



Impact of Social Influence and Bandwagon Effect in Tourism Students: A Basis for an Action Plan

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Received: 28 Apr 2024; Received in revised form: 29 May 2024; Accepted: 09 Jun 2024; Available online: 17 Jun, 2024

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Abstract— *The researchers explored the influence of social factors, specifically social influence, and the bandwagon effect, on the travel choices of Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM) students. Utilizing a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design, a self-constructed survey was distributed to BSTM students from Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology. Stratified random sampling was employed, resulting in a sample size of 103 respondents. The study found that social media significantly influences the travel decisions of BSTM students, with many relying on travel-related content on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter for inspiration and information. The bandwagon effect also plays a pivotal role in their travel choices, with students often swayed by the popularity and trends associated with certain destinations. However, the study found no significant variations in the impact of social influence and the bandwagon effect across different academic years. Based on these findings, the study proposes a comprehensive action plan to address these influences through awareness campaigns, personalized counseling, stakeholder collaboration, digital education, continuous research, capacity-building initiatives, community engagement, and regular reviews for ongoing optimization.*



Keywords— *Social Influence, Bandwagon Effect, Travel Behavior, Tourism Management, Decision-making, Social Media.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the ever-changing environment of travel and tourism, understanding the elements that influence people's decisions has become critical, especially for students pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM). These students experience a variety of internal and external factors that influence their decision-making process when selecting travel destinations. Prior research has posited two primary factors affecting BSTM students' travel choices: social influence and the bandwagon effect.

Travel and tourism involve individuals visiting and staying in areas other than their typical environment for various reasons (Barten, 2023). Tourism offers students

a platform for growth beyond academic limits, increasing cultural awareness and practical skills (Sethi, 2023). The rise of the internet and social media has made information and communication technologies crucial in the tourism industry, influencing marketing campaigns, revenue growth, and client relationships. Information about tourist spots is often obtained from friends and online resources, with travelers relying heavily on social media reviews (Varga & Gabor, 2021). Social media has increased social visibility, influencing young travelers (Petrosyan, 2023). Youth travel, a fast-growing segment of international tourism, presents significant socioeconomic opportunities, boosting local tourism businesses and promoting sustainable tourism (UNWTO, 2016).

Social influence involves changes in an individual's behavior, ideas, or beliefs due to their network connections (Sweet & Adhikari, 2023). Social media enables individuals to learn about others' travel choices, influencing their preferences. The bandwagon effect, where people follow others' lead regardless of their own beliefs, also impacts decision-making (Investopedia Team & Kelly, 2023). Social media trends and the bandwagon effect can significantly shape individuals' decisions, fostering conformity and group alignment (Cherry, 2023; Shatz, n.d.; O'Connor & Clark, 2019).

Moreover, social influence, particularly through traveler reviews on social media, plays a significant role in the decision-making process for travel purchases (Book et al., 2015; Tanford & Montgomery, 2014). Practitioners are encouraged to engage actively on social media platforms to attract new customers (Liu et al., 2019). Understanding social influence can help individuals make informed decisions and avoid negative outcomes from peer pressure (Roguska, 2023). Hence, the bandwagon effect can overwhelm critical thinking, leading to decisions that may not benefit the individual (Levitan & Verhulst, 2016). Social media trends can amplify this effect, with people more likely to conform to popular opinions and actions (Cherry, 2023). Embracing trends can also foster social connections (O'Connor & Clark, 2019).

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study aims to contribute to the understanding of travel destination selection among Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM) students. Objectives include examining social influence and the bandwagon effect on their travel choices, identifying specific social factors affecting decisions, exploring peer influence and social media's role, and offering recommendations for stakeholders in the tourism industry

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to unveil the impacts of social influence and bandwagon effects on travel choices of Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM) students in Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology through comprehensive analysis.

Specifically, the researchers sought answers to the following questions:

1. How may the profile of BSTM students be described in terms of:

- 1.1 age;
- 1.2 gender;
- 1.3 year level; and
- 1.4 allowance.

2. How does the travel decision of BSTM students may be impacted by the following factors of social influences:

- 2.4 social media presence;
- 2.5 peer recommendations; and
- 2.6 travel ad campaigns.

3. How does the travel decision of BSTM students may be impacted by the following factors of bandwagon effects:

- 3.1 conspicuous consumption:
 - 3.1.1 luxury experiences;
 - 3.1.2 visible consumption; and
 - 3.1.3 social comparison.
- 3.2 consumer behavior:
 - 3.2.4 perception;
 - 3.2.5 motivation; and
 - 3.2.6 attitudes.

4. Is there a significant correlation between the profile of the BSTM students and their decision- making?

5. Is there significant difference between the psychological phenomenon factors on the BSTM students' travel decision when they are grouped according to year level?

6. Action plan will be proposed after analyzing impacts of social influence and bandwagon effect towards decision making

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design for the study "Impact of Social Influence and Bandwagon Effect in Tourism Students: A Basis for an Action Plan" utilizes quantitative methods, specifically descriptive research. This approach gathers quantifiable data from a sample of BSTM students to analyze the prevalence and nature of social influence and bandwagon effects in their travel decisions. Quantitative methods involve collecting numerical data through questionnaires, structured observations, or experiments and statistically analyzing

them to compare, aggregate, or demonstrate relationships among the data.

Population and Sample of the Study

The total sample size of this study is composed of 103, drawn from 20% of the total population of BSTM students from 1st year to 4th year, which is 516 at the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, Sumacab Campus, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija

Instrumentation

This study will use a survey method to collect data from BSTM students about their travel choices. The survey will consist of three parts: demographics, social influence factors, and bandwagon effect factors. It will use a Likert scale with a 4-point numerical scale to measure attitudes and opinions of the respondents.

Hypotheses of the Study

The study hypothesizes that H01, stating no significant correlation between BSTM students' profiles and their decision-making, will be evaluated against Ha1, suggesting a significant correlation. Additionally, H02, suggesting no significant difference in psychological phenomenon factors impacting travel decisions when grouped by year level, will be compared with Ha2, indicating a significant difference.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Profile of the Respondents

The survey conducted among 103 BSTM students reveals key aspects such as age, gender, year level, and monthly allowances, offering a comprehensive overview of the respondents.

Variables	f n=103	%
Age		
18 and below	13	13%
19-21 years old	72	70%
22-24 years old	18	17%
25 and above	0	0%
Gender		
Male	31	30%
Female	72	70%
Year Level		
1st year	39	38%
2nd year	28	27%
3rd year	20	19%
4th year	16	16%
Allowance		
0-1,500 pesos	13	13%
1,501-3,000 pesos	72	70%
3,001-4,500 pesos	18	17%
4,501+ pesos	0	0%

The profile of BSTM students offers valuable insights into their characteristics and background. A significant 70% of the respondents are aged between 19 and 21 years, which corresponds to the general age range of tertiary students in the Philippines. This age bracket reflects the common educational trajectory from high school to higher education. Additionally, there's a

pronounced gender imbalance among the respondents, with females comprising 70% and males 30%. Academically, most of the students are in their first and second years, constituting 38% and 27% respectively, while third and fourth-year students make up 19% and 16% respectively. Financially, 70% of the students receive a monthly allowance ranging from 1,501 to 3,000

pesos.

influence affecting the travel choices of Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management students at Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, by examining the roles of social media presence, peer recommendations, and travel ad campaigns.

2. Factors of Social Influence Affecting Travel Choices of BSTM Students

This part explores the factors of social

Statements	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
2.1. Social Media Presence		
The presence of travel-related content on social media platforms influences my travel decisions as a BSTM student.	3.05	Often
I consider travel recommendations from influencers or travel bloggers on social media when making travel decisions.	3.03	Often
When planning a trip, I am likely to seek inspiration or information from travel-related posts on social media platforms.	3.23	Often
I rely on reviews and comments on social media platforms to make decisions about travel destinations or activities as a BSTM student.	3.07	Often
I find myself influenced by the number of likes or shares on travel-related posts when considering travel options as a BSTM student.	2.78	Often
Weighted Mean	3.03	Often
2.2. Peer Recommendations		
Recommendations from friends or classmates influence my travel decisions.	3.09	Often
When planning a trip, I consider suggestions from peers who have visited similar destinations.	3.21	Often
I rely on personal experiences shared by friends or classmates when making travel plans.	3.27	Always
I trust recommendations from peers compared to other sources when deciding on travel destinations or activities.	3.00	Often
I consider my travel companion’s suggestion about a certain destination.	3.00	Often
Weighted Mean	3.11	Often
2.3. Travel Ad Campaigns		
Travel advertisements influence my travel decisions.	2.99	Often

When exposed to travel ad campaigns, I consider the advertised destinations or offers.	2.83	Often
I find myself researching or considering travel options after seeing an advertisement.	3.01	Often
I notice travel advertisements while browsing online or watching TV.	3.03	Often
I recall specific travel destinations or deals advertised in campaigns.	2.91	Often
Weighted Mean	2.95	Often
General Weighted Mean	3.03	Often

Legend: 3.25 – 4.00 Always; 2.50 – 3.24 Often; 1.75 – 2.49 Rarely; and 1.00 – 1.74 Never

The survey results indicate that social media presence significantly influences travel decisions among BSTM students, with a weighted mean of 3.03, indicating that these platforms play a crucial role in their travel planning. Students often rely on travel-related content, recommendations from influencers or travel bloggers, and reviews/comments to gather inspiration and make decisions about destinations and activities. However, the influence of likes or shares on travel posts is slightly lower, suggesting that engagement metrics have a less pronounced impact. Peer recommendations also carry substantial weight (weighted mean of 3.11), with students frequently considering suggestions from friends, classmates, and travel companions. They place a high level of trust in personal experiences and prefer peer recommendations over other sources. In contrast, travel ad campaigns have a moderate influence (weighted mean of 2.95), where students often notice and consider travel advertisements but do not rely on them as heavily as social media or peer recommendations. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of social connections and digital platforms in shaping travel decisions among BSTM students, reflecting a blend of personal

experiences, social influence, and exposure to advertising.

Studies show that social influence significantly impacts travelers' choices, especially through social media and networks. Comments, reviews, and recommendations online affect tourist destination choices and other travel decisions, such as routes, departure times, transportation modes, and activities. Social network members' shared information influences travelers both before and during trips, emphasizing social influence in consumer marketing. Additionally, social influence affects decisions like choosing green resorts and engaging in eco- friendly behaviors (Tanford & Montgomery, 2014; Asvikaa & Gupta, 2018; Sedera et al., 2017; Acain, 2022; Sanders & Geerts, 2019).

3. Factors of Bandwagon Effect Affecting Travel Choices of BSTM Students

This part delves into the factors of the bandwagon effect influencing the travel choices of Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management students at Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, by analyzing the impact of conspicuous consumption and consumer behavior on their travel decisions.

Statements	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
3.1. Conspicuous Consumption		
3.1.1. Luxury Experiences		
My travel decisions are influenced by the availability of luxury experiences.	2.35	Rarely
I prioritize luxury travel experiences when planning my trips.	2.24	Rarely
Luxury offerings play a role in my choice of destination regularly.	2.28	Rarely

The allure of luxury accommodations or activities impacts my travel choices.	2.49	Rarely
I consider luxury experiences as a deciding factor in my travel plans.	2.34	Rarely
Weighted Mean	2.34	Rarely
3.1.2. Visible Consumption		
I consider how my travel choices will be perceived by others.	2.70	Often
My travel decisions are influenced by the potential to showcase them on social media.	2.89	Often
I select travel destinations or activities with the intention of creating visually appealing content regularly.	2.87	Often
I share my travel experiences on social media platforms.	3.01	Often
I prioritize visually appealing destinations or activities when planning my travels.	3.08	Often
Weighted Mean	2.91	Often
3.1.3. Social Comparison		
I find myself comparing my travel experiences to those of my peers or influencers.	2.70	Often
I'm influenced by the travel experiences shared by others on social media platforms.	2.92	Often
I regularly adjust my travel plans based on what I perceive to be the norm among my peers or social circles.	2.77	Often
I seek out destinations or activities that align with popular trends among my social circles.	2.83	Often
I consider the travel experiences of others before making my own travel plans.	2.84	Often
Weighted Mean	2.81	Often
3.2. Consumer Behavior		
3.2.1. Perception		
My perceptions of a destination's popularity influence my interest in visiting it.	3.09	Often
My travel decisions are influenced by my perception of a destination's appeal.	3.02	Often
I rely on the perceptions of others regularly when forming opinions about travel destinations or activities.	2.99	Often
I consider the popularity of a destination before making my travel plans.	3.12	Often

I seek out information about popular travel destinations or experiences.	3.04	Often
Weighted Mean	3.05	Often
3.2.2. Motivation		
I find myself comparing my travel experiences to those of my peers or influencers.	3.33	Always
I'm influenced by the travel experiences shared by others on social media platforms.	3.13	Often
I regularly adjust my travel plans based on what I perceive to be the norm among my peers or social circles.	2.96	Often
I seek out destinations or activities that align with popular trends among my social circles.	3.16	Often
I consider the travel experiences of others before making my own travel plans.	3.25	Often
Weighted Mean	3.17	Often
3.2.3. Attitudes		
My attitudes towards travel trends or popular destinations impact my decision-making process.	3.01	Often
I believe that following travel trends enhances my overall travel experiences.	2.95	Often
I regularly adjust my travel plans based on changes in my attitudes towards certain destinations or experiences.	2.76	Often
I consider the opinions and attitudes of others when making my travel plans.	2.98	Often
I reassess my attitudes towards travel in light of new experiences or information.	2.84	Often
Weighted Mean	2.91	Often
General Weighted Mean	2.86	Often

Legend: 3.25 – 4.00 Always; 2.50 – 3.24 Often; 1.75 – 2.49 Rarely; and 1.00 – 1.74 Never

The survey results illustrate that while luxury experiences rarely influence travel decisions among BSTM students (weighted mean of 2.34), visible consumption (weighted mean of 2.91) and social comparison (weighted mean of 2.81) play significant roles. Students frequently prioritize visually appealing destinations and showcase their travel experiences on social media, reflecting a desire for perceived status and social validation. They often compare their travel experiences with peers and influencers, adjusting their plans to align with perceived social norms and popular

trends. Additionally, students are motivated by the popularity and appeal of destinations, seeking out information about popular travel spots and reassessing their travel attitudes based on new experiences. These findings suggest that social and peer influences, as well as the desire for social recognition and conformity, strongly shape the travel decisions and behaviors of BSTM students, highlighting opportunities for marketers and educators to engage with this demographic through targeted strategies that emphasize social and visual appeal.

Studies show that the bandwagon effect significantly influences travel decisions in tourism. Social influence shapes vacation and destination choices, with individuals often swayed by others' behaviors in their region. This effect is especially strong among non-travelers from the previous year, leading them to choose popular destinations or activities based on others' choices rather than personal preferences (Oan-Oon & Choibamroong, 2024; Garcia & Pino, 2022; Cherry,

2023; Munauwar, 2020).

4. Correlation between BSTM Students' Profile and Decision-Making

This part aimed to uncover relationships between the profile characteristics of BSTM students and their decision-making capabilities throughout the findings.

Profile	rs	N	DF	T statistics	P-value	Decision
Age	0.06	103	101	0.59	0.55	No correlation

Gender	-0.07	103	101	-0.73	0.47	No correlation
Year Level	0.17	103	101	1.77	0.08	No correlation
Allowance	0.02	103	101	0.22	0.83	No correlation

The study aimed to identify correlations between the profile of BSTM students and their decision-making capabilities. The analysis indicated a weak positive correlation between age and decision-making, suggesting that age might not be a primary determinant in evaluating decision-making skills among BSTM students. Gender exhibited an extremely weak negative correlation with decision-making, implying that other variables might have a stronger influence on decision-making abilities in this demographic. Additionally, year level showed a weak positive correlation, indicating that academic progression might play a role in shaping decision-making abilities among BSTM students. Moreover, the study found an almost negligible positive correlation between the monthly allowance of BSTM students and their decision-making capabilities in which suggests that the allowance amount does not significantly influence the decision-making skills of BSTM students.

5. Differences in Psychological Phenomenon Factors Across Academic Years

This part analyzes two key psychological phenomena: Social Influence and the Bandwagon Effect, assessing their impact on travel decisions and exploring potential variations based on students' academic progression.

The study explored if there were significant differences in the psychological phenomenon factors influencing the travel decisions of BSTM students across different academic years. The analysis revealed no significant variations in the Social Influence and Bandwagon Effect factors across the different year levels. This suggests a consistent pattern of influence on travel decisions among BSTM students throughout their academic journey.

Social Influence							
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	F crit	P-value	Decision
Between Groups	0.32	3	0.11	0.65	2.70	0.58	Accept null hypothesis
Within Groups	16.01	99	0.16				
Total	16.33	102					
Bandwagon Effect							
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	F crit	P-value	Decision

Between Groups	0.69	3	0.23	2.01	2.70	0.12	Accept null hypothesis
Within Groups	11.34	99	0.11				
Total	12.03	102					

6. Proposed action plan

In response to the identified concerns regarding the influence of social media and bandwagon effects on the travel decisions of BSTM students, a comprehensive action plan has been formulated.

Action Steps	Connection to Problem Statement	Person / Industry Involved	Expected Outcome	Time Frame
Conduct Awareness Campaigns	Many BSTM students may not fully comprehend the influence of social media and bandwagon effects on their travel choices.	Tourism department, Student organizations	Increased awareness among BSTM students about the impact of social influence and bandwagon effects on their travel decisions.	1-2 months
Provide Personalized Counseling	Individual counseling sessions can help students understand how social influence and bandwagon effects affect their decision-making.	Counselors, Academic advisors	Improved decision-making skills among BSTM students, leading to more informed travel choices.	1-2 months
Collaborate with Stakeholders	Engaging with tourism industry stakeholders can provide insights into current trends and practices in destination marketing.	Tourism industry representatives, Local businesses	Enhanced collaboration between academia and industry, leading to more relevant and updated information for BSTM students.	1-2 months
Implement Digital Education	Incorporating digital literacy modules into the curriculum can empower students to critically evaluate information on social media.	Faculty members, IT department	Improved digital literacy skills among BSTM students, enabling them to discern reliable travel information from social media.	1-2 months
Conduct Continuous Research	Ongoing research initiatives can provide valuable data on evolving travel trends and preferences among BSTM students.	Research department, Faculty members	Updated insights into the changing travel behavior of BSTM students, enabling proactive adjustments in educational strategies and industry practices.	Ongoing
Facilitate Community Engagement	Engaging students in community projects related to tourism can provide hands-on experience and deeper understanding of travel impacts.	Local community organizations, NGOs	Increased awareness of the social and environmental impacts of travel among BSTM students, fostering responsible tourism practices.	Ongoing
Conduct Regular Reviews for Ongoing Optimization	Periodic evaluations of the action plan will allow for adjustments and improvements based on feedback and outcomes.	Evaluation committee, Faculty members	Continuous improvement and refinement of strategies to address the influence of social media and bandwagon effects on travel choices among BSTM students.	Bi-annual

The proposed action plan addresses concerns regarding the influence of social media and bandwagon effects on the travel decisions of Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM) students. It outlines specific steps aimed at increasing awareness, improving decision-making skills, fostering collaboration with industry stakeholders, enhancing digital literacy, conducting research, facilitating community engagement, and implementing regular reviews for ongoing optimization. By engaging relevant stakeholders and implementing targeted

initiatives, such as awareness campaigns, personalized counseling, collaboration with industry stakeholders, digital education, continuous research, community engagement, and regular reviews, the plan aims to equip BSTM students with the necessary skills and knowledge to make informed and responsible travel decisions. Moreover, this action plan seeks to enhance the educational experience and empower BSTM students for meaningful engagement in the tourism sector while promoting sustainability and responsible tourism practices.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study titled “Impact of Social Influence and Bandwagon Effect in Tourism Students: A Basis for an Action Plan” finds that BSTM students are influenced by social media, peer recommendations, and a desire for relatable travel experiences. Key conclusions include the importance of budget-friendly yet quality travel options, the need for robust social media presence by travel companies, and tailored marketing strategies based on demographic factors and year levels. The proposed action plan suggests enhancing social media engagement and leveraging peer influence, with specific strategies for different student year levels to ensure relevance and effectiveness in travel planning.

Recommendation

Based on the study's findings, recommendations include:

1. Closer collaboration between communities and educational institutions to develop tourism experiences reflecting BSTM students' cultural identity;
2. Educational institutions should integrate the study's findings into curriculum development and provide faculty training on contemporary tourism trends;
3. BSTM students can use the insights for informed travel decisions and seek industry opportunities for practical learning;
4. Researchers are encouraged to conduct further studies on social influence and bandwagon effects in tourism, considering sustainability and cultural variations, and;
5. Engaging in interdisciplinary approaches for a comprehensive understanding of global tourism dynamics.

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