

VIŠJA STROKOVNA ŠOLA ACADEMIA

MARIBOR

Impact of social media on transformation of workplace in travel agencies

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GRATITUDE/THANKS

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SUMMARY

Social media is a platform where people can create and share their own content. Having this in mind, I saw it necessary to investigate whether employees have noticed the effect of the constant increase in social media usage, thus bringing noticeable transformation to their workplace.

In recent times social media has become one of the most important parts of people's lives. Its influence has reached beyond personal lives - into business lives too. With access to social media people in workplace can establish relationships and develop deep bonds with their colleagues – that was not possible or as easy as before. It enables the employees to communicate and get to know each other beyond their professional lives. This can go on to enhance their experience at work with better socialization at work, mutual understanding among colleagues, coordination etc. So, in this research I am trying to examine the impact of social media on the workplace transformation. This thesis report focuses on the relation between social media and workplace transformation, thus determining social media impacts. The country I have chosen to perform the research in is Nepal because tourism is being one of the main sources of income; Nepal is known as a tourist country.

Two travel agencies, for which I believe are the two companies with the biggest social media impact on their work environment, are taken as a reference. According to the first company of those two, Far Out Nepal, social media contributes to the business strategies of the company. Travel agencies in Nepal uses Facebook, Instagram, Google+, YouTube, WhatsApp and other similar social media sites as a means for networking and to connect with customers via posting posts or new content on the home page. Social media in travel agencies can be used in various impactful way with the goal of a successful, steady growth and promotion of the company. It has been prepared on the basis of research data collected through survey questionnaire during October – November 2021. Practical data were collected from 28 respondents who works in travel agencies, located, located in Kathmandu. The questionnaire contains sixteen statements and three demographic questions. It was sent to travel agencies through google forms. Based on the results of this research, this thesis report presents conclusion and implication.

Key words: *Social media, Travel agency, Transformation, Strategy, Workplace, Tourism, Impact, Far Out Nepal*

POVZETEK

Vpliv družbenih medijev na preoblikovanje delovnega mesta v potovalnih agencijah

Družbeni mediji so platforma, na kateri lahko ljudje ustvarjajo in delijo svojo vsebino. Glede na to se mi je zdelo potrebno raziskati, ali so zaposleni opazili učinek nenehnega naraščanja uporabe družbenih medijev, zaradi česar se je njihovo delovno mesto opazno spremenilo.

V zadnjem času so družbeni mediji postali eden najpomembnejših delov življenja ljudi. Njihov vpliv je presegel meje osebnega življenja - segel je tudi v poslovno življenje. Z dostopom do družbenih medijev lahko ljudje na delovnem mestu vzpostavljajo odnose in razvijajo globoke vezi s sodelavci - kar prej ni bilo mogoče ali tako enostavno. Zaposlenim omogoča, da komunicirajo in se spoznavaajo tudi zunaj svojega poklicnega življenja. To lahko izboljša njihovo izkušnjo na delovnem mestu z boljšim druženjem na delovnem mestu, medsebojnim razumevanjem med sodelavci, usklajevanjem itd. V tej raziskavi torej poskušam preučiti vpliv družbenih medijev na preoblikovanje delovnega mesta. To diplomsko poročilo se osredotoča na povezavo med družbenimi mediji in preobrazbo delovnega mesta ter tako določa vplive družbenih medijev. Država, ki sem jo izbrala za izvedbo raziskave, je Nepal, saj je turizem eden glavnih virov dohodka; Nepal je znan kot turistična država.

Za raziskovalni skupini sem vzela dve turistični agenciji, za kateri menim, da sta podjetji z največjim vplivom družbenih medijev na njuno delovno okolje. Po mnenju prvega od teh dveh podjetij, Far Out Nepal, družbeni mediji prispevajo k poslovnim strategijam podjetja. Potovalne agencije v Nepal uprabljajo Facebook, Instagram, Google+, YouTube, WhatsApp in druga podobna družbena omrežja kot sredstvo za mreženje in povezovanje s strankami prek objavljanja ali drugih novih vsebin na domači strani. Družbeni mediji v potovalnih agencijah se lahko uporabljajo na različne učinkovite načine s ciljem uspešne, stalne rasti in promocije podjetja. Poročilo je bilo pripravljeno na podlagi raziskovalnih podatkov, zbranih z anketnim vprašalnikom v obdobju oktober-november 2021. Praktični podatki so bili zbrani od 28 anketirancev, ki delajo v potovalnih agencijah, ki se nahajajo, v Katmanduju. Vprašalnik vsebuje šestnajst trditev in tri demografska vprašanja. Potovalnim agencijam je bil poslan prek google obrazcev. Na podlagi rezultatov te raziskave so v tem diplomskem poročilu predstavljeni sklepi in implikacije.

Ključne besede: Družbeni mediji, potovalna agencija, preobrazba, strategija, Delovno mesto, Turizem, Far Out Nepal

Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA AND DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM	2
1.2	PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND BASIC CLAIMS	3
1.3	ASSUMPTION AND RESTRICTIONS	3
1.4	USED RESEARCH METHODS	4
2	TRAVEL AGENCIES IN NEPAL.....	5
2.1	HOW DOES TRAVEL AGENCIES WORK?	11
2.2	IMPORTANCE OF TRAVEL AGENCIES IN NEPAL	12
2.3	SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN TRAVEL AGENCIES OF NEPAL	13
2.3.1	<i>To become a brand.....</i>	<i>13</i>
2.3.2	<i>To offer the deals</i>	<i>13</i>
2.3.3	<i>To show their expertise</i>	<i>14</i>
2.3.4	<i>Providing choices on travel components</i>	<i>14</i>
2.3.5	<i>To promote tourism.....</i>	<i>15</i>
2.3.6	<i>To Generate the lead.....</i>	<i>15</i>
2.3.7	<i>To maintain relationship with customer</i>	<i>16</i>
2.4	WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA DO OUR TRAVEL AGENCIES USE?	16
2.5	FAR OUT NEPAL	17
2.5.1	<i>Business strategy of Far out Nepal.....</i>	<i>18</i>
2.5.2	<i>Social media impact on transformation in far Out Nepal.....</i>	<i>19</i>
2.5.3	<i>Relationship between social media and work performance in Far out Nepal.....</i>	<i>19</i>
2.6	SNOWYODA.....	20
2.6.1	<i>Business strategies of SnowYoda.....</i>	<i>21</i>
2.6.2	<i>Social media impact on transformation in SnowYoda.....</i>	<i>21</i>
2.6.3	<i>Relationship between social media and work performance in SnowYoda.....</i>	<i>22</i>
3	RESULT AND DISCUSSION	23
3.1	DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE RESPONDENTS	23
3.1.1	<i>Age Group working in the organization.</i>	<i>23</i>
3.1.2	<i>Number of employees in the organization.</i>	<i>25</i>
3.2	DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ON FIRST OBJECTIVE	26
3.3	DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ON SECOND OBJECTIVE.....	28
3.4	DISCUSSION	31
4	CONCLUSION.....	32
6	ATTACHMENTS.....	37

Table of graphs

GRAPH 1 AGE GROUP	24
GRAPH 2 NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	26
GRAPH 3 FIRST OBJECTIVE RESPONDENTS	28
GRAPH 4 SECOND OBJECTIVE RESPONDENTS	30

Table of figures

TABLE 1 AGE GROUP.....	23
TABLE 2 NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES.....	25
TABLE 3 NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES.....	25
TABLE 4 FIRST OBJECTIVE RESPONDENTS.....	27
TABLE 5 SECOND OBJECTIVE RESPONDENTS.....	29

Table of Pictures

PICTURE 1: PASHUPATINATH TEMPLE.....	6
PICTURE 2: BOUDHANATH STUPA	6
PICTURE 3: SWAYAMBHUNATH STUPA	7
PICTURE 4: CHANGUNARAYAN TEMPLE	7
PICTURE 5: KATHMANDU DURBAR SQUARE	8
PICTURE 6: PATAN DURBAR SQUARE.....	9
PICTURE 7: BHAKTAPUR DURBAR SQUARE.....	9
PICTURE 8: LUMBINI.....	10
PICTURE 9: CHITWAN NATIONAL PARK	10
PICTURE 10: SAGARMATHA NATIONAL PARK	11

List of Abbreviation

KTM - Kathmandu

TAAN - Treking association of Nepal

NMA - Nepal mountainneering Association

SA - strongly agree

A - Agree

N - Neutral

D - Disagree

SD - Strongly Disagree

1 INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

According to Macintosh and Goldner “Tourism is a collection of activities, services and industries which deliver a travel experience comprising transportation, accommodation, eating and drinking establishments, retail shops, entertainment business and other hospitality services provided for individuals or groups travelling away from home. Tourism industry is the largest industry in Nepal. It is the largest source of foreign exchange and revenue. Possessing 8 of the 10 highest mountains of the world, Nepal is a hotspot destination for mountaineers, rock climbers and people seeking adventures. The heritage of Nepal is also a strong attraction. Tourism in Nepal, despite having a long history has really started to appear since 1950. Nepal celebrated “Visit Nepal 98” which brought overwhelming numbers of tourist. After 2006 tourism industry slowly started blooming.

Social Media

Social media has been integrated into a part of social and economic life as one of the most powerful online networking tools in today’s world. Its use as the means of marketing travel related services has also increased unprecedentedly in the recent times. Social media helps people to create their contents. Social media has also allowed people to distribute their own content and information. Social media allows the user to comment and give or receive feedback instantly. Social media has benefits which attracts travel agency to make use of social media. It has offered new ways to service provider and the consumers of travel business to connect socially, by integrating information, technology, social interaction and construction of words, picture, videos and audios. Social media is a strong asset for taking tourism and hospitality industry forward in any country. (Sthapit, 2015)

Travel Agency

A travel agency refers to the private or public service that provides travel and tourism related services to the traveller such as airlines, activities, car rentals, hotels, travel insurance and package tours. In addition to dealing with ordinary tourists most travel agencies have a separate department devoted to planning for business travellers and some travel agencies specialize in commercial and business travel only.

Transformation in workplace

It is the method of rethinking and improving workforce skills and abilities to keep up with the constant changes happening in the business strategies due to the environment around. It is all about creating a flexible space for the employees that helps in giving everyone the equal and fair amount of experience. It is a productivity gain for both business and public sector. Organizations need work force in huge amount especially in this changing environment. They can't just keep on hiring new recruits, instead the company can upskill their existing employees. It is more about expanding the capabilities of the people in the workplace. Rethinking about the jobs is necessary too like to eliminate some positions, combine some positions, add some positions, designing the workflow. Transformation in workplace is must for sustainability of business. It is required in order to become relevant. As the world where we are working changes, we need to change the way of working. There are three drivers for the transformation in workplace. They are: Engagement, collaboration and optimization.

1.1 Description of the area and definition of the problem

Kathmandu is the capital of Nepal and the largest metropolitan city. The city is the urban core of the Kathmandu Valley in the Himalayas, which also contains two sister cities namely Patan/Lalitpur, 5 kilometers to its southeast and Bhaktapur, 14 kilometers to its east. It is also acronymed as 'KTM'. The city stands at an elevation of approximately 1,400 meters (4,600 ft) in the bowl-shaped valley in central Nepal surrounded by four mountain ranges namely: Shivapuri, Phulchowki, Nagarjun, and Chandragiri. The Kathmandu valley with its three districts including Kathmandu District accounts for a population density of only 97 per square kilometers. Kathmandu is the capital city of Nepal with the most advanced infrastructure among urban areas in Nepal, Kathmandu's economy is tourist-centric and accounts for 3.8% of the GDP. Kathmandu was named after a structure in Durbar Square called Kasthanamandap. This research work is indeed an area worthy of study considering the huge importance of travel agencies for the nation's economic recovery, growth, competitiveness, and performance. The ability of travel agencies to creatively and strategically manage and overcome challenges is still an issue of discussion. Many researches have been conducted on the impacts of social media impact on workplace transformation but the main aim of this particular research is to find the factors that influence the social media and its subsequent influence in workplace for the

transformation, particularly in travel agencies. This research was done to find out the reason for the social media in relation to transformation in workplace in travel agencies in Kathmandu.

1.2 Purpose, objectives and basic claims

Objectives of the study

To determine the impact of social media on transformation in workplace in travel agencies.

To examine the relationship between social media and work performance of travel agencies.

Research questions

Which factors determines the transformation in the workplace of travel agencies due to social media?

What is the relationship between social media and work performance in travel agencies?

Is there an impact of social media usage on transformation of workplace in travel agencies?

Hypothesis of the study

H1: There is a positive relationship between social media usage and changes in business strategies in travel agencies.

H2: The use of social media reducing overall costs in the travel agencies.

H3: There is a positive relation between social media and employee satisfaction in travel agencies.

H4: There is a positive impact of social media in rapid adaptation in travel agencies.

1.3 Assumption and restrictions

This research benefits the management of companies involved in the tourism industry which helps to find out the various factors that result in the effective company performance of travel agencies in Kathmandu. This research helps to find out the relation between social media and transformation in the workplace. Moreover, this research will be useful for future researchers who will conduct research on related topics. Every research has certain restrictions while conducting it. This research also has some of the limitations which are listed below:

- This research is only based in Kathmandu so that it may not cover other areas.
- Time limits may not be sufficient to collect genuine data in a short period of time.
- The sample data taken may not be good enough for the conclusion.
- Due to the busy schedule of the participant, they may not answer the question properly.

1.4 Used research methods

This study is focused on the upliftment of the travel agencies of Nepal. The method used for the research was a descriptive and explanatory design to explain the relation between social media and transformation in the workplace. The target population for this study was the travel agencies located in Kathmandu. For this study, survey methods were used. A sample of 28 respondents was selected for the purpose of this study. Questionnaire method was used to collect data. A 16 questions, self-administered questionnaire in English language, was developed into 3 sections. Among the first section, 3 questions are intended to collect the respondent's demographic information, while 13 opinion statements in the remaining sections are used to collect the respondent's views on a 5 rating scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. This research employed both primary and secondary data. However, the analysis part only included the primary data, and secondary data were used for other parts. Secondary data for this research was collected through different sources such as: Textbooks: the books related to the research topic were referred for secondary data. Internet: As internet is the huge source of secondary data. Many data and websites related to the research topic were searched and online journals were also referred, related social works: The research reports and articles of several researchers have been used as references in this research. It will help us to get answers to the questions we have raised in this research and to check if the hypothesis we have created are correct or not. So, for analysis of primary data, simple comparison technique is performed as it comes under qualitative technique of analysis.

2 TRAVEL AGENCIES IN NEPAL

Nepal is a landlocked country surrounded by China in the north and India in the east, south and west. Nepal is a developing country; being one of the countries which is rich in its natural resources, attracts many tourists. Nepal's diversity of land from the highest peak of Himalayas to the hot, steamy grassland of Terai is one of a kind in this world. There is lot in this kingdom to explore; for example temples, pagodas, stupas, lush jungles, rolling hills, frozen Himalayas, broad valleys, and may more. Nepal can be the best choice for those people who like adventure. There are lots of things you can do like, hiking, trekking, bungy jump, swing, zipline, rafting, paragliding, jungle safari. Not only adventures, but tourists can enjoy different kinds of food, cultures, lifestyles, religions etc. Nepal is rich in its culture; this country has cultural diversity. Nepal is a small country, but this country is shared by 4 castes and thirty-six sub-castes (also known as ethnic groups). As culture differs language, rituals, foods, language, belief also differs, if not drastically, slightly. So, tourist can experience different kinds of cultural ways of living. Nepal is diverse in terms of land, caste and religion, but the people live in harmony, celebrating and accepting each other's way of living. This is why multi-dimensional heritage can be seen in Nepal. There are numerous festivals celebrated. 8 out of 10 of the highest mountains are located in Nepal, such as Everest, Kanchenjunga, Lhotse, Makalu, Cho Oyu, Dhaulagiri, Manaslu, and Annapurna. Nepal celebrates unity in diversity. (Duarte, 2019)

So, there are lots of travel agencies located in Nepal for helping travelers make their journey pleasant. There are more than 400 travel agencies in Nepal. The purpose of travel agencies is to act as an agent to sell products and services on behalf of the suppliers and also to make easier for the travelers in context of where to visit, what to see, transportation, food and lodging, insurance etc. Travel agencies take commissions in percentages from the overall fee a consumer pays, and commissions vary from one service/product to another. There are three different kind of business model to distinguish one another; independent, multiple, and miniple. Independent travel agency is the company which has no other branches and is not associated with any other travel agencies or companies; these kind of travel agencies doesn't necessarily have to have a physical travel agency. Multiple travel agencies are the large organizations having a chain of branches. Miniple travel agency is the company which has several branches, which is a mid-sized organization. In Nepal, you can find travel agencies giving services from budget-friendly travel packages to luxurious travel packages. (Barefoot, 2010)

Nepal consist of 10 world heritage sites listed by UNESCO. Those are:

Pashupatinath Temple

Pashupatinath temple is one of the most sacred old temple of lord Shiva. The compound has Main temple which is surrounded by other small temples, ashrams and sculptures. Bagmati river flows bordering the east. It was listed as world heritage site in 1979 by UNESCO.



Picture 1: Pashupatinath Temple

Source: (<https://thehimalayantimes.com/kathmandu/pashupatinath-temple-to-open-tomorrow>)

Boudhanath Stupa

Boudhanath stupa is the holy place for Buddhists. It is the largest stupa in the world. The stupa was built by Licchavi king in the 5th century. Boudhanath stupa is surrounded by 40 monasteries nearby.



Picture 2: Boudhanath Stupa

Source: (<https://www.exoticmiles.com/kathmandu/boudhanath-stupa/>)

Swayambhunath Stupa

The origin of this stupa is tied to the origin of Kathmandu valley itself. It is one of the oldest monuments in Nepal. The surrounding of the swayambhunath stupa has a mixture of Hindu shrines and Buddhist stupas. It is also famous as a monkey temple.



Picture 3: Swayambhunath Stupa

Source: (<http://www.mytripnepal.com/trip/swayambhunath/>)

Changunarayan Temple

Changu Narayan Temple is the temple of Lord Vishnu. This temple is located at the top of a hill named Changu and is surrounded by forest. It was built in 464 AD. It is also one of the oldest temples in Nepal.



Picture 4: Changu Narayan Temple

Source: (<https://mandalas.life/2017/oldest-hindu-temple-changu-narayan/>)

Kathmandu Durbar Square

The Kathmandu Durbar Square is one of the three durbar squares located in Kathmandu. The main palace was constructed in the 15th century. It is also called as Hanuman Dhoka Palace. Kathmandu Durbar Square was the courtyard of Malla and Shah, and a Royal palace surrounded with temples and shrines.



Picture 5: Kathmandu Durbar Square

Source: (<https://www.greattibettour.com/kathmandu-durbar-square>)

Patan Durbar Square

Patan Durbar Square is the old palace of the Lalitpur kingdom. In the 3rd century emperor Ashoka built parts of the square. It consists of Buddhist monuments as well as Hindu temples around it.



Picture 6: Patan Durbar Square

Source: (<https://pristinenepl.com/patan-durbar-square/>)

Bhaktapur Durbar Square

It is the combination of four squares named Taumadhi square, pottery square, Dattatreya square, and Durbar square. It is located in Bhaktapur district.



Picture 7: Bhaktapur Durbar Square

Source: (<https://pixels.com/featured/bhaktapur-durbar-square-in-kathmandu-valley-nepal-ivan-batinic.html>)

Lumbini

Lumbini was listed in 1997 as a world heritage site by UNESCO. It is a religious pilgrimage which is located in the Terai region. Lumbini is the birth place of Gautam Buddha, whose teaching was spread all over the world as Buddhism. It is the most important and religious place for Buddhists.



Picture 8: Lumbini

Source: (<https://www.nepalhikingteam.com/lumbini-birthplace-lord-buddha/>)

Chitwan National Park

Chitwan National Park is the first National park in Nepal. It is home to 700 species of wildlife. The land occupied by this national park is 952 square kilometers. It is in Chitwan.



Picture 9: Chitwan National Park

Source: (<https://visithimalayastrek.com/chitwan-national-park-tour/>)

Sagarmatha National Park

Sagarmatha national park is the home for diverse flora and fauna. The region is surrounded by different glaciers, valleys, rivers and mountains including worlds highest mountain Everest. This is a very famous trekking route as well.



Picture 10:Sagarmatha National Park

Source: (<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/24769866676535446/>)

These are also the main attractions for tourists. Seven of the heritage sites among the ten are within 5km range. Travel agencies make it easier for the clients to explore these places and provide information regarding these places.

2.1 How does travel agencies work?

First of all, travel agencies need to get approval from the government for opening the company. After getting approval, they can open a travel agency. The company makes itinerary, plans, packages. Budgeting is done for each program and package. Company then makes a website or social media networks through which they can connect with clients. Clients can see the packages, programs travel agency is offering through the websites or any social media page; they can also contact the company and get information about the programs they offer. When a client makes their mind up about what service they want to choose, the payment is done and then clients go to their destination and enjoy their time. Clients can choose between two packages semi and full. Semi package price includes tours and programs but not food and lodging, whereas full packages include everything. Travel agencies help people to choose and

arrange the holidays/travel plans. Travel agencies have their offices where the clients can go and get the information about the destination place and packages. Travel agencies also have their websites where clients can choose the destination, program, packages etc. While budgeting, the service charge is already included in packages. So, when clients arrive at the destination, travel agency employees - tour leaders or guides, arrange everything. At the airport, the member/employee of the travel agency will welcome the tourists to the country and then drive them to the hotel, where everything is already arranged for the visitors. Later, according to the package they have chosen, the travel agent will take care of everything they have paid for. It makes traveling in an unknown location much easier. (Stainton, 2021)

2.2 Importance of travel agencies in Nepal

Travel agency is one of the important factors in tourism industry. As we all know Nepal is a tourist country. Huge numbers of tourists come to Nepal every year. People come to experience the beauty of nature, adventurous sports etc. But the route could be difficult and dangerous if one did not have all the information needed. So, travel agencies in Nepal ensure the safety of their clients. When in Nepal, if anyone goes for the trekking without a travel agency, it may endanger their safety and in worst case, even their life. There may arise different accidents due to altitude sickness, difficult routes etc. So, a travel agency gives its clients a feeling of safety. They guarantee their clients a state of comfort, health and happiness and always keep their needs first. In Nepal you need to have a license to be a guide for trekking. This shows how important it is to have a guide with the clients for them to get the best experience. Travel agencies will provide their clients with a guide and they can lead treks or tours. They will have all the knowledge required and bring the best to the table. They will take care of all itinerary items. They will make the journey pleasant for the travelers.. The language of Nepal is different; it can also be a barrier for lots of things. Accommodation is one of the problems travelers may face in Nepal, as it is not that easy to find a satisfying accommodation or in some cases accommodation at all. Travel agencies have access to the best accommodations in Nepal. Travel agencies give travelers many options on how they want to have an experience, such as, trekking, rafting, bungee jumping, jungle safaris, hiking, cultural tours etc. and cities to visit. This way travelers save time and energy on deciding what could be the option. Travel agencies also help to choose the programs according to the budget travelers may have. All the problems and stress will be taken care by the travel agency and the traveler can just relax and enjoy. It will be

difficult for travelers to arrange the vehicles for the destination they want to reach. The roads are difficult. Transportation is not that easy as in other developed countries. Travel agencies will take care of their client's transportation needs. They will pick up the clients, drop the clients to their destination without any difficulties on time. For tourism progress travel agencies play a very vital role in Nepal. Travel agencies promote as well as help people see what Nepal has to offer and act in their best interest. Otherwise it could be really difficult for traveler to travel Nepal. (Adventure Himalaya circuit, 2020)

2.3 Social media use in travel agencies of Nepal

Social media is an essential means of communication through which travel agencies communicate with their customers in this modern digital era. All the budgeting, plans and programs are kept on their websites for their potential clients or clients to see. On social media platforms they post the trips they have taken. Cultural moments, Specialty of place. Clients can post their experience on the company's social media platforms. Social media helps travel agencies reach a greater number of people all around the world. The use of social media in travel agencies of Nepal are listed below:

2.3.1 To become a brand

Travel agencies can better their reputation by actively using social media platforms as the means of informing potential customers of what is new, special offers and so forth. Therefore, people are updated on all the news and activities of the particular company. Social media can help companies create a good reputation by sharing the experience of their clients. When clients share their experience, it can be seen by other prospect clients which leaves a good impression of the services at that travel agency. It also helps to attract more clients.

2.3.2 To offer the deals

Travel agencies can offer the right kind of deals through social media platforms. Travelers check online portals to explore the options. Travel agency in Nepal offers exciting deals for the customers through it. For example, discounts on packages, deals on occasion of festivals or seasons etc.

2.3.3 To show their expertise

They use social media to give information about the destinations they have taken their clients to. The specialty in terms of the destination can be shown through social media platforms. The experience their clients had during those tours can be shown through pictures and videos. The work they have carried out in the past and giving current clients a refreshing list of possible location visits makes people want to visit Nepal even more. (Travel technology and solutions, 2011)

2.3.4 Providing choices on travel components

On choosing a destination

Travel agencies use social media as a reference to show customers about the destinations that could be traveled to. Images, videos and posts could be shown through social media to give a sense of how the place looks. There are different kinds of destinations which offer different kinds of experiences. So, travel agencies can show the attraction of the destination via social media platforms, thus making it an easier job for the clients to pick their desired location from.

On choosing a mode of transport

There are different ways of transport available to reach the chosen destination. Travel agencies can show what kind of transports are available for their clients. Customer can choose the mode of transport according to their comfort. For example, modes of transport could be plane, buses, micro buses, trains, horses, jeeps, motorbikes etc. All means of transport information can be given through social media and can also show the pictures of it so that there won't be any misunderstanding regarding the transportation.

On choosing the right accommodation

Accommodation is one of the important factors that, if done right, are of big satisfaction for the client. When on holidays, people want to relax and have a pleasant experience. Accommodation plays a very important role in making the experience pleasant for clients. So, through social media travel agencies can show the best accommodation options. Provide an information regarding it and some pictures regarding it.

On choosing place to dine

There are many unique places in Nepal. The country very is rich with a vast menu of different food you can eat there. Travel agencies themselves can get information regarding the best place to eat certain food. They can give options to the travelers regarding what foods is best in the current destination and options regarding where to dine. Hence, social media helps travel agencies to understand the needs of their clients.

On choosing destination related activities

There are lot of activities one can choose from in Nepal. Social media helps in showing what kind of activities can be done in the selected destination – activities like hiking, safaris, ziplining, shopping etc. There could be lots of activities that could be done. Through social media, travel agencies can show and/or provide all the posible activities in the current destination. It makes it easier for the clients to make up their mind regarding the activities they want to choose from. (Bronner, 2011)

2.3.5 To promote tourism

Promotion of tourism is nowadays mostly done through social media because of the fast evolution of digitalisation. Consumers search for trips on social media. Travel agencies show all the attractions of Nepal that could be explored through social media. Social media is used all around the world by almost everyone; it is the best way to promote tourism of the country. People engage in social media networks and taking that as an advantage and promote in social media networks.

2.3.6 To Generate the lead

There are different ways to generate the lead through social media platforms. Travel agencies put the products and service they offer on social media for people to see because it is easy to promote with thus reaching far more potential customers as per traditional promoting ways, hence getting the lead in customer numbers faster. Advertisement of the company and service they offer is also done through those means.

2.3.7 To maintain relationship with customer

Social media is used to maintain a healthy relationship with the customers. Customers may want to know something related to the trip. Travel agencies can immediately help their customer through social media with any questions or possible doubts about a package, offer, destination etc.. Communication, as in many businesses, is the key – digital or traditional. So, managing relationship through social media is a nice way to keep the old clients satisfied as well as obtaining new clients.

2.4 *Which social media do our travel agencies use?*

All travel agencies have their own websites. They use social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Google, WhatsApp, and YouTube. Huge amounts of travel agencies use a different combination of social media, whereas some are limited to just one. Some travel agencies only use Facebook, but on the other hand, no travel agencies use YouTube only. If travel agencies are using a combination of different social media platforms, Facebook is the most common platform they would be using. Let's take a look at the social media our travel agencies use and how they do it.

Facebook

Facebook is still the most used social media platform for travel agencies in Nepal. Travel agencies create Facebook accounts with the company's name for a wider recognition and promotion. On Facebook they post information of the company; location, contact number, services, destinations covered. All the information about packages and services they provide for the tours and treks are provided with pictures and hyperlinks to the travel agencies website. As already stated, interaction with customers too are mostly done through Facebook. Highlight of the day Stories are also being uploaded constantly.

Instagram

Instagram is mostly used for the promotion of the company. They post pictures from different treks and tours they have conducted. This platform is used for generating the company lead, written about in the previous subchapter. People can see different activities carried out by their travel agency and this helps travel agencies attracting prospect customers. It is about glamming up various kind of beautiful nature Nepal holds.

Google+

It is used for sending and receiving emails. Much of service-customer communication is done through emails. Websites are made through the Google platform. Companies provide information about the country, what services they offer, itineraries, destinations, contact number, terms and conditions, prices etc. No information is left out. It is used for the promotion as well as for the communication.

YouTube

It is a social media platform for travel agencies, that make videos and post it. The content of those videos are mostly about tourists and destinations they chose from, about tours the agency provides – basically visually representing all they offer and how it looks like or is experienced like from a customers point of view. As customers can hear about new, yet unvisited destinations from a YouTube video from a travel agency, so can travel agencies find out new destinations to include into their service from videos of other travellers, traveling agencies.

Whatsapp web

Whatsapp webpage is used for communication purposes. It is used to call and text customers and vice versa. When someone needs to talk about the packages, tours or anything related to the service that a particular company provides, they can contact them on whatsapp. Not only customers, employees also communicate with each other through whatsapp for work-related topics.

2.5 Far Out Nepal

Far Out Nepal is a Kathmandu based company. It is specialized in operating exciting holiday programs for its clients in Nepal, India, Bhutan, and Tibet. It is the government-registered tours and trekking company, also being a member of TAAN (Trekking Association of Nepal) and NMA (Nepal Mountaineering Association) unfolds the adventures in Himalayas to travel enthusiasts all over the world. They have been in the business for 17 years now.



Picture 11: Far Out Nepal logo

Source:(<https://www.google.com/search?q=logo+far+out+nepal&oq=logo+far+out+nepal&aqs=chrome.69i57.11278j1j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>)

Far Out Nepal has provided services to more than 2000 clients from all over the globe. They have organized trips for most sacred places and difficult routes, which has made their company stronger in the travel business. The services they provide are trekking, one day tours, Nepal tours, and peak climbing. These are travel packages available to clients. For trekking, they are: Everest base camp trek, Nar with upper mustang via Teri-la pass, Kanchenjunga trek, Upper dolpo trek, Dhaulagiri circuit trek, Everest three pass trek, Everest panorama trek, Balthali village trek, Poon hill trek, and Annapurna base camp trek. One day tour packages are: White Water day raft trip, bungee jump, day tour, day hike, and Everest helicopter tour. Similarly, for Nepal tour, Kathmandu adventure, Kathmandu with nature, Nepal 10 days tour program, Photography in the Himalayas, Art music and culture, Nepal wonders, and Nepal Tibet tour. And for peak climbing, Island peak, and Mera peak now. (Far out Nepal travel agency, 2018)

2.5.1 Business strategy of Far out Nepal

Vision: To provide best Himalayan holiday of the lifetime with quality touch.

Mission: To operate an environment friendly tour with small groups of people for maintaining the quality, and tailor made for the guests as per their desire and requirements.

Strategy: Far out Nepal strategy to success in their mission is by practicing sustainable tourism, which also supports local communities in every level of their operation. The strategy also involves attracting a greater number of tourists in Nepal for coming years.

2.5.2 Social media impact on transformation in far Out Nepal

Social media has a huge impact on Far out Nepal as it has helped promoting their company to large number of people. They have their website, Facebook page and Instagram page which allows people to see the services they have been providing and how good they are at it. Social media has helped employee work from almost anywhere and everywhere, it is not necessary for them to be in their office to be able to work, which keeps them at ease. The engagement of travel agent and customers has improved as they post pictures, videos or articles and share it through social media, which is something they like doing and at the same time promotes the company. They discuss, among other things, work-related post on social media such as photos, videos etc. and are also connected through such media as they make cooperational plans for company purpose and communicate through given social media with each other, helping them develop the relationship they have. Employees come up with the ideas for new programs and are given recognition through social media. Their work on social media is also appreciated. Hence, social media has a good impact on the Far Out Nepal travel agency transformation. (Praveen, 2002)

2.5.3 Relationship between social media and work performance in Far out Nepal

Far out Nepal gets connected with their clients through social media. Clients and potential clients can see what kind of service they are offering through Far Out Nepal's website and choose the program or tell the company what kind of program they wish to have, and the employees responsible for it will work on it. This would bring satisfaction to both parties as clients would get what they want and the company would know exactly what their clients desire. Social media has helped their company reduce advertising costs, organizing meetings costs, printing costs, etc., because all these can be done through social media and it does not cost a big amount of money. Far out Nepal websites, Facebook comment sections, inbox are filled with the feedbacks of their clients, so it has helped the company improve their efficiency as the

process is direct, fast and effective, as it is out there for everyone to see. (Far out Nepal travel agency, 2018)

2.6 SnowYoda

Snowyoda was established in 2016 – it has been six years since it has been in business. It is located in Kathmandu, Nepal. The tag line of Snowyoda is ‘going beyond’. They offer limitless variety of trips. It is open to custom tours where customer can choose trips and activities they want to do. Snowyoda provides an experienced expert who knows all the local secrets and is expertise in its job to lead the tour.



Picture 12: SnowYoda logo

Source: (<https://www.facebook.com/thesnowyoda/>)

The traveling team at Snowyoda has the inside knowledge and are passionate about the Himalayas and guarantee to give the satisfaction to their clients by offering an amazing experience. They are very creative making their tour packages, where they continuously try to provide the best experience by innovative ways of appealing their customer varieties of tastes in short time. They provide different product categories trekking and they are: Annapurna region, Everest region, Langtang and upper mustang. The package available in Annapurna region are: Annapurna basecamp trek and Poonhill trek. The package available in Everest region are: Everest three high passes trek, Everest basecamp trek and Gokyo lake Everest basecamp trek. The package available in Langtang is Gosaikunda lake trek, Similarly, the package available in upper mustang are: Ride to Lo Manthang, Ride to Muktinath, Mystic Mustang. They also offer sightseeing packages such as Nepal Adventure tour, Naturally Nepal, and Muktinath temple tour. Nepal adventure tour is one of the best-selling packages. (SnowYoda expedition Pvt. Ltd., 2016)

2.6.1 Business strategies of SnowYoda

Vision: To become a full travel experiences provider.

Mission: To provide original, priceless, peaceful and soulful trips for the modern travelers that displays the beauty of Himalayas.

Strategy: SnowYoda creates a tour which provides authentic and rich cultural experience to show the hidden treasure and natural beauty. Authenticity helps in long run. They also come up with different strategy every now and then to keep up with the modern tourist.

2.6.2 Social media impact on transformation in SnowYoda

SnowYoda uses more social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter etc. They also have their own website. There are lots of employees working in SnowYoda. Social media has helped all those employees to make their relationship better as some work as a tour leaders, some as a guides, some work in the office. They connect with each other through social media platforms. It is necessary to have a good cordial relationship with people working in the same company. Social media helps to develop a relationship with the colleagues. It helps every employee to share their work and experience in social media platform. One gives some information regarding tourism and others appreciate it. Social media has increased the engagement of the people working there, they continuously post articles, picture, videos regarding their work, share each other works, advice each other, help each other through social media. They know the changes happening in the world of tourism. They discuss what can be done to improve the quality of the service they provide. Studying what kind of programs excite clients and prospective clients. Work of travel agents is constantly posted in social media platforms and appreciated by company. This motivates employees of SnowYoda to keep up with their good works. Social media has a significant impact on transformation of SnowYoda.

2.6.3 Relationship between social media and work performance in SnowYoda

Social media is interrelated with the work performance of SnowYoda. In social media platforms they share attractive information about the tour packages they are providing. Many times they offer interesting discounts on their packages depending on the location or the number of people in a group. Social media has always helped the company reach out to a larger number of people worldwide. The struggle to promote the company is real, but social media platforms has become the company's voice. It has helped reduce the cost of the company in things like advertisement cost, Pamphlets, phone bills etc. Lots of work can be done through social media platforms itself. Social media has given the option for its customers to directly give the feedback on their experience. When their clients have inquiries, they write them to the company and employees deal with the enquires almost instantly. SnowYoda has a huge number of competitors, Nepal is a well known tourist country and there are plenty of other travel agencies. Social media has helped them to collect information about the competitors. They can see what product/service their competitors are providing, they can come up with plans to sell their product/service more than their competitors, by reducing the price or coming up with extra tours that others are not providing. Social media has made it easier for them to be in contact with customers anywhere and anytime. Due to the usage of the listed platforms, communication has improved, that is why it has become easier for them to cooperate with their customers. All these things have helped to improve work performance due to social media. (Amaro, 2016)

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 *Demographic profile respondents*

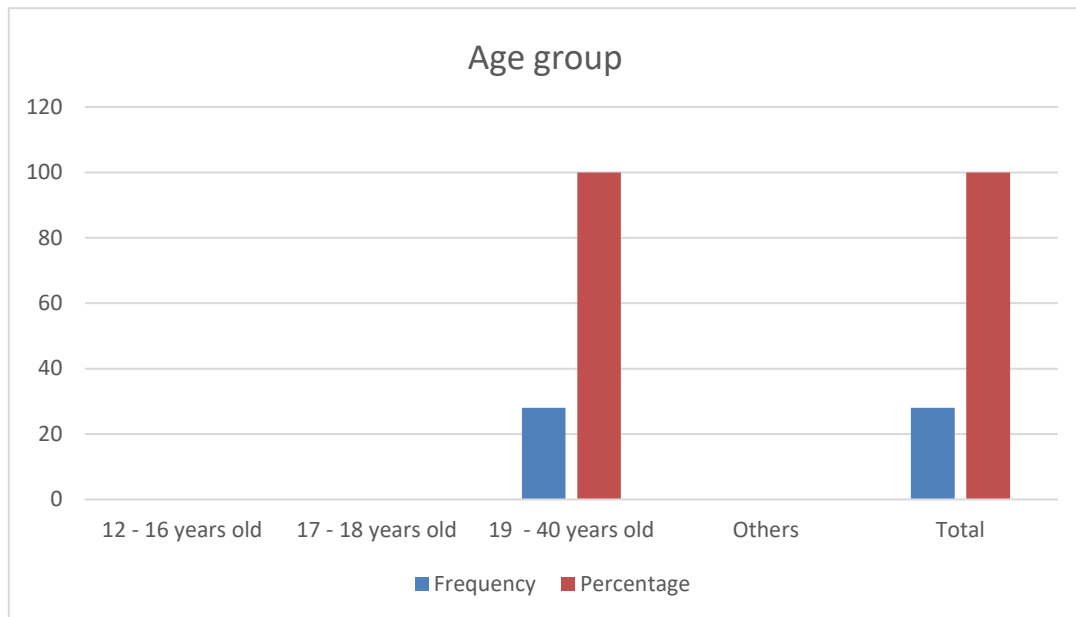
3.1.1 Age Group working in the organization.

Table 1 Age Group

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
12 – 16 years old	0	0
17 – 18 years old	0	0
19 – 40 years old	28	100
Others	0	0
Total	28	100

Source: (Own)

Graph 1 Age group



Source: (Own)

Table 1 and graph 1 show the distribution of respondents based on their age group. Age groups from 12 – 16 years old, 17 – 18 years old, 19 – 40 years old, and others are 0 %, 0%, 100% and 0 % respectively. Out of 28 respondents, 19 – 40 years old, shows a higher number of respondents or - in this case - only respondents.

3.1.2 Number of employees in the organization.

Table 2 Number of employees

Number of Employees	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 5 people	6	21.4
6 – 10 people	11	39.3
10 – 15 people	6	21.4
Above 15 people	5	17.9
Total	28	100

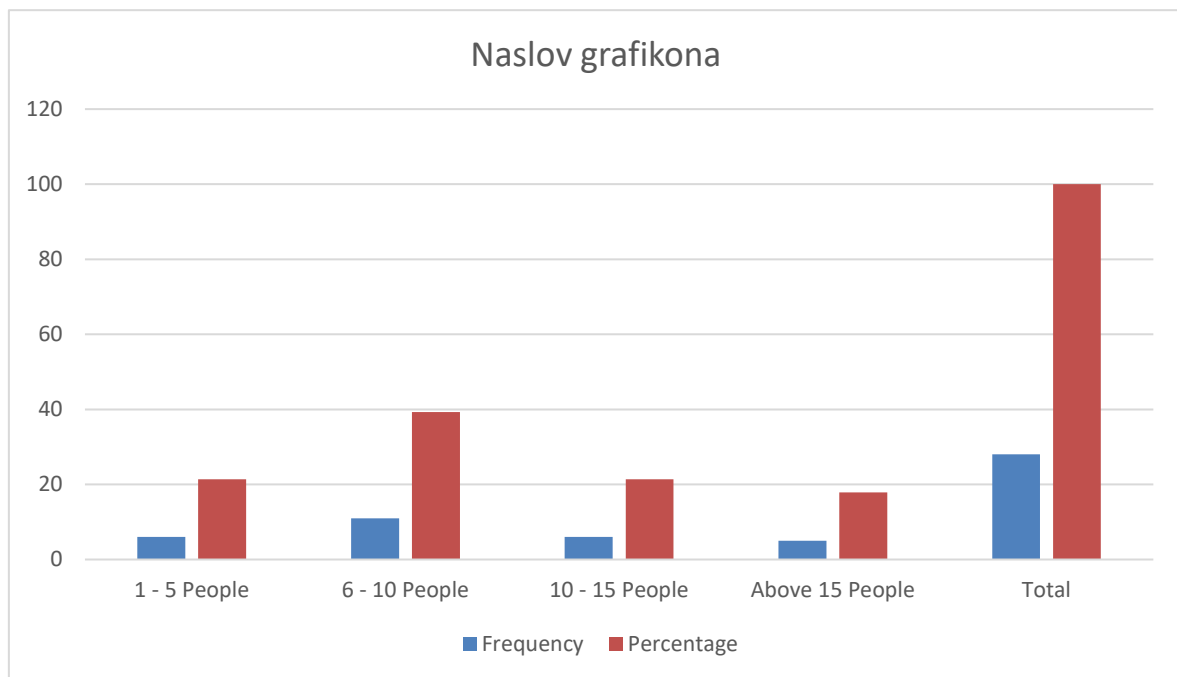
Source: (Own)

Table 3 Number of employees

Number of Employees	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 5 people	6	21.4
6 – 10 people	11	39.3
10 – 15 people	6	21.4
Above 15 people	5	17.9
Total	28	100

Source: (Own source)

Graph 2 Number of employees



Source: (Own)

Table 2 and 3 and Figure 2 show the respondents based on number of employees. Number of respondents which shows majority of employee were 6 – 10 out of 28 respondents. 39.3 % represents number of employees from 6 – 10. Similarly, the respondents between 1 – 5, 10 – 15 and Above 15 were 21.4 %, 21.4% and 17.9% respectively.

3.2 Distribution of respondents on first objective

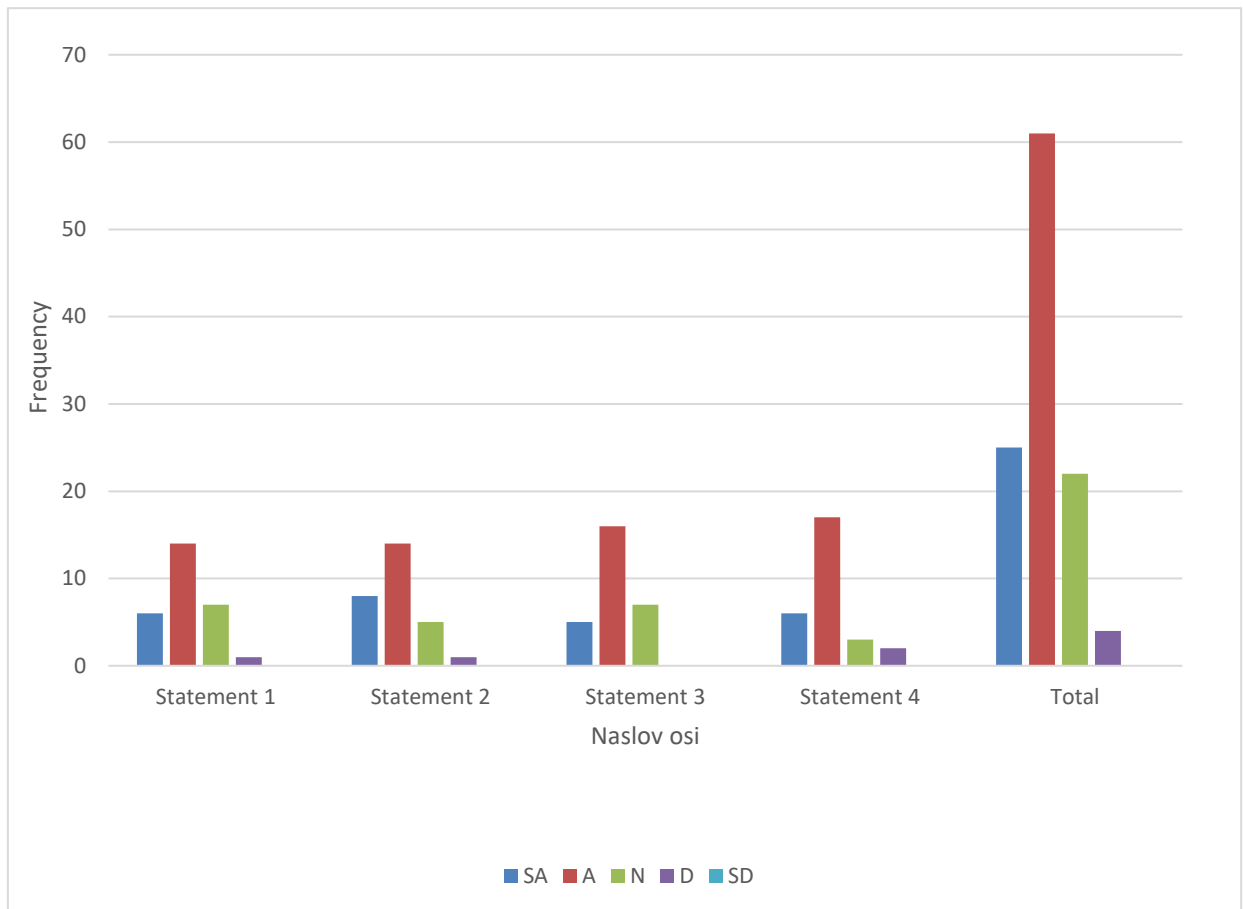
The first objective of the study is to determine the impact of social media on transformation of workplace in travel agencies. The data has been collected from the questionnaire. The statements supporting first objectives are shown below. For analyzing statements 5 scales were given: Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD).

Table 4 First objective respondents

Open Statements	Frequency				
	SA	A	N	D	SD
Social media has strengthened workplace relationships	6	14	7	1	0
Social media has increased engagement of employees in the company	8	14	5	1	0
Social media has helped company to improve employee recognition	5	16	7	0	0
Social media has enhanced employee learning	6	17	3	2	0
Total	25	61	22	4	0

Source: (Own source)

Graph 3 First objective respondents



Source: (Own)

Table 4 and Graph 3 shows the frequencies of respondents on first objective. Total number of respondents agree(A) to the statements is the highest and respondents strongly disagree (SD) is the lowest. So, comparing the frequencies we found that the greatest number of people agreed to the statements.

3.3 *Distribution of respondents on Second objective*

The second objective of the study is to examine the relationship between the social media and work performance of travel agencies. Data has been collected from the questionnaire.

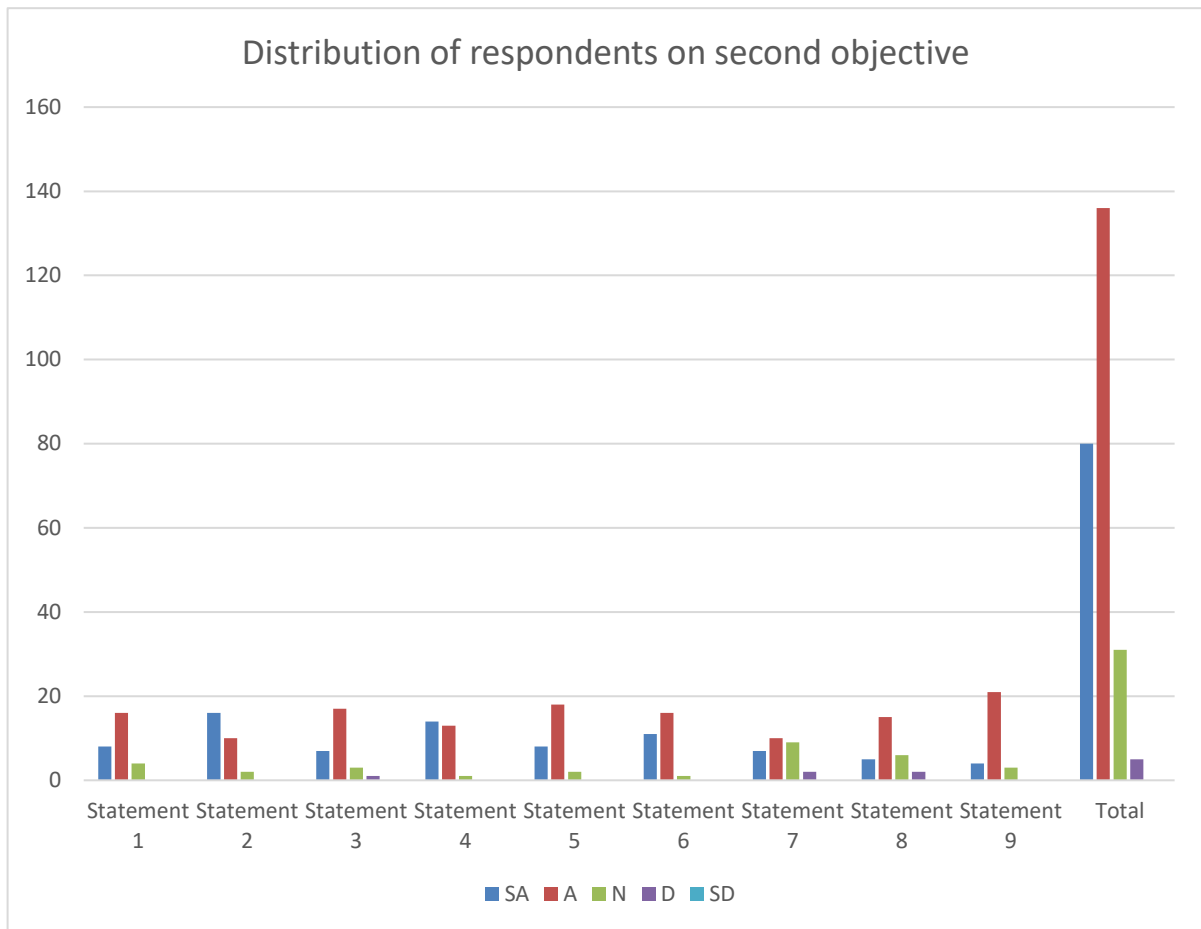
Statements supporting second objective are shown below. For analyzing statements ,5 scales were given Strongly agree (SA), Agree(A), Neural(N), Disagree (D), Strongly disagree (SD).

Table 5 Second objective respondents

Opening statements	Frequency				
	SA	A	N	D	SD
Use of social media helps in generating leads.	8	16	4	0	0
Use of social media helps organization reach out to more people	16	10	2	0	0
As social media uses digital content it helps to reduce overall costs	7	17	3	1	0
Social media helps to give and receive direct feedback which increases the efficiency	14	13	1	0	0
Social media helps to gather information about competition product/service which creates ease in dealing with customers	8	18	2	0	0
Social media has made it easier to communicate with the customers	11	16	1	0	0
Information on social media has helped our firm create a positive effect on customers perception of brand	7	10	9	2	0
Social media has made it easier for employee to quickly adapt to the changes happening around	5	15	6	2	0
Social media has helped in making business strategies	4	21	3	0	0
Total	80	136	31	5	0

Source: (Own)

Graph 4 Second objective respondents



Source: (Own)

Table 5 and Figure 4 shows the frequencies of respondents on second objective. Total number of respondents on Agree(A) is the highest and Strongly disagree (SD) is the lowest. So, comparing the frequencies overall, we found the highest number of people agreeing to the statements.

3.4 Discussion

The results from the questionnaire shown in the diagram above backs up the hypothesis created at the beginning of the research. From this research we know that social media is increasingly being adopted in virtually all sectors of the economy, particularly the service sector. Social media has been a major determinant of any organization's short and long run success and differential advantage in any competitive environment. The need for transformation in any organization cannot be over-emphasized. Social media is particularly important for the transformation in workplace-in travel agency of Kathmandu today because of the volatility, highly competitive and the turbulent nature of the marketing environment. The factors that determine transformation in the workplace are employee satisfaction, efficiency, work performance, competitive advantage, and cost-effectiveness. Social media makes it easier to work as employees are connected with each other through social media networks. It helps to build relationships with co-workers, managers. The efficiency of employees can increase if used in the right way. Works that could take lots of energy and time could be done in a minute with the help of social media. The study suggests social media and work performance go hand in hand if used in the correct way. Employees can enhance their learning on how to perform particular work or can get different ideas through social media platforms. Summing up the results from the questionnaire and all the research performed, we can observe that social media has a significant impact on transformation in workplaces in travel agencies.

4 CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of social media on the transformation of workplace in travel agencies and to examine the relationship between the social media and work performance of travel agencies. The survey was carried out in Kathmandu and sampled answers of 28 respondents. The data provided through questionnaires showed a significant relationship between social media and work performance in any organization, specially in travel agencies. Impact of social media on transformation in workplace can be determined by looking at the data provided in different aspects such as communications, perception of brands, business strategies, adaption, employee insights, efficiency, competitive advantages, cost effective and customer service. The study shows what employees working in travel agencies in Kathmandu have experienced. The hypothesis we had created in the beginning and its result show us that there is a significant impact of social media in business strategies, employee satisfaction, rapid adaptation and overall costs. The respondents were people working in travel agencies in Kathmandu. Social media is used heavily for organizational performance in travel agencies, for example marketing, customer relationship, information accessibility etc. It gives travel agencies a competitive advantage upon their competitors in the business. Travel agencies employees are more likely to adapt the changes quickly with the use of social media. We got to know that majority of travel agencies have 6 – 10 employees, thus travel agencies are medium sized in Nepal. Results present the help of social media in the mutual relationships between travel agency employees employees, managers, directors etc. Employees engage in conversation via social media more often because of the fast response or feedback, hence promotion is done through it. Result also shows that travel agency employees get more recognition through social media platforms, because they are the public face of the company.

Looking at the research performed and the results attained, we can observe the answers to our objectives, research questions and hypothesis that we had assumed to be the outcome at the beginning of the research. Let's see what we found below:

H1 - There is a positive relationship between social media usage and business strategy changes in travel agencies.

The statement backing up H1 was used in questionnaire and the result can be seen in table 5, statement number 9, with the highest number of people agreeing to the statement, 21 out of 28 respondents agreed to the statement. 4,3,0,0 respondents strongly agreed, neutral, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. As a result, hypothesis 1(H1) was accepted.

H2- The use of social media reduces overall costs in travel agency services.

The statement backing up H2 was used in the questionnaire and the result can be seen in table 5, statement number 3, with the highest number of people agreeing to the statement, 17 out of 28 respondents agreed to the statement. 7,3,1,0 respondents strongly agreed, neutral, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. As a result, hypothesis 2(H2) was accepted.

H3- There is a positive relationship between social media and employee satisfaction in travel agencies.

The statement backing up H3 was used in the questionnaire and the result can be seen in table 3, statement number 3, with the highest number of people agreeing to the statement, 16 out of 28 respondents agreed to the statement. 5,7,0,0 respondents strongly agreed, neutral, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. As a result, hypothesis 3 (H3) was accepted.

H4 – There is a positive impact of social media in rapid adaptation in travel agencies.

The statement backing up H4 was used in the questionnaire and the result can be seen in table 5, statement number 8, with the highest number of people agreeing to the statement, 15 out of 28 respondents agreed to the statement. 5,6,2,0 respondents strongly agreed, neutral, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. As a result, hypothesis 4 (H4) was accepted.

The comparison analysis was used to determine if the hypothesis is to be rejected or accepted. All four hypotheses listed above have been proven to be true. Transformation at workplace through social media is necessary in travel agencies to ensure the company's success. The overall results suggest that social media factors are drivers of organizational positioning in a dynamic environment thus developing a transformation of any kind in a travel agency shows to be very welcoming. The effectiveness of organizational performance depends on the travel

company's ability to respond positively to the environment they operate in. The study also implies responsiveness in developing awareness to environmental change and appropriate identification and effective reaction towards that change. In every organization employees are the backbone of the company and an important aspect of all their business operations. This research was conducted with the aim of proving, that travel agencies can exist as a superior organisation with the proper and smart usage of social media platforms. The research also indicates that travel agencies need to improve the use of social media for the improvement of workplace transformation, employee's motivation, customer service and the travel organization as a whole. Social media has direct connection with transformation at workplaces and work performance of given travel companies. Information in social media may not always have a positive effect on the customer or the company itself, depending on the information, that was given or presented – mostly the goal is to achieve a positive feedback - with the aim to improve a service, raise the experience for the customer, upgrade accomodation/transport etc – yet sometimes it can backfire in the entirely opposite way. Communication between employees as well as with customer is easier due to social media. More and more people are connected with the company because of it and it shows how digital platforms has taken over globally. The majority of employees age is ranged between 19 to 40 years, which means that mostly younger generation is interested and motivated to work in travel agencies. This generation is likely to learn, adapt and change faster and easier. The survey showed that the digital content in social media has minimized overall costs of the company and at the same time has helped them to reach out to a greater number of people who could be their prospect customers. Therefore, managers of travel agencies are encouraged to pursue the use of social media for the development and sustainability of travel agencies and to have a successful transformation in workplace with competitive advantage.

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6 ATTACHMENTS

Questionnaire Form

Dear Respondents,

My name is Surabhi Adhikari, studying Business tourism, Diploma program in Academia for my thesis report, I am examining " Impact of social media on transformation in workplace in travel agencies". I am inviting you to participate in this research by completing the questionnaire. All of your information will be kept confidential and response will be used only for academic research purpose. Attached here is questionnaire that seeks your opinion. Thank you in advance for filling out this questionnaire.

General information (mark only one oval)

What is your age?

- 1) 12-16 years old
- 2) 17-18 years old
- 3) 19-40 years old
- 4) Other

How many employees are there in your company?

- 1) 1-5 people
- 2) 6-10 people
- 3) 11-15 people
- 4) Above 15

Is your company located in Kathmandu?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

Objective 1: To determine the impact of social media on transformation in workplaces in travel agencies. (mark only one oval)

Social media has strengthened workplace relationships.

- 1) Strongly Agree
- 2) Agree
- 3) Neutral
- 4) Disagree
- 5) Strongly Disagree

Social media has increased engagement of employees in the company.

- 1) Strongly Agree
- 2) Agree

- 3) Neutral
- 4) Disagree
- 5) Strongly Disagree

Social media has helped company to improve employee recognition.

- 1) Strongly Agree
- 2) Agree
- 3) Neutral
- 4) Disagree
- 5) Strongly Disagree

Social media has enhanced employee learning.

- 1) Strongly Agree
- 2) Agree
- 3) Neutral
- 4) Disagree
- 5) Strongly Disagree

Objective 2: To examine the relationship between the social media and work performance of travel agencies. (mark only one oval)

Use of social media helps in generating leads.

- 1) Strongly Agree
- 2) Agree
- 3) Neutral
- 4) Disagree
- 5) Strongly Disagree

Use of social media helps organization reach out to more people.

- 1) Strongly Agree
- 2) Agree
- 3) Neutral
- 4) Disagree
- 5) Strongly Disagree

As social media uses digital content it helps to reduce overall costs.

- 1) Strongly Agree
- 2) Agree
- 3) Neutral
- 4) Disagree
- 5) Strongly Disagree

Social media helps to give and receive direct feedback which increases the efficiency.

- 1) Strongly Agree
- 2) Agree
- 3) Neutral
- 4) Disagree
- 5) Strongly Disagree

Social media helps to gather information about competitors product/services which creates ease in dealing with customers.

- 1) Strongly Agree
- 2) Agree
- 3) Neutral
- 4) Disagree
- 5) Strongly Disagree

Social media has made it easier to communicate with the customers.

- 1) Strongly Agree
- 2) Agree
- 3) Neutral
- 4) Disagree
- 5) Strongly Disagree

Information on social media has helped our firm create a positive effect on the customers perception of a brand.

- 1) Strongly Agree
- 2) Agree
- 3) Neutral
- 4) Disagree
- 5) Strongly Disagree

Social media has made easier for the employee to quickly adapt to the changes happening around.

- 1) Strongly Agree
- 2) Agree
- 3) Neutral
- 4) Disagree
- 5) Strongly Disagree

Social media has helped in making business strategies.

- 1) Strongly Agree
- 2) Agree
- 3) Neutral
- 4) Disagree
- 5) Strongly Disagree