



Article

Main Directions of Outsourcing Services in the Tourism Sector of India

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Abstract: This study examines the main directions and features of outsourcing services in the tourism sector of India under conditions of globalization and digital transformation. The research highlights the growing role of Information Technology (IT) outsourcing and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) in enhancing efficiency, reducing operational costs, and strengthening competitiveness in the tourism industry. Special attention is given to the development of Online Travel Agencies (OTAs), the application of advanced technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and Big Data, and their impact on marketing effectiveness and customer satisfaction. The findings show that outsourcing significantly contributes to the expansion of online tourism markets, optimization of business processes, and improvement of service quality. At the same time, the study identifies key challenges, including trust issues, data security concerns, and limitations of digital platforms. The research concludes that outsourcing has become a strategic tool for tourism companies in India, enabling sustainable growth and competitive advantage in the global tourism market.

Keywords: Tourism industry, outsourcing, IT outsourcing, BPO, RPO, Online Travel Agencies (OTA), Big Data, VR and AR technologies, digitalization, India tourism, competitiveness, marketing strategy.

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Introduction

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing sectors of the economy in India, contributing significantly to employment, GDP, and foreign exchange earnings. In recent years, the industry has undergone substantial transformation driven by globalization, digitalization, and increasing competition in the global tourism market.

One of the key drivers of this transformation is the adoption of outsourcing practices, which allow tourism companies to focus on core activities while delegating non-core functions to specialized external providers. Outsourcing in tourism encompasses a wide range of services, including IT solutions, marketing, online sales, recruitment, and operational support such as housekeeping.

With the rapid development of digital technologies, including Big Data analytics, VR, and AR, outsourcing has expanded beyond traditional functions to include advanced technological services. This has significantly enhanced the ability of tourism companies to attract customers, improve service delivery, and optimize operational efficiency.

This study aims to analyze the main directions, effectiveness, and implications of outsourcing services in India's tourism sector, as well as to identify the opportunities and challenges associated with their implementation.

Research Methodology

The research is based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Secondary data sources, including academic studies, industry reports, and statistical databases, were analyzed to assess the development of outsourcing in India's tourism sector.

The study also incorporates empirical data derived from surveys and statistical analyses, including Likert-scale evaluations, mean values, and standard deviation indicators. These methods were used to measure the effectiveness of outsourcing practices such as IT outsourcing, Big Data analytics, Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO), and housekeeping outsourcing in hotels.

Comparative analysis was applied to evaluate different outsourcing models (IT, BPO, RPO) and their impact on tourism companies' performance. Additionally, trend analysis was used to assess the growth of outsourcing markets at both national and global levels.

Analyses and Results

Tourism is one of the largest industrial sectors in India. The country accounts for 1.45% of global tourist flows and 7.96% of the Southeast Asia region's share. In 2024, India was visited by 18.89 million international tourists. The sector employed 79.86 million people in 2020 and 45.39 million people in 2024 [1, 2]. Its contribution to GDP amounted to USD 231.6 billion in 2023 and, according to forecast estimates, is expected to reach USD 523.6 billion by 2034 [3].

In 2013, 80.7% of revenues were generated by domestic tourists and 19.3% by international tourists; by 2023, these figures had changed to 85.8% and 14.2%, respectively [4]. Moreover, foreign exchange earnings from tourism increased from USD 3.46 billion in 2000 to USD 30.6 billion in 2019; however, due to the impact of the pandemic, they declined to USD 16.93 billion in 2022 [5].

It should be noted that, under the influence of globalization, the tourism sector is becoming increasingly digitalized. In 2014, 39.05 thousand foreign tourists visited through the use of electronic visas, whereas between 2019 and 2024 this figure reached nearly 3 million, indicating a growing trend toward the wide adoption of innovative technologies in the sector.

In these processes, outsourcing relationships in tourism play a significant role, with their scope extending to the outsourcing of artificial intelligence-based technologies. It is important to emphasize that in the development of India's tourism industry, the role of outsourcing in information technology (IT) and business process management (BPO) services is steadily increasing and becoming more diversified.

Table 1. Characteristics of outsourcing utilization in the tourism sector of India.

Tourism Industry		Outsourcing Characteristics				
Category	Sector/Direction	By purpose of outsourcing	By form of outsourcing	By scale of outsourcing	By duration of outsourcing implementation	By mode of outsourcing delivery
Tourism Companies	Marketing programs	IT		Onshoring	Long-term	Full

	Online sales		Front office			
Hotels	Recruitment and personnel selection	BPO	Back office			Full, partial
	Cleaning and housekeeping services					

Source: Compiled by the author.

Information technology outsourcing is applied in tourism for the development of strategic marketing programs and the expansion of online sales. In India, IT outsourcing has played a significant role not only in facilitating and simplifying the use of resources, but also in the emergence of OTAs (Online Travel Agencies) in the form of online, virtual, and electronic travel portals.

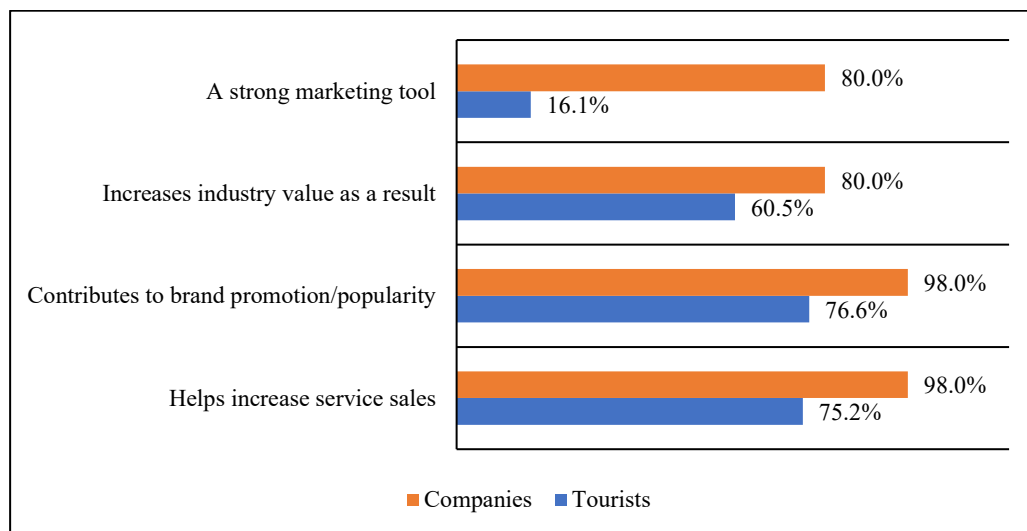
In the country, OTAs operating under merchant and agency models are established and approved by the government and, within the scope of their activities, enter into contracts with international organizations. In India, OTAs exist in two main forms. Under the merchant model, tourism companies sell their services directly to OTAs, whereas under the agency model, they act as partners and earn revenue accordingly. In this case, the promotion and advertising of tourism companies are carried out through OTA investments. It should be noted that today more than 50% of travel transactions in India are conducted through OTAs [6]. At the same time, OTAs have not only negatively but also positively influenced the efficiency of traditional (offline) travel agencies.

It is worth noting that in 2023, the online sales volume of OTAs in India amounted to USD 15.6 billion, and it is projected to reach USD 28.4 billion by 2029 [7]. In particular, between 2022 and 2023, this figure increased from USD 226 billion to USD 600 billion, representing approximately 165.4% growth, and is expected to grow by 39.6% to reach USD 838 billion by 2029 [8]. This implies that India's share in the global online tourism market will rise to around 3.3%.

Currently, in India, outsourcing of VR (Virtual Reality) and AR (Augmented Reality) technologies is being used to develop marketing programs aimed at attracting tourists to sports, educational, cultural tourism, and festivals. These technologies make it possible to simulate and visually reconstruct ruined or deteriorated historical sites, attractions, landmarks, and artifacts, projecting them onto large screens, walls, and even open spaces. This, in turn, enhances the investment attractiveness of tourism objects. Today, tourists show high demand not only for tour packages but also for simulated and immersive services [9].

In particular, phenomena that are otherwise only imaginable—such as global warming, glacier melting, natural disasters, and volcanic eruptions—can be recreated virtually through various technological tools, thereby increasing tourists' interest in such destinations. In this regard, major tourism companies such as Marriott International, Hilton Worldwide, and Thomas Cook Group are contributing to the creation of a strong competitive environment in the country's online tourism market through the use of these technologies.

According to research examining the attitudes of tourism companies and tourists toward the effectiveness of VR and AR technologies used in India's tourism sector, outsourcing of these technologies has a positive impact of 80% on marketing effectiveness and significance, and 98% on increasing sector value, enhancing brand popularity, and boosting the sales of tourism services [10]. Below are the perspectives of tourists and companies regarding the role of these technologies in tourism.



Graph 1. Impact of outsourcing of VR and AR technologies on company performance in the tourism sector of India [11].

Source: Adapted from Jamgade, S., & Jayaprakash, A. (2023), pp. 116–117.

The outsourcing of these technologies has a significant impact on companies when implemented in a back-office form, while in a front-office form it positively contributes to increasing tourists' satisfaction with services. In particular, the perceived importance of cultural-historical tourism, sports, and festivals among tourists reached 60.5%, while brand popularity accounted for 76.6%.

The use of these technologies in tourism was valued at USD 6.49 billion in the global market in 2023, and it is projected to grow by 24.9% during 2024–2030 [12]. By 2025, revenues from VR and AR technologies in India are expected to reach USD 917.5 million. It is also observed that the country is becoming a leading nation in the development of software for these technologies by 2025 [13].

Moreover, in the tourism market of India, IT outsourcing—particularly the use of Big Data technologies—is widely applied in developing marketing strategies to meet the rapidly growing demands of tourists. According to research, three large tourism companies and corporations, each employing 3,000–4,000 workers and generating annual revenues of USD 330–675 million, experienced a 1.5% to 3% increase in quarterly revenues after outsourcing Big Data technologies such as AHP, DEMATEL, and MCDM [14].

This technology enables the systematization of vast and fragmented data—such as India's rich historical experience in tourism, advanced digital technologies, diversified marketing, advertising tools, accumulated expertise, and tourists' feedback and preferences in virtual environments—thereby facilitating optimal decision-making and solutions. Through the digitization of tourism development from historical periods and great geographical discoveries to the present day, Big Data forms an immense virtual information base. Since analyzing such large-scale data exceeds the capacity of conventional computing systems, it has necessitated the adoption of Big Data-based programming solutions.

In this regard, researchers emphasize that Big Data has triggered a revolution in business, particularly noting that its outsourcing enables companies to better understand consumer demand, market conditions, competitors, and the overall business environment [15]. Large datasets help tourism companies capture consumers' emotions, unique perceptions, and authentic experiences [16]. Furthermore, Big Data-driven outsourcing of services in India enhances operational efficiency, reduces managerial risks, strengthens relationships with tourists, and creates competitive advantages through effective

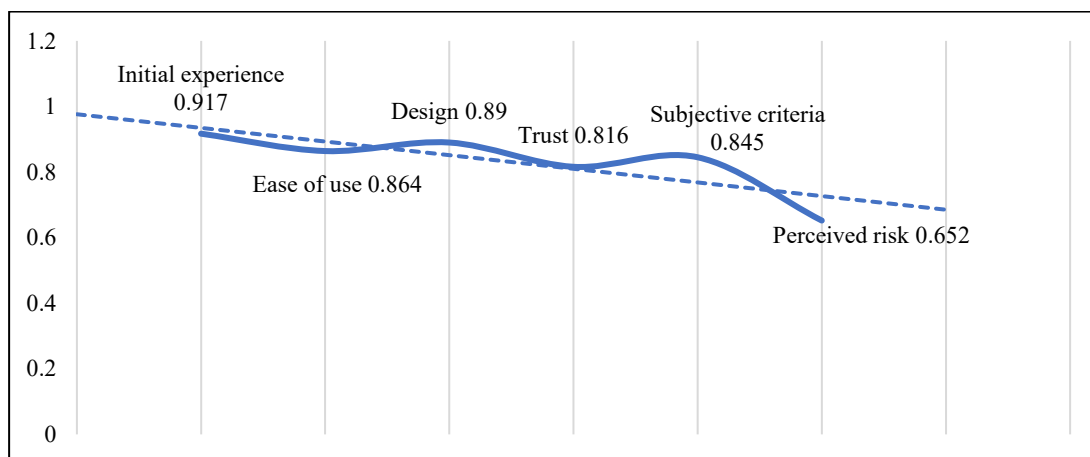
marketing strategies. It also helps tourism companies better understand customer needs, gain market share, and significantly increase revenue.

It is worth noting that the market value of these technologies in India is estimated at USD 2.34 billion by 2025 and is projected to reach USD 3.38 billion by 2030, growing at an average annual rate of 7.66% [17]. Globally, the Big Data market—rapidly expanding within the tourism sector—is expected to reach USD 486.6 billion by 2033 [18].

Additionally, in India's tourism sector, the development of internet platforms and online services is also outsourced to IT providers. In this regard, studies by Dankar and Kumar on the attractiveness of tourism company websites and the barriers affecting them demonstrate the importance of outsourcing platform development in the future [19, 20]. Specifically, the following factors have been identified as influencing the attractiveness of platforms and increasing tourists' use of websites and applications in the country:

- First experience — the initial impression a tourist gains when using the platform for the first time;
- Ease of use and convenience of websites and applications;
- Aesthetic and appealing design of the platform;
- Trust;
- Subjective factors;
- Security.

The impact of these factors can be represented within a confidence interval ranging from 0 to 1 as follows.



Graph 2. Effectiveness of factors influencing the attractiveness of tourism IT outsourcing websites and applications in India [21]. Conditional scale: 0 = low, 1 = high.

Source: *Firmino Gaspar. Pre-Traveling experience in Online Booking Platforms. Copenhagen Business School 2019. P-1-90.*

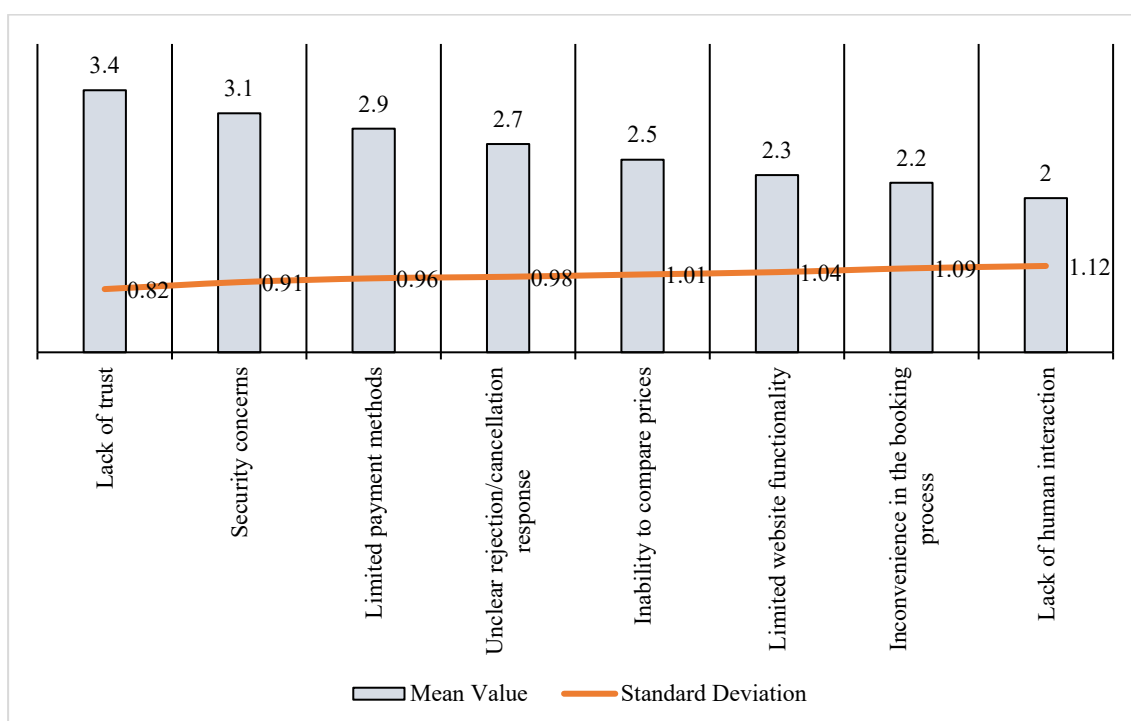
According to research findings, the primary factor determining the attractiveness of tourism platforms in India is the **initial experience** of tourists, which plays a crucial role. This is followed by the platform's **design**, including relevant images, graphics, and overall aesthetics. It has also been demonstrated by F. Gasparo, M. Priscillia, and Sh. Ahmadi that a positive initial experience and attractive design reduce the perceived risk of tourism websites and applications in the eyes of tourists [22, 23, 24].

According to studies on the impact of online tourism service outsourcing on the revenue and efficiency of offline travel agencies in India [25], the increasing number of traditional travel agencies in the country can be explained by the high likelihood that tourists repeatedly turn to the agency or platform that provided them with a positive first impression. At the same time, the existence of several barriers that hinder tourists' use of

online services in India highlights the need for caution in utilizing IT outsourcing in tourism [26]. These include:

- The growth of fraudulent platforms, leading tourists to doubt the authenticity of online tourism services and lose trust in online information;
- Concerns over the misuse or leakage of personal and financial data;
- Limited payment methods for online tourism services;
- Lack of clarity in rejection or cancellation responses;
- Inability to compare prices simultaneously across different options;
- Limited functionality and inconvenience of websites and applications;
- Absence of human interaction in online services.

These barriers contribute to a lack of trust among tourists toward IT outsourcing tools. In fact, in online tourism services, the **risk factor** constitutes an integral part of the platform's overall structure [27]. Below, the impact of these factors leading to the underutilization of tourism IT outsourcing websites and applications is presented.



Graph 3. Impact of factors hindering tourists' use of websites and applications in India [28].

Source: Adapted from P. Kumar, Dr. V. Kumar. (2023). 1913-1916.

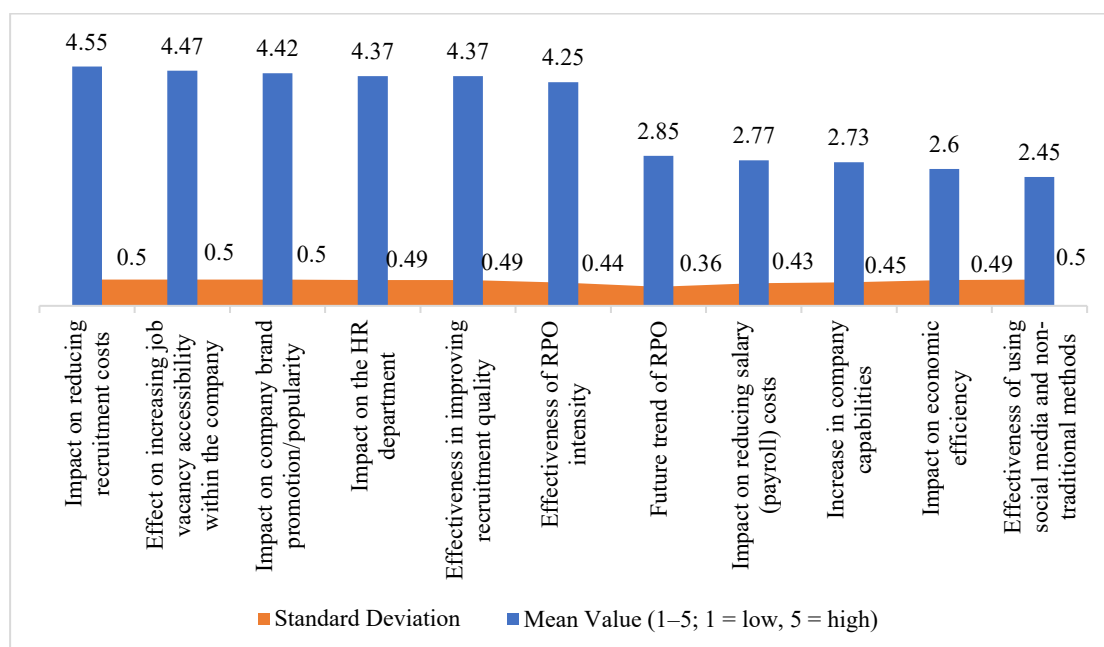
The outsourcing of tasks such as the development of websites and applications, as well as marketing activities by tourism companies in the country, significantly contributes to attracting tourists and increasing the number of bookings in the tourism market. In particular, online travel bookings in India amounted to USD 23.238 million in 2021, and it is projected to increase by 149.2% to reach USD 57.924 million by 2030 [29].

Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) also plays an important role in India's tourism sector. This includes outsourcing services such as recruitment and personnel selection, cleaning, and housekeeping functions. In particular, under conditions of rapid development of software, technologies, and digitalization processes in India's tourism industry, human resource (HR) departments often struggle to meet demand. Factors such as the inability to develop strategic models, difficulties in staffing short-term rigid projects,

the need to reduce costs, strengthen operational processes, increase efficiency, minimize threats to company reputation, and improve team management have led to a growing demand for recruitment services. These services are provided by Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO) companies in the country.

According to studies conducted among 100 luxury-category hotel chains in India [30], 53.3% of hotels use recruitment services internally, 38.3% partially outsource them, and 8.3% fully outsource them. It should be noted that more than 54.5% of hotels in India outsource payroll management services based on KPI criteria. In India, 64.8% of hotels outsource the recruitment of managers and senior-level executives, 31.5% outsource lower- and mid-level staff recruitment, 29.6% outsource entry-level staff selection, and 14.8% outsource part-time staff recruitment.

This type of outsourcing significantly helps tourism companies distinguish between core and non-core activities. Selected personnel are better aligned with company strategy and are directed toward identifying and driving key development factors. As a result, company performance and competitiveness improve. Below, the impact of using RPO outsourcing on hotel performance is calculated based on a five-point Likert scale.



Graph 3. Performance indicators of tourism companies using RPO outsourcing in the tourism sector of India [31].

Source: Adopted from Nadda, Vipin, Rafiq, Z and Tyagi, P (2017).

In this form of outsourcing, it is possible to observe both cost reduction and increased efficiency. As tourism companies expand, management mechanisms become more complex, and under conditions of reduced control, the need for employees to make independent decisions increases.

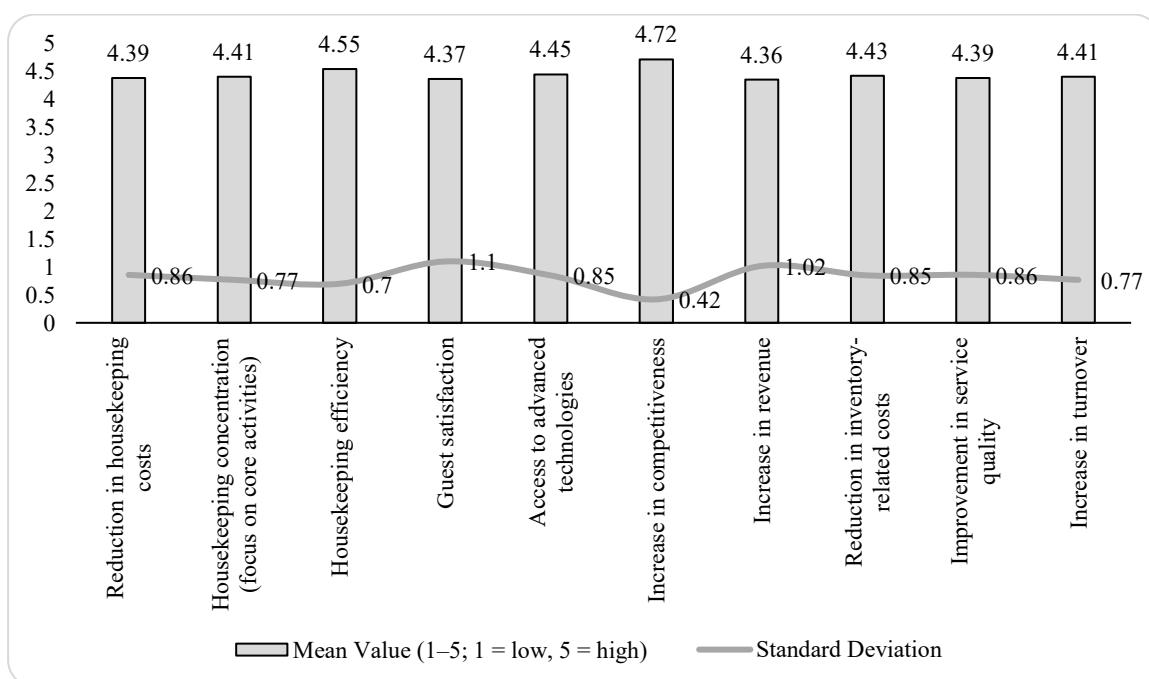
It should be noted that RPO outsourcing is becoming an important factor in the expansion of tourism companies, which is also evident from global recruitment market trends. In particular, the global RPO outsourcing market was valued at USD 757.56 billion in 2023 and is projected to reach USD 2.031 trillion by 2031, growing at an average annual rate of 13.1% [32]. In India, this market was valued at USD 18.06 billion in 2022 and is expected to grow by 13.2% to reach USD 48.53 billion by 2030 [33].

In India's tourism sector, integration processes play a significant role in ensuring efficient allocation of resources under highly competitive conditions, developing new

business strategies, and optimizing costs. In this regard, tourism companies in the country—particularly hotels—are actively applying outsourcing-based business strategies to compete successfully. In such cases, companies outsource functions such as accommodation services, laundry, security, surveillance, entertainment activities, landscaping, staff training and development, information systems, and technical maintenance [34].

In five-star hotels in India, housekeeping services are increasingly outsourced (housekeeping outsourcing) to achieve higher efficiency, improved skills, flexibility, access to new services, and increased liquidity. In this process, housekeeping-related jobs are transferred to third-party companies, and all employee-related costs are paid within an agreed contractual amount. The outsourcing company covers wages and all other payments for housekeeping staff from its own resources. Outsourcing managers coordinate operations between both parties, while overall supervision remains the responsibility of the outsourcing provider.

In Indian hotels, outsourced housekeeping staff operate on a regular basis similarly to in-house employees. As a result, hotels reduce excess costs and focus more on their core activities. According to studies, housekeeping outsourcing has led to an 88% reduction and optimization in cleaning costs, a 87.4% increase in customer satisfaction, an 89% rise in hotel competitiveness, and an 85% improvement in access to advanced technologies. Additionally, financial costs decreased by 88%, revenues increased by 84%, and product-related expenses declined by 83% [35].



Graph 4. Efficiency of using housekeeping outsourcing in hotels in India [36].

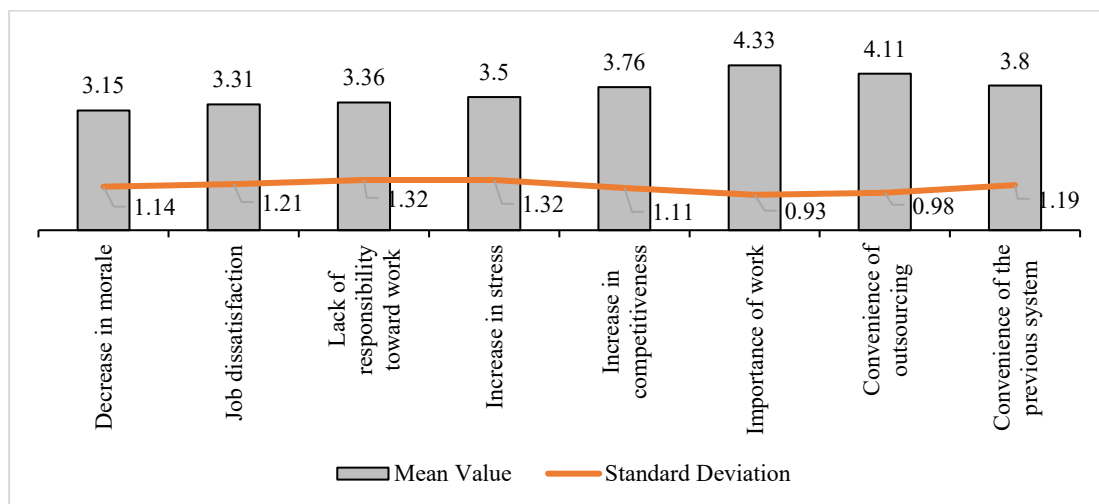
Source: Adopted from Tiwari A., Singh M., Dahiya A. (2023) pp. 6-9.

According to the diagram above, housekeeping outsourcing has had a significant impact on the competitiveness and efficiency of this service. It has also led to a reduction in the costs associated with organizing cleaning and housekeeping services. The resources saved create opportunities for companies to implement new technologies and attract investments.

Along with the positive effects of housekeeping outsourcing on company performance, it is also important to consider the attitudes of cleaning and housekeeping

staff toward outsourcing processes. In fact, the introduction of outsourcing in the housekeeping sector directly leads to workforce reductions and the transformation of employees into third-party staff. In contrast, other types of outsourcing do not pose a threat to existing employees; instead, they simplify their previous functions and improve efficiency.

Studies have been conducted in Indian hotels regarding the negative impacts of housekeeping outsourcing on employees and the subsequent strategies of managers [37]. According to these studies, the competitiveness of housekeeping staff was rated at 74%, while their performance in the new system reached 86%. The survey results were presented based on a five-point Likert scale as follows.



Graph 5. Impact of housekeeping outsourcing on employees in hotels in India [37].

Source: Adopted from Akshita T., Dr. Malini Singh, Dr. Ashish Dahiya (2021).

The research results show that respondents who consider their work important, regardless of outsourcing processes, have higher scores compared to other parameters. The remaining indicators demonstrate almost similar values.

It should be noted that the relevance of outsourcing in India's tourism sector is steadily increasing, and it encourages hotel managers to adopt resilient, risk-resistant management approaches under any circumstances. At the same time, managers need to reassure employees that they remain valuable to the company and that their jobs are secure. In this regard, taking into account employee satisfaction and performance indicators ensures that outsourcing decisions are implemented in a correct and reliable manner.

In conclusion, in the context of globalization, outsourcing relations—considered a modern business model—are widely applied in India's tourism industry as a means of regulating rising costs and striving for efficiency, ultimately enabling companies to gain a competitive advantage in an increasingly intense market environment. In tourism, outsourcing is primarily used by travel companies to enhance marketing and increase online sales, thereby improving their attractiveness in the online market through full delegation to external providers. In the hotel sector, outsourcing is mainly applied in housekeeping and recruitment functions, both partially and fully. As a result, tourism companies have achieved positive outcomes.

It is important to emphasize that outsourcing also performs an integrative function in the digitalization of the tourism industry and its active participation in the online market. Today, more than 50% of tourism services are delivered through online sales. This

trend suggests that, in the future, companies will further concentrate on outsourcing as a key mechanism for generating revenue from tourism services.

In India's tourism sector, outsourcing services are also used to develop optimal marketing strategies based on large-scale and fragmented data. The use of Big Data outsourcing by companies has been observed to enhance economic efficiency. Moreover, Big Data outsourcing enables effective management of tourist flows, targeted concentration of marketing campaigns, analysis of tourism infrastructure, and the creation of personalized service packages for customers.

Outsourcing the development of tourism platforms helps companies increase their competitiveness in the online market. This, in turn, improves the quality of products and services, attracts more tourist inquiries, increases conversion rates, and leads to more stable revenue generation.

In addition to IT outsourcing, the widespread use of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) in India's tourism sector plays a crucial role, especially under conditions of rapid digitalization, technological advancement, rising tourist demand, and accelerated automation processes. In this sector, BPO outsourcing is mainly applied in hotels for recruitment and housekeeping services, including the selection, screening, and management of personnel.

Business process outsourcing enables tourism companies to optimize workflows, regulate and control increasing financial costs, improve workforce efficiency, empower skilled employees to make independent decisions, strengthen competitiveness, and effectively utilize modern technologies.

Conclusion

To sum up, the findings indicate that outsourcing has become a fundamental component of India's tourism industry. IT outsourcing plays a crucial role in developing marketing strategies, expanding online sales, and supporting the growth of Online Travel Agencies (OTAs), which now account for more than 50% of travel transactions.

Advanced technologies such as VR and AR, when outsourced, significantly enhance marketing effectiveness, improve brand recognition, and increase customer engagement. These technologies also contribute to the creation of immersive tourism experiences, thereby raising the investment attractiveness of tourism destinations.

Big Data outsourcing has proven to be highly effective in optimizing decision-making processes, analyzing consumer behavior, and improving marketing strategies. Empirical results show that companies using Big Data outsourcing experience measurable increases in revenue and operational efficiency.

In the hotel sector, BPO and RPO outsourcing are widely used for recruitment, payroll management, and housekeeping services. The results demonstrate that housekeeping outsourcing leads to substantial cost reductions, improved service quality, and increased competitiveness. However, it also presents challenges related to employee morale, job security, and workforce adaptation.

Despite its advantages, outsourcing in tourism faces several barriers, including lack of trust in online platforms, security concerns, limited payment options, and insufficient functionality of digital services. Addressing these challenges is essential for maximizing the benefits of outsourcing.

Overall, the study confirms that outsourcing enhances efficiency, supports digital transformation, and strengthens the competitive position of tourism companies in India. It is expected that the role of outsourcing will continue to grow as the tourism industry becomes increasingly technology-driven and customer-oriented.

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