

A STUDY ON THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF FoMO ON SOCIAL MEDIA (INSTAGRAM) INDUCED TRAVEL ADDICTION AND RISK TAKING TRAVEL BEHAVIORAL INTENTION IN YOUTH

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ABSTRACT

The effect of social media on youth is immense. Fear of missing out (FoMO) is a common repercussion found in youth due to extreme usage of social media platforms. They suffer from FoMO in the context of travel and tour. This behavior leads to impulsive travel decisions plus risk-taking travel attitude. The present study examines the impact of Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction on youth's Risk-Taking Travel Behavioral Intention with FoMO as a mediating variable. An online survey conducted amidst 420 South Indian students revealed that Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction (SMTA) had a direct positive impact ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.05$) on Risk Taking Travel Behavioural Intention (RTTBI). It was also observed that Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction had a direct positive impact on FoMO ($\beta = 0.58$, $p < 0.05$), and FoMO had a direct positive impact ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < 0.05$) on Risk-Taking Travel Behaviour Intention. Further, FoMO was also observed to mediate the connection among Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction and Risk-Taking Travel Behavioural Intention. It is proposed that parents, teachers, and educational institutes regulate risk-taking travel behavior in youth. Furthermore, it is suggested that the youths be provided with coping/resilience strategies to deal with social media addiction. The limitations, implications for future research, and recommendations are also discussed in the paper.

Keywords : FoMO, Instagram addiction, risk-taking travel, social media addiction, youth's travel behavioral intention

Introduction

Today many social media providers such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook etc., have created an excellent digital platform for social interaction (Voorveld et al., 2018). The internet has made social participation simple and accessible, allowing people to connect, discuss, share, and expand their network. Advances in technology have partially removed the constraint of distance, allowing people to exchange real-time information, share photos, life events, and activities (Agarwal & Mewafarosh, 2021).

The novel Coronavirus-2019 (COVID-19) outbreak increased stress in people. The pandemic altered people's behaviour (Kayis et al., 2021) as well. The COVID-19 demanded people keep a physical distance from each other to curb the spread of the disease. This resulted in less time spent outside and more time spent on digital devices and screens. New ways of socializing have emerged as a result of virtual and digital technologies (Hayran &

Anik, 2021). In the pandemic's early stages, internet traffic soared to 70%, and social media sites saw massive increases in visitors (Beech, 2020).

During the pandemic, greater internet participation facilitated good experiences, like keeping individuals informed, engaged, and overcome stress and anxiety (Polizzi et al., 2020). While communicating with friends and maintaining social connections, young adulthood population commonly used social media platforms like Facebook to initiate and sustain meaningful relationships (Ellison et al., 2007). Young adults' social conduct and interpersonal relationships are critical to their growth, and social media appears to be playing a significant role in building the same (Jenkins-Guarnieri et al., 2013). During tough times like pandemic, social media helped people connect in isolation when people were physically separated (van Deursen, 2020). Hence, efficient social media usage can be

critical to meet individuals' social needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Studies also pointed that unpleasant emotions also lead to excessive or obsessive social media usage (Tandon et al., 2021). The extraordinary increase in internet and digital platform usage posed a hazard to mental health issues such as addiction, anxiety and sadness (Gao et al., 2020). It is a fact that contentment levels deteriorate as the danger of social media addiction rises. COVID-19 has increased fear and dysfunctional emotions like alienation and smartphone addiction. As a result, people's well-being has been adversely impacted (Kayis et al., 2021). Now almost every young individual experiences a desperate tendency to check social media regularly. It has also become much easier for people to learn about their possible gratifying experiences that they might be missing out on social media (Agarwal & Mewafarosh, 2021).

Fear of missing out (FoMO) is a by-product of excessive internet and obsessive social media use. Individuals with a high level of FoMO might engage in problematic habits and distorted behaviour to satisfy their emotional demands (Franchina et al., 2018). They use their smartphone and display a greater affinity for social media platforms, directly impacting their academic and social lives (Elhai et al., 2016; Wolniewicz et al., 2018). Lately, travel to unexplored places and posting the travel experience on social media has become a new social trend (Radzimski & Gadziński, 2019). It is also a risk for young people to be exposed to violent or hazardous circumstances (UNICEF, 2020) in travel and tour.

Research Gap

A review of related literature reveals separate studies on FoMo, social media addiction, and risk-taking travel behavior. However, little evidence exists to ascertain how these three variables interact together, mainly through the lens of a mediating variable. Thus owing to the importance of the state of addiction, fear, and travel risk seen in youngsters and related consequences, this study identifies this relationship as the research gap and a matter of investigation. It is thus imperative to understand how the relationship worked in the dynamics of social media-induced travel addiction, risk-taking travel behavioral intention in youth and FoMO, and what

direction. The present-day scenario of social media usage and the consequent travel behavior in youth raises numerous questions to be addressed. For the current study, investigators identified the following research questions:

1. What are the significant impacts of social media-induced FoMO in risk-taking behavior in the youth?
2. What may be the possible consequences of social media overuse in the travel behavior of present-day youth?

Theoretical framework

Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction (SMTA)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, social media was used extensively as a comprehensive communication tool (Mohanani & Shekhar, 2021). According to studies, there has been a rise in internet addiction, which adversely influenced psycho-social well-being. Addiction to social media is a result of excessive time spent on specific social media or networking sites. This further results in an overpowering desire to access it all time. Individuals who suffer from social media addiction are frequently too obsessed about it and are motivated by an uncontrolled desire to log on and utilize it (Andreassen & Pallesen, 2014). Internet overuse has significantly affected youth's mental and social fitness (Fernandes et al., 2020). The instantaneous sharing attitude is a trait in the youth's social media usage pattern (Shekhar, 2021). The excessive use of social media may even adversely influence the users' daily lives (Andreassen & Pallesen, 2014). Likely, this will eventually lead to major concerns (Kircaburun & Griffiths, 2018). Social media platforms like Instagram have attractive features which make them an ideal platform for sharing daily life activities. Reports on Instagram usage reveals that it is among the most social networking sites, causing poor sleep quality, abuse, FoMO, and increased worry and sadness (Glazzard & Stones, 2020). The outcome of social media on travel and tourism is enormous. Owing to the adventurous nature of tourism services, travel decisions prompted by social media posts are seen as risky. Research studies have also been conducted to determine the function and impact of social media on tourist behaviour (Fotis, 2015).

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)

Fear of missing out (FoMO) is a form of anxiety coming from the belief that the person suffering from the anxiety may not be present when others are having fun. It makes a person desire and stays connected continuously with others. Researchers carried out the first empirical investigation on FoMO to determine the construct's motivational, emotional, and behavioral aspects (Przybylski et al., 2013). FoMO was found to moderate the impact of low emotional well-being on social media use. According to previous research, individuals are internally obliged to spend more time on social media in a way to feel socially active and avoid suffering from FoMO (Browne et al., 2018; Elhai et al., 2016; Przybylski et al., 2013). FoMO is not a new idea, but the depth and debate of FoMO have risen dramatically with the development of technology, particularly social media (Roberts & David, 2020). FoMO is a term that relates to excessive use of a smartphone (Elhai et al., 2016). It is correlated with decreased satisfaction with life, dissatisfaction with life, biased perception of others, anxiety, envy, and attention deficits (Hogan, 2015). Researchers define FoMO as an unpleasant sense "that others may have more gratifying or advantageous experiences than oneself ". It is linked to a sense of being excluded from desirable experiences or a strong need to be constantly connected to what everyone else is experiencing (Zhang et al., 2020). FoMO relates to the distressing sensation that arises from being notified of unattended events (Hayran & Anik, 2021). Individuals with a high susceptibility for FoMO display restless behavior and keep constantly linked online via social media sites (Przybylski et al., 2013). People frequently create pictures of their desired future self, fantasize about unrealized goals, and make personal bucket lists of anticipated life events (Sirgy, 1982).

Risk-Taking Travel Behavioural Intention (RTTBI)

Risk is found in everyone's life, and everyone is exposed to it to some extent. While some people try to stay away from it, others appear to be drawn towards it. Traveling safely is crucial, and most individuals do not put their safety at risk by engaging in tourist activities (Sonmez & Graefe, 1998). Although much research has been undertaken on tourist behavior, little focus has been paid to studying

risk-taking travel intention or behavior. According to psychologists, risk-taking tendency is a psychological trait that differs amongst people (Keinan et al., 1984). Attempting to comprehend visitor behavior and risk perceptions is difficult (Hunter-Jones et al., 2007). Risk-taking and pleasure-seeking personality traits are linked to specific travel behaviors and tourist engagement choices among youth (Pizam et al., 2004). The risk-taking intention in youth has been defined as the possibility of youngsters engaging in risky activities (Wong & Yang, 2021). Risk-takers and thrill-seekers may be driven to participate in vigorous, daring, and innovative tourist events and activities. They choose to travel independently, visit new and unusual places, and make advance travel plans if any. Many others may like to go on group trips, spend time in familiar destinations, find comforts of a "home away from home," and involve in safe tourist events and leisure activities. Sensation seekers enjoy traveling and are willing to accept potential threats and vulnerabilities when visiting unfamiliar destinations. In comparison to low sensation seekers, they expect more joyful stimulation and less worry during travel (Pizam et al., 2004). Risk-taking travel intention relates to how youths may make risky decisions in the future, such as in the sector of recreation (Weber et al., 2002). During adolescence, risk-taking behaviors become more prevalent. Emotional reactivity is higher in adolescents (Steinberg, 2008) and is mainly associated with high-risk takers and impulsive travel planners who seek innovative travel intention. Youths are mostly risk takers when they are influenced by their peers (Chein et al., 2011; Gardner et al., 2008). Food and drink risk behaviors (e.g. eating food from a street vendor), drinking and drug risk behaviors, and public transit risk behaviors were among the risk-taking travel behavior domains previously identified (Sonmez & Graefe, 1998).

Generally, youth are considered to be highly influenced by their friends and are high-risk takers. Overuse of social media in youth is related to the development of FoMO. This can be FoMO of experiences, events, or activities. As a consequence of FoMO, young people may tend to travel to newer places (Elhai et al., 2016). They feel it is essential to upload their pictures on social media, which is a common trend these days (Radzinski & Gadziński,

2019). Hence they may plan to travel spontaneously, bearing risks (Chein et al., 2011; Gardner et al., 2008). More precisely, the current study investigates the relationship between social media (Instagram) overuse and risk-taking travel intention in youth due to social media (Instagram)-triggered FoMO. Thus the focus is on the direct and indirect relationship between Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction and Risk-Taking Travel Behavioral Intention, particularly in light of the mediating role of FoMO. The study may contribute to the relevant literature on FoMO, social media-induced travel obsession, and risk-taking travel intention among youth. Consequently, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

H₁: Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction would have a direct positive significant impact on Risk Taking Travel Behavioural Intention.

H₂: Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction would have a direct positive significant impact on FoMO.

H₃: FoMO would have a direct positive significant impact on Risk Taking Travel Behavioural Intention.

H₄: FoMO would mediate the relationship between the Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction on Risk Taking Travel Behavioural Intention.

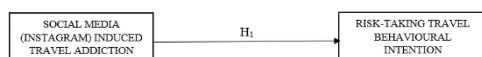


FIGURE: 1
TOTAL EFFECT

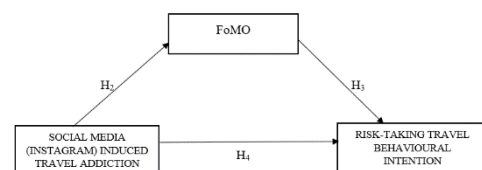


FIGURE: 2
DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECT

Conceptual model of the study

Methods

For the data collection, a convenient sampling method was performed. 420 students from various parts of South India actively participated (68% males and 32% females; age

group from 20 to 30 with a mean age of 21.2 years) in an online survey. Most of the respondents were graduate and post-graduate students in different disciplines (Table:1)

Table: 1
Demographic profile (N=420)

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	135	32.1
	Male	285	67.9
Age group	20 - 23	307	73.0
	24 - 27	83	19.7
	28 - 31	30	7.1
Qualification	Graduates	284	67.6
	Postgraduates	136	32.3

Research Design

The authors conducted cross-sectional descriptive research for the present study. Owing to the risks of physical data collection due to COVID-19, the responses were elicited via an online survey. Convenient sampling was used as the sampling technique. The study was conducted during the period August-September 2021.

Measures

Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction Scale

The twenty-item scale on the Instagram Feed Addiction Scale developed by (Sholeh & Rusdi, 2019) was modified to Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction Scale without affecting the scale's fundamental essence. This scale was designed to assess social media users' addictive behavior in the context of travel obsession. The scale developed in 2019, which measured the Instagram feed and Instagram story addiction, was best used to measure addiction promoting travel obsession. For example, a question 'I often think of any photos/videos posted by others on the Instagram feed' was modified to 'I often think of any photos/videos of travel destinations posted by others on the Instagram feed'. The items were evaluated on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Fear of Missing Out Scale

A ten-item scale of FoMO developed by (Przybylski et al., 2013) was slightly modified without deviating the essence of the original scale. The researcher modified the original scale to best fit in the context of FoMO in

travel. For example, the question '*I fear others have more rewarding experiences than me*' was modified into '*I fear others have more rewarding traveling experiences than me*'. The items were also rated on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Risk-Taking Travel Behavioural Intention Scale

The risk-taking travel behavioral intention in youth was assessed using a seven-point scale adapted from (Wan et al., 2021). The original scale named Risk-Taking Behavioural Intention was renamed in the study to Risk-Taking Travel Behavioural Intention, without modifying the scale. Sample question was like '*I like to travel to unfamiliar places*'. The items were examined on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Data Analysis

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was conducted to ascertain the effect of the three constructs, namely Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction, FoMO, and Risk-Taking Travel Behavioural Intention (RTTBI). Initially, Confirmatory Factor Analysis was used to confirm the measures. To test the model's goodness of fit, the fit indices as

prescribed by (Hu & Bentler, 1999) were used. The measurement model was subjected to a reliability and validity check. Cronbach's α , Composite Reliability (CR), Average Factor Loadings (AFL), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Discriminant Validity (DV) were also examined. All the findings were reported as standardized regression weights. A bootstrapping procedure (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) using 2000 samples were also executed using a 95% confidence interval to examine the indirect effect of FoMO. The analysis of the paper was carried out in SPSS and AMOS version 21.

Results

From Table 3, CR of the variables under study were found to be greater than 0.6 and AVE greater than 0.5. This indicated good reliability and convergent validity (Srinivasan et al., 2002) for the constructs used for the study. AFL was also found to be above 0.7 for all three constructs. The off-diagonal values in Table 4 indicated the correlation among the constructs. These were found to be lesser than the diagonal elements (Table 4). This confirmed that the constructs were having good Discriminant Validity as well.

Table: 2
Descriptive statistics (N=420)

Construct	Mean	SD	Cronbach α	Max	Min
1. Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction (SMTA)	68.45	2.17	0.935	100	20
2. FoMO	29.35	1.11	0.877	50	10
3. Risk-Taking Travel Behavioural Intention (RTTBI)	23.86	1.03	0.764	35	7

The three constructs were subjected to reliability analysis. The Cronbach's α values (Table: 2) were 0.7 for all three constructs. This confirmed the reliability of the scales in the study (Ziegel et al., 1999).

Table: 3
Convergent Validity & Composite Reliability

Construct	AVE	AFL	CR
1. Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction (SMTA)	0.668	0.748	0.814
2. Fear of Missing out (FoMO)	0.657	0.771	0.791
3. Risk-Taking Travel Behavioural Intention (RTTBI)	0.598	0.744	0.733

AVE: Average Variance Extract, AFL: Average Factor Loadings, CR: Composite Reliability

Table: 4
Discriminant Validity

Variable	SMTA	FoMO	RTTBI
1. Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction (SMTA)	0.818		
2. Fear of Missing out (FoMO)	0.706	0.813	
3. Risk-Taking Travel Behavioural Intention (RTTBI)	0.612	0.598	0.762

The off-diagonal elements represent the correlation among the constructs

Full structural model

A full structural model was tested using SPSS AMOS 21. A scrutiny of the fit indices showed overall good fit for the model ($\chi^2 = 112.3$, $\chi^2/df = 2.21$, GFI = .945, TLI = 0.960, CFI = 0.973, RMSEA = 0.036). The full structural model was thus used for hypothesis testing. Results revealed that Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction had a direct significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < .05$) on Risk Taking Travel Behavioural Intention (Figure: 3 and Table 5). H₁ was thus accepted. Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction was having a direct significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.58$, $p < .05$) on FoMO as well (Figure: 4 and Table 6). H₂ was also accepted. Further, FoMO was found to have a direct significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < .05$) on Risk Taking Travel Behavioural Intention (RTTBI). H₃ was also accepted (Figure: 4 and Table 5). The indirect effect of Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction on Risk Taking Travel Behavioural Intention (RTTBI) was also found to be significant ($\beta = 0.1$, $p < .05$) i.e., FoMO was observed to mediate the connection among Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction on Risk Taking Travel Behavioural Intention. H₄ was thus accepted (Figure: 4 and Table: 5).

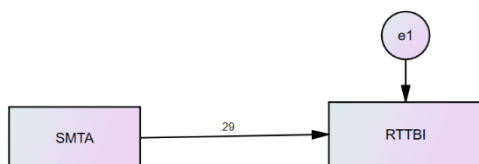


FIGURE: 3
Full Structural Modelling
Total Effect

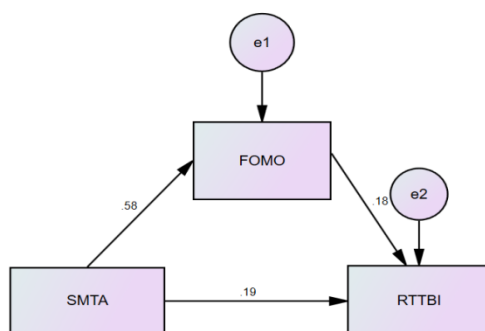


FIGURE: 4
Full Structural Modelling
Direct and Indirect Effect

Table: 5 Standardized Regression weights

	β	P value	Result
Total Effect	0.29	0.001	Significant
Direct effect	0.19	0.002	Significant
Indirect effect	0.10	0.004	Significant

Table: 6 Direct & Indirect effects paths

Path	β	p values*	Result
<i>Direct Effect</i>			
Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction --> FoMO	0.583	0.002	Significant
FoMO ---> Risk-Taking Travel Behavioural Intention	0.177	0.004	Significant
Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction --> Risk-Taking Travel Behavioural Intention	0.186	0.002	Significant
<i>Indirect effect*</i>			
Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction --> FoMO --> Risk-Taking Travel Behavioural Intention	0.10	0.004	Significant

*p value < .01

#Bootstrap sample size=2000; Performance bootstrap and bias-corrected confident interval (95%) were selected to assess the significance level.

DISCUSSION

The study's key goal was to examine the association between Social Media (Instagram) induced Travel Addiction and Risk-Taking Travel Behavioural Intention. Several studies have found that misuse and addiction to social media platforms like Instagram have increased in the previous decade, negatively influencing the well-being of young people. The current study reveals that individuals who experience social media (Instagram) induced travel addiction tend to risk their travel behavior. Further, it also indicates that social media-induced travel addiction may

trigger a feeling of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) on rewarding travel experiences, events, and activities. In addition to the preceding discussion, the study looked into the association between FoMO and risk-taking travel behavioral intention in youth. This is consistent with previous research findings that FoMO is linked to higher risk-taking travel behavioral intention among young social workers (Fotis, 2015).

Due to the obvious lifestyle changes spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, internet addiction may continue to rise in the upcoming years. Addiction causes a person's physical and mental health to deteriorate. As observed in the COVID-19 pandemic scenario, environmental and situational factors can either help or complicate these processes (Wegmann et al., 2021). If internet addiction in youth continues, it may increase the risk of developing other mental disorders such as anxiety and depression. Addiction can put a person's health in danger and limit interpersonal, professional, and recreational activities. Rather than intruding in the youth's privacy in social media, parents shall urge them to balance their online time with hobbies and co-curricular activities. Parents may insist their children to spend time outside with their friends rather than locking themselves up on social media. Teenagers nowadays are digital immigrants, having grown up in a world dominated by the internet and social media. The concept of friendship and communication to them differs significantly from that of their parents. Nevertheless, a distinction is to be necessarily made between social media use and misuse (Paradigm Treatment, n.d.).

Parents, teachers, and educational institutions should carefully consider social media usage guidelines, for the sake of youth's mental health. They may develop ways to decrease youth's overuse of social media and encourage them to arrange well-planned vacations. Risk-taking travel behavioral intention in youth is amplified than before, which is problematic to their well-being.

Furthermore, according to some experts, enhancing one's sense of human connectivity and a positive appraisal of one's existing status can help alleviate feelings of social desertion (Polizzi et al., 2020; Shanahan et al., 2020). Pastimes that aid youngsters enhance

themselves physically or emotionally may be practiced. Examples are activities like meditation, relaxation methods, long walks, or time invested with a therapist. These act as stress relievers to develop a healthy outlook to approach their troubles (Paradigm Treatment, n.d.). Gradually, one may successfully deal with issues like social media addiction, risk-taking behavioral intention, impulsive travel, etc.

Theoretical implications

The study's findings add to the association between social media-induced travel addiction and risky travel behavior in youth/teenagers. Excessive and obsessive social media use were related to increased FoMO in the domain of risky behaviors, with a significant magnitude of effect (Shah et al., 2019). It is evident that there is widespread usage of internet and social media in youth, with a positive association to risky behaviors. Thus it becomes critical that risk-taking theories (Albert et al., 2013; Casey, 2015; Shulman et al., 2016) may include context of social media obsession and excessive access to social network. The higher the number of youth who agreed to be worried while missing an opportunity, the greater their fear of missing out (van Rooij et al., 2018). Hence, this study supports the previous literature. Since there is no ample research showing the positive association between social media-induced FoMO and risk-taking travel behavior in the youth, the researchers would recommend more future studies to be steered in the same direction.

Managerial implications

The study's outcome may help the policymakers, and other stakeholders devise coping or resilience strategies for the mental well-being of the youths addicted to social media and experiencing high FoMO, which successively leads to risk-taking travel intention or travel behavior in them. Educational institutes and workplaces shall organize tours, leisure trips, and nature visits more often to encourage social involvement with their fellow students, rather than alienating themselves. Parents can set an excellent example by actively engaging in well-planned excursions and vacations with their kids to discourage risky and impulsive travel decisions in youth. Effective coping methods must be learned, retained, and used. Coping strategies aids in the reduction of

anxiety and fear, as well as the development of a sense of contentment and emotional control. Engaging in reading, writing, interests, and hobbies, and freely addressing emergent emotions with family members or close friends are all stress-relieving and emotion-management activities. This must be recommended to be followed by young individuals.

LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

As the study is limited to a smaller sample of youth, the study has associated limitations. The data could indicate that there is a common bias in the responses. More longitudinal studies in this area could improve the validity of our findings. Furthermore, additional studies on different regions in the world may improve the generalizability of findings in various contexts (Polit & Beck, 2010). The study is significant and of huge relevance to academicians, as it is futuristic. Managing and coping with risk-taking intention and impulsive travel behavior in youth is a major concern these days. How to deal with the psychological well-being of youth, in an era of social media addiction is yet another major concern. The outcomes we used for the research are limited, and hence, future research could concentrate on more detailed and versatile outcomes to provide a more accurate understanding of the matter.

CONCLUSION

Travel addiction triggered by excessive use of social media has impacted youth's travel behavior. The risk-taking travel behavioral intention of youth has amplified with social media travel-induced addiction. Since people's travel habits and behavior are so significant, this study offers some advice to general youth and society on handling and coping with the risky travel behavior they exhibit due to social media-induced travel addiction. The research also serves as a reminder to young travelers to developing resilience methods to monitor and restrict their social media usage.

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