an excellent camping site in France (Brooner & Hoog, 2011). It is evident from previous literature that interpersonal influence and WOM are ranked the most important information source when a consumer is making a purchase decision (Litvin et al., 2006).

When WOM becomes digital, the large-scale, anonymous, ephemeral nature of the Internet induces new ways of capturing, analyzing, interpreting, and managing the influence that one consumer may have on another (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012b). Growing importance of ICT in hospitality & tourism necessitates studying the impact of ewom (Law et al., 2014). Reduced consumer trust, both of organizations and advertising, has led to electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) becoming an increasingly popular way of obtaining competitive advantage. e-WOM is especially relevant with regard to tourism, specifically tourists' attitudes toward destinations (Albarq, 2014). Some researchers have noted that one characteristic of e-WOM is that it has occurred within between people could have no relationship between each other or know with whom they are communicate (Sen & Lerman, 2007 as cited in Albarq, 2014). This makes e-WOM more reliable and trustworthy. WOM and e-WOM in tourism studies have been studied as a prior to visit indirect advertising sources (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012a; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012b). In the research of Jalilvand & Samiei (2012a) and Jalilvand & Samiei, (2012b) tourists have referred WOM and e-WOM for visiting Isfahan city. A comparison study of WOM and e-WOM by Manthiou & Schrier (2012) was accomplished through online survey in where the respondent visited Greece or planning to visit. This research study was done to compare that whether respondents reviewed a Greek hotel through a travel guidebook or from travel website. Results indicate that there is some difference between printed travel guidebooks and the online travel reviews. Comparing with WOM, Bickart and Schindler's (2001) showed that e-WOM may have higher credibility, empathy and

relevance to customers than marketer-created sources of information on the Web (cited in Lin et al., 2013). Fakharyan et al. (2012) has also studied the influence of online word of mouth communications on tourists' attitudes toward Islamic destinations and travel intentions. Findings revealed that online word of mouth has a significant impact on tourists' attitude towards Islamic destinations and consequently, travel intention. Jalilvand et al. (2012) had studied the interrelations among WOM (e-WOM), destination image, tourist attitude and travel intention in the tourism industry (Prior Visit). The findings implicate that e-WOM positively influences the destination image, tourist attitude and travel intention; destination image and tourist attitude have a significant relationship with intention to travel; destination image positively affects tourist attitude, and the socio-demographic characteristics influence e-WOM, destination image, tourist attitude, and travel intention. The effect of e-WOM on destination image, satisfaction and loyalty was investigated by Setiawan et al. (2014). The outcomes of this study were that e-WOM has a significant direct effect on destination image, while it has indirect effect on satisfaction and loyalty are completely mediated by destination image. It can be concluded that both WOM and e-WOM have significant effect mainly on destination image, choice and future travel intentions. If we link WOM and e-WOM to Indian tourism studies this area is under reached. So, in our study we investigate the impact on socio-demographic variables on WOM & e-WOM; the next section will provide basis for the importance of socio-demographic variables.

2.4 Socio-Demographic Variables

Segmentation and Socio-demographic Variables

"The heart of modern strategic marketing can be described as segmenting, targeting and positioning", with segmentation being the essential first step in the direction of a "target marketing approach" (Kotler 1994; Kastenholz et al., 2013). Wendell Smith (1956, cited by Baker, 1991), stated that "groups of consumers can be defined in such a way that their purchasing behavior would be relatively homogeneous." Middleton (1988) defined segmentation as "a process of dividing a total market, such as all tourists, into manageable sub-groups (permitting) more cost effective marketing, through the design, promotion and delivery of purpose built products aimed at satisfying the identified needs of target groups." (cited in Kastenholz et al., 2013). Similarly, Anable (2005) stated that "it is about reducing the number of entities being dealt with into a manageable number of groups that are mutually exclusive and share well defined characteristics". Ultimately segmentation has its implications on better structuring of the market and better-targeted policies (Anable, 2005; Kastenholz et al., 2013). There are numerous variables that have been suggested in the general marketing (Kotler et al., 1999) and tourism literature (Mill and Morrison, 1992; Pender, 1999; Kotler et al., 1995) for segmentation. Most importantly socio-demographic variables such as gender, age, income, education have been considered as the basis for segmentation (Kastenholz, 2002; Gitelson and Kerstetter, 1990; Kastenholz et al., 2013). The marketing literature substantiate that socio-demographic factors affect perceptions and purchasing pattern of consumers. Similarly in tourism literature researchers have significantly studied the impact of socio-demographic factors in the formation of destination image, behavioral intention etc. Most of the past studies illustrate that socio-demographic factors influence the destination image (Woodside and Lysonsky 1989; Um and Crompton 1990; Stabler 1995; Beerli and Martin, 2004). Researchers have found differences in the perceived image based on socio-demographic variables (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Kattiyapornpong & Miller, 2009). Tasci (2007) has found that age and prior visitation were significant to have a better perception of the destination. The impact of demographic differences based on age, gender, income and origin across word-of-mouth groups were well studied by Murphy et al. (2007). Decrop (2000) has discussed the impact of socio-demographic variables on vacation decisions (especially on destination choice). Age has constraints like health, mental and travelling too far that influences the decision making and in comparison to that younger people have higher travel involvement. Similarly, family situation, having children led to have constraints i.e. children require more care and attention so, travelers choose closer and familiar destinations and on the other hand large families have financial issues and constraint of not planning frequent travel activities (Decrop, 2000). In this study it has been found that important differences in decisions and decision making styles result from such classical criteria as age, family situation, socio-economic status, and occupation (Decrop, 2000). It has been found that differences in decision making result from socio-economic status, and occupation too (Decrop, 2000). A study done by Kattiyapornpong & Miller (2009) it has been found that age, income and life stage have significant differential and interactive effects on travel behavior. In the previous literature gender differences were considered commonly for the basis for market segmentation. Barber et al. (2009) in their study found that men relied more on impersonal sources for information and females relied on personal sources. Socio-demographic variables were seen as a very important basis to identify the travel motive (Gitelson & Kerstetter, 1990; Zimmer et al. 1995; Sangpikul, 2008; Jensen, 2011), in travel choice (Decrop, 2000; Kattiyapornpong & Miller, 2009) and in the destination image formation (Woodside & Lysonsky 1989; Um & Crompton 1990; Stabler 1995; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Kattiyapornpong & Miller, 2009; Tasci, 2007). Though, there exists various tourism research studies based on socio-demographic variables as a basis for segmentation (destination image formation) but there have been limited research exits on socio-demographic characteristics where they can be considered for measuring propensity for WOM and e-WOM.

Research Hypothesis

H1: The propensity for WOM by leisure tourists' would vary on demographic characteristics: a) gender b) age c) occupation d) education e) family income f) family life cycle across five selected destinations.

H1: The propensity for E-WOM by leisure tourists' would vary on demographic characteristics: a) gender b) age c) occupation d) education e) family income f) family life cycle across five selected destinations.

3. Methodology

3.1 Measures

The measures for the propensity for WOM and EWOM were taken from the work of Goyette et al. (2010) and were modified in context to tourism. Responses were taken on five point likert scale with 5 Disagree and 1 = Agree. Each factor has three statements to evaluate the propensity of WOM and e-WOM. Socio-demographic variables have been included in this on the basis of review of past literature (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Tasci , 2007; Murphy et al., 2007; Kattiyapornpong & Miller, 2009). The pilot study has been done and on the basis of its feedback the changes and improvements were made in the questionnaire to validate the scale (Byon and Zhang, 2010). Cronbach alpha ($\alpha \geq 0.70$) was used to verify the internal consistency reliability (Garson, 2006). The scale demonstrated valid psychometric properties as the internal consistency measure assessed by cronbach alpha were well within the acceptable range providing for the scale reliability.

3.2 Data Collection and Sample Profile

Hill Tourism is one of the major sources of revenue generation for any region or country as compared to other forms of Tourism (Mishra & Juyal, 2012). The major reason for tourists' being attracted to Hill stations is the calm, cool and serene environments and scenic beauty they offer (Mishra & Juyal, 2012). The economy of some of hill states like Himachal Pradesh and Uttrakhand is overwhelmingly dependent on tourism and particularly on domestic tourism (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2013).

Hill Stations

The five hill stations from India: Ooty, Shimla, Manali, Mussoorie and Mount Abu were chosen as the subjects for this study and data was collected during tourist season in these destinations.

Ooty, the hill station of Tamilnadu was chosen as one the subject (destination) for this study. Its easy accessibility and several other attractions have made it one of India's most popular hill destinations. Nature has been generous with this region, which is by far the most beautiful in the state. Apart from coffee and tea plantations, trees like conifers, eucalyptus, pine and wattle dot the hillside in Ooty and its environ (http://tamilnadutourism.org). Ooty is one of the major contributors for tourism inflows in the state (Tourism and Culture Department, 2012). The other two hill stations were taken from Himachal Pradesh i.e. Shimla and Manali. **Shimla**, the capital of Himachal Pradesh endowed with a natural green cover; the city terrain (alpine forest cover) is naturally attractive and presents a scenic charm. Besides, the city is distinctive for its variety of architecture and Shimla's famous mall road offers one of the longest stretches of pedestrian shopping in the world (http://himachaltourism.gov.in/shimla.php). **Manali,** just 40 Km away from Kullu to the north, is situated near the end of the valley on the National Highway leading to Leh. The landscape here is breath- taking. One sees well-defined snowcapped peaks, the Beas River with its clear water meandering through the town. On the other side are deodar and pine trees, tiny fields and fruit orchards (http://himachaltourism.gov.in/manali.php). The fourth hill station was **Mussoorie**, Queen of the Hills, located some 290 km north of New Delhi, is among the most popular hill stations of the country. Mussoorie spreads across at a height of 2,005.5 m above sea level. From this vantage point, Mussoorie offers superb scenic view of peaks of the Himalayas in western Garhwal. Mussoorie boasts of some of the most spectacular views of the Himalayas (http://uttarakhandtourism.gov.in/utdb/? q= mussoorie). The fifth hill station that was undertaken in this study was **Mount Abu**. During the period of the Maharaja's, it was used as a place of leisure by the royalties and semi-royalties. The place presents an interesting contrast of British style bungalows and holiday lodges of the royals (Thikhana) with various tribal communities residing amidst the thick lush forest on the hills surrounding the region. The flora and fauna enjoys the adulation of the tourist to the fullest (http://www.rajasthantourism.gov.in/ Destinations/ Mount Abu/AboutMountAbu2.aspx). A set of structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The constructs and number of questions were based upon the research questions and the formulated hypotheses. The questionnaire consists of three sections – socio-demographic information, statements on WOM and e-WOM & cognitive and affective destination image. Two tier sampling was used: multi stage sampling & convenience sampling was employed which resulted in a sample size of 853. Table 1 provides the sample profile.

3.3 Statistical Analysis

The data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 17.0. Data issues such as missing values and the test for normality were addressed prior to other advance analysis. Missing data were handled through mean substitution for metric variables (Soley-Bori, 2013; Pallant, 2011). The data normality was checked through Q-Q plots and was found to be adequate (Pallant, 2011). The frequency tests were conducted on socio-demographic variables to have sample profile (Table 1) and mean descriptives (Table 2 & 3). Two way ANOVA analysis have been carried out to test the hypotheses (Table 4 & 5).

Table 1 *Sample Profile*

Variables	Levels	Frequency (N=853)	%	Variables	Levels	Frequency (N=853)	%
Gender				**Family Income**			
	Male	460	53.9		Below 40,000	38	4.4
	Female	393	46.14		40,000 - 94,999	103	12

Age					95,000 - 1 49,999	171	20
	20 - 30 yrs	267	31.3		1 50,000 - 2 04,999	283	33.2
	31- 40 yrs	251	29.4		Above 2 05,000	258	30.2
	41- 50 yrs	171	20.1	**Family Life Cycle**			
	51- 60 yrs	122	14.3		Individual	213	25
	Above 60 yrs	42	4.9		Couple	212	24.8
Occupation					Couple with Children	428	50.2
	Govt. Job	111	13.0	**Education**			
	Private Job	330	38.7		Graduation	365	42.8
	Business	139	16.3		Post-graduation	449	52.6
	Student	128	15.0		Doctorate	18	2.1
	Housewife	119	14.0		Other	21	2.5
	Other	26	3.0				

Table 2 *Mean Ratings of WOM*

Socio-demographic variables	Mean	Socio-Demographic Variables	Mean
Gender		**Education**	
Male	4.57	Graduation	4.53
Female	4.58	Post-graduation	4.61
Age		Doctorate	4.59
20-30	4.63	Other	4.77
31-40	4.62	**Family Income**	
41-50	4.52	Below 40 000	4.51
51-60	4.49	40 000-94 999	4.53
Above 60 years	4.53	95 000-149 999	4.50
Occupation		1 50 000-2 04 999	4.58
Govt. Job	4.48	Above 2 05 000	4.67
Private Job	4.58	**Family Life Cycle**	
Business	4.59	Individual	4.66
Student	4.67	Couple	4.57
Housewife	4.55	Couple with children	4.55
Other	4.69		

Table 3 *Mean Ratings of e-WOM*

Socio-Demographic Variables	Mean	Socio-Demographic Variables	Mean
Gender		**Education**	
Male	4.24	Graduation	4.18
Female	4.17	Post-graduation	4.25
Age		Doctorate	4.24
20-30	4.43	Other	3.87
31-40	4.28	**Family Income**	
41-50	4.07	Below 40 000	4.18
51-60	3.93	40 000-94 999	4.04
Above 60 years	3.79	95 000-149 999	4.31
Occupation		1 50 000-2 04 999	4.15
Govt. Job	4.11	Above 2 05 000	4.29
Private Job	4.28	**Family Life Cycle**	
Business	4.16	Individual	4.38

Student	4.33	Couple	4.31
Housewife	4.08	Couple with children	4.07
Other	4.21		

4. Findings

To examine the WOM & e-WOM propensity, 1 to 5 point likert scale was used. The data analysis of the sample suggests that the propensity for WOM does not vary across any of the socio-demographic variables (Refer table 2). The significant difference in the mean values has been found for various age categories. The younger age groups 20-30 years have higher mean value (M=4.43); slight difference was found with 31-40 years age group with mean value of (M=4.30). In comparison to that older age groups: 41-50 years have (M=4.08) mean value, 51-60 years have (M=3.92) and above 60 years respondents have mean value of (M=3.72). This implicate that younger segment on the basis of age are more propensity for e-WOM. Although there was high tendency for e-WOM among all the occupational groups but students have higher mean value of (M=4.33) followed by private job (M=4.28), business (M=4.16), government job (M=4.11) and housewives and other occupation groups have lower mean value of (M=4.08 & M=4.01). Couple with children having (M=4.07) less propensity for e-WOM in comparison to individuals (M=4.38) and couples (M=4.31). In order to test the hypotheses – To test H1, the two way ANOVA were carried with demographic variables – gender, age, occupation, family income education and family life cycle as independent variable, WOM as dependent variable. Similarly, to test H2, e-WOM has been taken as independent variable. The detailed results on F statistic, partial eta squared, noncent parameter, observed power and significance has been shown in tables 4 and 5 respectively. The results revealed that the main effects in case of propensity for WOM are moderately significant for age (p=0.07) and family life cycle (p=0.06). There was a significant interaction between age groups across five destinations is (p=0.00) and moderate significant interaction between family life cycle across five destinations (p=0.08). Post hoc analyses using Tukey's HSD revealed that there were not any significant differences among age sub categories; for family life cycle: individuals differ from the couples having children for propensity of WOM. (Refer table 4). Thus results partially supports H1 b) and H1 f). The main effects in case of propensity for e-WOM are highly significant for age (p=0.00), occupation (p=0.01) and family life cycle (p=0.00). The interaction between socio-demographic variables across five destinations is significant for the same: for age (p=0.00), occupation (p=0.00) and family life cycle (p=0.00) (Refer table 5). Thus supporting H2 b), H2 c) and f). Further post-hoc analysis revealed that means of various sub categories of age and family life cycle were significantly different from each other i.e. age group 20-30 years (M= 4.43) & 31-40 years (M=4.30) were significantly different from age groups 41-50 (M=4.08), 51-60 (M= 3.92) and 60 & above (M= 3.72). Similarly, in case of family life cycle it is revealed that individuals differ from the couples with children in their propensity for e-WOM. The results revealed that the main effects in both the cases; propensity for WOM and e-WOM were significant for destinations (Refer Table 4 & 5).

Table 4 *Two Way ANOVA Results for Propensity for WOM based on Socio-Demographic Variables across Selected Destinations*

Dependent Variable: WOM

Source of Variation	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Gender	0.20	0.66	0.00	0.20	0.07
Destinations	25.90	0.00**	0.11	103.59	1.00
Gender * Destinations	0.50	0.74	0.00	1.99	0.17
Age	2.18	0.07	0.01	8.71	0.64
Destinations	19.46	0.00**	0.09	77.82	1.00
Age * Destinations	2.78	0.00**	0.05	44.48	1.00
Occupation	1.16	0.33	0.01	5.79	0.42
Destinations	14.28	0.00**	0.06	57.13	1.00
Occupation * Destinations	1.09	0.35	0.03	21.82	0.81
Family Income	0.26	0.90	0.00	1.04	0.11
Destinations	11.21	0.00**	0.05	44.85	1.00
Family Income * Destinations	1.01	0.44	0.02	15.17	0.67
Education	1.03	0.38	0.00	3.09	0.28
Destinations	2.55	0.04**	0.01	10.21	0.72
Education * Destinations	0.34	0.98	0.00	4.09	0.20
Family Life Cycle	2.86	0.06	0.01	5.71	0.56
Destinations	18.41	0.00**	0.08	73.62	1.00
Family Life Cycle * Destinations	1.77	0.08	0.02	14.14	0.77

***p-value is significant at 5percent level.*

Table 5 *Two Way ANOVA Results for Propensity for e-WOM based on Socio-Demographic Variables across Selected Destinations*
Dependent Variable: e-WOM

Source of Variation	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Gender	1.30	0.25	0.00	1.30	0.21
Destinations	19.34	0.00**	0.08	77.36	1.00
Gender * Destinations	0.79	0.53	0.00	3.17	0.26
Age	13.26	0.00**	0.06	53.05	1.00
Destinations	25.77	0.00**	0.11	103.08	1.00
Age * Destinations	5.73	0.00**	0.10	91.74	1.00
Occupation	2.90	0.01**	0.02	14.51	0.85
Destinations	15.75	0.00**	0.07	62.99	1.00
Occupation * Destinations	2.12	0.00**	0.05	42.49	0.99
Family Income	1.90	0.11	0.01	7.61	0.58
Destinations	9.09	0.00**	0.04	36.35	1.00
Family Income * Destinations	0.96	0.49	0.02	14.46	0.65
Education	0.69	0.56	0.00	2.07	0.20
Destinations	4.37	0.00**	0.02	17.49	0.93
Education * Destinations	0.74	0.72	0.01	8.83	0.44
Family Life Cycle	12.72	0.00**	0.03	25.43	1.00
Destinations	13.63	0.00**	0.06	54.52	1.00
Family Life Cycle * Destinations	3.47	0.00**	0.03	27.79	0.98

***p-value is significant at 5percent level.*

5. Discussion & Conclusion

The main objective of the current research was to investigate the impact of socio-demographic variables on the propensity for WOM & EWOM. The findings provide evidence that the domestic tourists have a high propensity for both WOM and e-WOM, albeit with a limited impact of socio-demographic variables. On the basis of mean ratings obtained for WOM, we have not found any significant difference on the basis of socio-demographic variables. In case of EWOM on the basis of mean ratings it was revealed that younger respondents have more propensity for e-WOM in comparison to older respondents. The reason for this might be that young population is more internet savvy. A slight difference in the mean values on the basis of occupation has been observed, where students (M=4.35) have higher propensity for e-WOM in contrast to other occupation groups. It can be again supported by the fact that that most of them belong to younger age group. There was a difference in the mean values of couple with children (M=4.07), individuals (M=4.38) and couples (M=4.31). It is noticed that that couple with children have less propensity for e-WOM in comparison to individuals and couples. Reason for this might be that couples with children are more involved in handling family. The study in particular tested the hypotheses that the propensity for WOM and e-WOM by leisure tourists' would vary on socio-demographic characteristics across five selected destinations. The two way ANOVA results for WOM propensity indicate that the main are moderately significant for age and family life cycle. There was a significant interaction between age groups across five destinations and moderate significant interaction between family life cycle groups across five destinations. The main effects in case of propensity for e-WOM are highly significant for age, occupation and family life cycle. Also, the interaction between socio-demographic variables across five destinations is significant for the same. Our results in general coincide with previous studies where they have investigated about the impact of the socio-demographic variables (Decrop, 2000; Tasci, 2007; Murphy et al., 2007; Kattiyapornpong & Miller, 2009). The current study was constrained by limitation: that sampling frame was limited to tourists visiting selected hill stations in India. It would be useful to repeat this research in other tourist locations to test some of the outcomes presented. In the previous studies the impact of socio-demographic variables has examined on travel behavior, destination image, destination choice etc. Here, we examined the impact of socio-demographic variables for propensity of WOM and e-WOM. The findings of the study are important in several ways: Firstly it makes a comparative analysis for WOM and e-WOM propensity in selected destinations. Though, major differences have been not found. Secondly, it focused on the under-researched area of exploring impact of socio-demographic variables on WOM and e-WOM propensity of domestic tourists in India. In conclusion, the present study is important, that it is meaningful for tourism marketers as they provide direction to the segment specific marketing approach and in designing suitable promotional strategies. The future research should direct attention to investigate the propensity for WOM and e-WOM on the basis of travel behavior, residency, technology, religion etc.

6. References

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