

Article

The impact of vlogs on travellers' intentions to use semi-high speed trains: A study on Vande Bharat Express

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Abstract: Recently, there has been a lot of buzz on social media, particularly in the form of vlogs, about newly launched semi-high speed trains in India popularly known as Vande Bharat Express. However, no information is available about the extent to which people trust the vlogs promoting the trains and the trains themselves. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the impact of watching vlogs about semi-high speed trains on the trust and attitude towards them, and how they perceive the risks associated. This study is guided by the trust transfer theory to investigate how trust transference can lead to a traveler's intent to use semi-high speed trains. This study involved 338 participants. The relationship between variables was examined using SmartPLS 4 software. The findings indicate that trust in semi-high speed trains can be established through vlogs leading to intention to use. On the theoretical side, it provides insight into how trust, attitude, and perceived risk can affect the adoption of new technology, while on the practical side, it helps to understand how vlog coverage can be used as a tool to increase trust and ultimately drive adoption. Vlog coverage, trust in vlog content, trust in semi-high speed trains and behavioural intention altogether are not well understood in current literature despite the important implication for managers, academicians and consumers alike. This study contributes to the field of transportation and railways, social media and communication, and hospitality and tourism research. The study helps policy makers to understand users' characteristics regarding the latest social media tools and adopt them accordingly to provide a better governance policy.

Keywords: vlogs coverage; Vande Bharat Express; trust transfer theory; semi-high speed trains; railways; infrastructure governance

1. Introduction

The world's fourth largest railway in the world, Indian Railways has been growing with a phenomenal growth rate of 25% in its revenue to 29 billion US dollar for the year 2022–2023 (IBEF, 2023). There is an increasing focus given by the government to railways in India, and it's projected to contribute to 40% of the global share of rail activity by 2050. The first semi-high speed trains also known as Vande Bharat Express, a type of high-speed passenger transportation system, was launched by the government in 2019 (Economic Times, 2023). This train has recently grabbed significant media attention in India due to a series of reported accidents. One particularly noteworthy article published by Hindustan Times on 09 November 2022, highlighted four major accidents occurring within a month of the operation of Vande Bharat Express (Hindustan Times, 2022). These accidents involved collisions with people, herds of buffaloes, cows, and operational glitches. Moreover, incidents of

stone pelting have also been reported (Economic Times, 2023). These acts pose a big safety risk and a loss of trust. The repercussions of these accidents can raise concerns about safety and can also impact passenger behavior. Trust plays a pivotal role in the acceptance and adoption of new transportation systems (Borhan et al., 2019), and the decline in trust can have detrimental effects. Therefore, this research aims to address this critical gap in the literature by examining the factors influencing trust in semi-high speed trains and exploring their relationship with attitudes and behaviours.

Subsequently, trust in the adoption of new transit technologies has been studied in varied contexts, like AI-powered chatbots for public transport services (Kuberkar and Singhal, 2020), automated transit technology (Nesheli et al., 2021), collaborative transit apps (Sarker et al., 2019), transit user loyalty (Imaz et al., 2015), and mobile ticketing applications in public transit (Bartin et al., 2018). The consumer's concerns about cost, performance, and safety heavily rely on trust in these technologies. Similarly, with Vande Bharat Express, many potential passengers holds a negative attitude and perceive high levels of risk associated with accidents, and system malfunction. Therefore, the lack of trust and little understanding of semi-high speed train technologies will likely hinder their acceptance and usage. Trust serves a fundamental role in reducing perceived risk in varied contexts like online purchasers (Harridge-March, 2006), launching new products (Nienaber and Schewe, 2014), user acceptance of a new technology service (Lee and Song, 2013), consumers' group buying behavior (Liu et al., 2013), public's acceptance of automated vehicles (Zhang et al., 2019), and driving automation (Stapel et al., 2022). Thus, establishing trust is crucial for ensuring the success of Vande Bharat Express trains in India.

To build trust, it is essential to delve into different strategies, including leveraging social media platforms. Research studies conducted by Cheng et al., (2017); Hajli (2014); Mainardes and Cardoso, (2019); etc. have shown that social media can have a positive and direct impact on trust. Vlogs, in particular, have been found to be effective in building trust (Aslam et al., 2022). However, trust transfer theory suggests that when a close affiliation exists between a trusted entity and an unknown one, trust can be transferred from the former to the latter (Chen et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2015; Yu et al., 2016). For example, trust in semi-high speed train could be established through vlogs, without experiencing the trains first-hand. While trust transfer theory has been studied in hospitality and tourism research, examining its impact on visitors' attitude toward hosting destinations (Lee et al., 2014), the influence of eWOM on destination trust and travel intention in medical tourism (Abubakar, 2016), the formation of trust among travellers (Kim and Kim, 2020), and hosts in P2P Accommodation (Park and Tussyadiah, 2020). However, there are limited research on how the trust transfer process affects travel intentions in the context of semi-high speed trains. Hence, current study aims to address this gap by using trust transfer theory to examine the relationship between trust in vlogs and trust in semi-high speed trains. Moreover, the study aims to understand how trust in one domain, in this case vlogs, can transfer to another domain, such as semi-high speed trains, and what factors may influence this transfer of trust. Therefore, this research will answer the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent do individuals place trust the semi-high speed trains?
- 2) How do people perceive and trust vlogs that provide information about semi-high

speed trains?

- 3) How trust is transferred from one medium (trust in vlogs) to the another (trust in semi-high speed trains)?

Objective of the study

Building upon identified research gaps and the research questions outlined. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the factors influencing trust in semi-high speed trains, with a specific focus on the Vande Bharat Express in India. The research aims to explore the relationship between trust, attitudes, and behaviors of potential passengers towards semi-high speed trains. Additionally, the study seeks to examine the role of vlogs as a medium in shaping trust and perceptions related to this mode of transportation.

We did an empirical assessment of our study model utilising SmartPLS. The data was acquired from respondents who have used semi-high speed trains. Moreover, this research has various implications. The study extends existing models by incorporating trust transfer theory to investigate travel mode usage behaviour, which deepens our understanding of the variables influencing behavioural intentions. The theoretical implications are valuable for scholars, as it extend existing model. From a practical standpoint, the findings of this research offer valuable insights to industry stakeholders. Specifically, the study provides a better understanding of the role of trust in videos about semi-high speed train technology in shaping potential travellers' intentions. By leveraging the insights, a more effective communication and promotional strategies can be built to enhance trust and drive the adoption (Bassey et al., 2023).

In terms of the flow of the remaining paper, the subsequent sections will delve into a comprehensive review of the relevant literature. The methodology section describes the research design, data gathering, and analysis. Following that, the results and analysis section will present the findings. Next, the conclusion will summarize the key findings, subsequently highlighting the theoretical and practical implications. Finally, the limitation and suggestions for future research.

2. Literature review

2.1. Trust transfer theory

Trust transfer theory is used to explain how trust in one domain can transfer trust in another domain (Stewart, 2003). The Trust Transfer Theory was initially formulated by Stewart et al. in 1999. This idea is based on the fundamental premise that trust established in a specific setting can be extended to another, particularly when there is a perceived similarity or association between the two situations (Kim and Kim, 2020). Critics of Trust Transfer Theory argue that the universality and applicability of trust transfer are subject to scrutiny and can be altered by several factors, such as individual variances and contextual specificity (Wu et al., 2016). Notwithstanding these objections, the theory offers a significant framework for comprehending how trust in one domain might influence trust in another (Kim and Kim, 2020). The theory points out that trust can be transferred from one source to another, based on a perceived similarity between the sources. The similarity can be based on various characteristics

such as physical similarity (Lee et al., 2014), behavioural similarity (Yang et al., 2015), or functional similarity (Wang et al., 2013). For example, if an individual trusts a vlog on Vande Bharat Express, they may also trust the information provided. Building trust will be a key component of mass media campaigns using vlogs, as it takes trust for people to adopt new technologies (Cheng et al., 2019). Therefore, the theory of trust transfer can be applied in this study to understand how trust in vlogs influences trust in trains and the factors that influence the transfer of trust. Moreover, this study will give insights on how the trust built on vlogs can be used to promote trust in new technology such as Vande Bharat Express trains. The trust transfer theory has been utilized in various studies to investigate this phenomenon. For example, Lee et al., (2014) found that attitude towards a mega event can influence attitude towards the host country. Similarly, a study by Chen et al. (2015) discovered that trust in the platform among Chinese online users can affect trust in the seller. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that trust in vlog videos about semi-high speed trains can translate to trust in the technology.

2.2. Semi-high speed train

The concept of semi-high speed trains has gained a lot of attention after the foundation stone for India's first high-speed train project between Mumbai and Ahmedabad was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan in 2017 (Press Information Bureau, 2017). The idea of semi-high speed trains is rooted in sustainable development and carbon neutrality which can bring the potential benefits to the economy and society (Gupta and Garg, 2020). The development of semi-high speed trains has been a significant trend in many countries like Korea (Kim et al., 2018), Japan (Clever and Hansen, 2008), and China (He et al., 2017) with the goal of providing fast, efficient, and sustainable transportation. The introduction of semi-high speed trains is a relatively new development in India, with the first such project, the Vande Bharat Express, launched in February 2019 by India's Prime Minister. The train runs from New Delhi railway station to Varanasi (Moneycontrol, 2019), since then the train is running on 25 other routes as of July 2023. Semi-high speed trains can reduce travel time, thus promoting economic growth by increasing mobility and connectivity (Borhan et al., 2019; Cheng, 2010; Harvey et al., 2014). This is particularly relevant for India, where the population is projected to continue growing (Wei et al., 2019), and the demand for transportation is expected to increase. The introduction of semi-high speed trains can lead to a reduction in traffic congestion, air pollution, and dependence on fossil fuels (Cheng, 2010). Additionally, it can also have a positive impact on the tourism industry by making it easier for tourists to visit popular destinations (Li and Chen, 2020; Mishra, 2020).

2.3. Vlogs coverage

Vlogs, also known as video blogs, are a form of digital content that typically feature a person or group of people sharing their thoughts, experiences, or information about a particular topic (Ashton and Patel, 2018). They are typically posted on video-sharing platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook (Berryman, 2020). Vlogs can cover a wide range of topics, including travel (Cheng et al., 2023),

education (Debbag and Fidan, 2021), lifestyle (Lee and Watkins, 2016), social issues (Raby et al., 2018), and technology (Silaban et al., 2022). In this study, vlogs may be used to provide coverage and information about semi-high speed train technology and services.

Vlogs can provide a personal perspective, which can make vlogs more relatable and understandable to viewers (Silaban et al., 2022). Moreover, as a form of user-generated content, vlogs can provide a level of authenticity, which can increase trust (Winterlin et al., 2020). Vlogs provides a more interactive platform by allowing personalized experience through the creation of individual channels, uploading videos, and the option for users to engage with others using comments or direct messages (Xu et al., 2021). Therefore, vlogs has expanded its reach beyond just digital entertainment and now includes educational (Debbag and Fidan, 2021), political (Raby et al., 2018), business (Lee and Watkins, 2016), marketing videos (De Veirman et al., 2019), and traveling (Xu et al., 2021).

Given the significant impact of vlogs on shaping attitudes (Folkvord et al., 2019), beliefs (Debbag and Fidan, 2021), perception (Harvey et al., 2014), and intention (Lee and Watkins, 2016), it is becoming increasingly common to use vlogs. The semi-high speed train is no exception, as it has seen a surge in interest following the successful launch of the first Vande Bharat Express train on February 15, 2019, with over 10 million views being recorded for the top 10 videos.

2.4. Attitude

In social psychology, attitude is a construct that refers to a person's overall evaluation of a particular object, person, or situation. It is a learned disposition that reflects a person's feelings, beliefs, and behavioural intentions towards a certain object or idea (Sherif and Cantril, 1945). According to Ajzen (1991) attitude as "the degree to which a person has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation or appraisal of the behaviour". Attitudes are composed of cognitive, affective and behavioural components, which are the beliefs, emotions, and actions that a person holds towards a specific object or idea (Ostrom, 1969).

A study conducted by Harvey et al. (2014) on the perception of high-speed rail in UK shows that attitude as a construct has a significant role in building perception. Using the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) to analyse passenger perceptions of high-speed trains in Libya, Borhan et al. (2019) discovered that promoting the new trains through mass media (such as television and social media) had a significant beneficial impact on perceptions. Therefore, the current study suggests that people will be more likely to use Vande Bharat Express train when they have a positive attitude about it.

2.5. Perceived risk

Perceived risk refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of the likelihood and potential consequences of negative outcomes known as risk associated with a specific action or behaviour (Dowling, 1986). This can include risks related to financial, social, physical, or psychological outcomes (Jacoby and Kaplan, 1972). Perceived risk can be influenced by a variety of factors such as personal experiences, past behaviours,

emotions, and information availability (Fischer and De Vries, 2008). When consumers are exposed to new products, services, or technologies, they often perceive a degree of risk due to the inherent uncertainty or lack of information about the product, service, or technology (Thilina and Gunawardane, 2019). This is particularly relevant in the context of semi-high speed trains, as this technology may be new or unfamiliar to potential passengers.

A study by Han et al. (2020) found that when people try something new, they typically face four main types of risks or uncertainties: functional risk (Simcock et al., 2006), physical risk (Han et al., 2020), psychological risk (Thilina and Gunawardane, 2019) and financial risk (Han et al., 2020).

2.6. Behavioral intention

Behavioral intention refers to an individual's willingness to perform a specific behaviour in a given situation (Ajzen, 1991). It is a construct that predicts an individual's likelihood of engaging in a particular behaviour. Behavioral intention is considered to be a strong predictor of actual behaviour and is often used as a key indicator of success in various fields such as marketing, health promotion, and social change (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of Vande Bharat Express, behavioural intention can be used to predict an individual's likelihood travelling in train. Factors such as vlog coverage, attitude, perceived risk, trust in vlog content, and trust in trains can influence an individual's behavioural intention towards Vande Bharat Express trains.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Relationships among vlog coverage, attitude, perceived risk, and trust in vlog content

The research shows that social media coverage including the vlogs can have a significant role in predicting 'attitude' (Stefanidis et al., 2022), reducing perceived risk (Nienaber and Schewe, 2014), and 'trust in vlog content' (Rutsaert et al., 2013). A positive attitude towards Vande Bharat Express trains can result in a higher behavioural intention. Consequently, if an individual perceives a high level of risk resulting in a lower behavioural intention to use. Therefore, addressing the relationships among vlog coverage, attitude, perceived risk, and trust in vlog content can be crucial for promoting the adoption and acceptance of Vande Bharat Express trains. For example, a study conducted by (Lee and Watkins, 2016), examines how vlogs influence the consumer perceptions of luxury brands. The results show that luxury brand perceptions and purchase intentions is influenced by the attitude. Therefore, we hypothesized that:

H1: Vlog coverage of semi-high speed trains will positively influence the attitude

Also, the perceived risk can be an influential factor in the travellers wanting to use Vande Bharat Express trains. A study conducted by Chemli et al. (2022) shows how media coverage and the perceived risks related to travel and tourism during pandemic time. The result suggest that physical perceived risk influenced by the media coverage for future travelling. Another study conducted by Toanoglou et al. (2022),

confirms that media coverage affects tourists' perceived risk. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Vlog coverage of semi-high speed trains will positively influence perceived risk.

Moreover, for trust, a study conducted by Fitriani et al., (2020) reported that product review videos influence credibility in vlog content. Moreover, the results show that communication styles namely, social-oriented and task-oriented affect audience trust. An explorative study conducted by Folkvord et al. (2019), assessed the relationship between children's bonding with the vlogger and viewing duration. The result shows that there is a positive impact on children's bonding with the vlogger and viewing duration indicating trust building. Thus, based on the above findings, it is reasonable to suppose that semi-high speed trains related vlogs will have a significant impact on viewers' trust in vlog content and on their attitudes to and perceived risk. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H3: Vlog coverage of semi-high speed trains will positively influence trust in vlog content.

In addition to examining the direct relationships among vlog coverage, attitude, perceived risk, and trust in vlog content, this study aims to explore the mediating role of attitude in shaping the behavioral intention of potential passengers towards Semi-high speed trains.

3.2. Relationship between attitude and behavioural intention

The relationship between attitude and behavioural intention is that attitude can predict and influence an individual's behaviour. The research demonstrates a strong correlation between behavioural intention and attitude (McLeod, 1990). For instance, (Miranda et al., 2021) discovered that Portuguese respondents were more likely to purchase youtuber generated products if they had a positive attitude toward the youtuber generated product content. Similar findings were made by (Jung et al., 2020), who discovered that a Chinese consumers sustainable apparel products attitudes had a strong positive effect on the purchase intention toward sustainable apparel products. Therefore, understanding the relationship between attitude and behavioural intention can be crucial for adoption of Vande Bharat Express trains. This suggests the following hypotheses:

H4: Attitude toward semi-high speed trains has a positive effect on the behavioral intention.

3.3. Relationship between perceived risk and behavioural intention

The relationship between perceived risk and behavioural intention is that perceived risk can influence an individual's decision to engage in a particular behaviour. The research demonstrates a strong relationship between perceived risk and behavioural intention (Lăzăroiu et al., 2020). Also, perceived risk may lead to a negative perception, as reported by (Sohn et al., 2016) while studying a case of local festival visitors in South Korea. For example, a study conducted by (Rutsaert et al., 2014) found that individuals who perceived a high level of risk associated with vlog content were less likely to trust the content and had a negative attitude towards it. Therefore, the present study indicates that travellers who have a low functional,

physical, psychological, and financial risk of using Vande Bharat Express will have a negative impact on intention to use. Thus, we hypothesises that

H5: Perceived risk has a negative effect on intention to use semi-high speed trains.

3.4. Relationships among trust in vlog content, trust in semi-high speed trains, and behavioural intention

The relationships among trust in vlog content, trust in semi-high speed trains, and behavioural intention are complex and interconnected. Research suggests that trust in vlog content can have a significant impact on an individual's trust in semi-high speed trains. For example a study conducted by (Yu et al., 2016) shows that how trust is transferred from one medium to the another in this case trust in online payment to the trust in mobile payment. Another study conducted by (Chen et al., 2015), revealed that how trust in platform positively affects the trust in the seller. Therefore, we hypothesized that-

H6: Trust in vlog content has a positive effect on trust in semi-high speed trains.

Trust in vlog content can also serve as a predictor of behavioural intention, as individuals who trust the vlog content are more likely to have a higher intention to use (Stefanidis et al., 2022). Moreover, studies have shown that trust can also predict behavioural intention (Fitriani et al., 2020). For example, a study conducted by (Folkvord et al., 2019) found that children who had a strong bond with the vlogger had a longer viewing duration, indicating that trust building is positively related to the viewing duration. Therefore, the relationships between trust in semi-high speed trains, and behavioural intention can be crucial. It can be supposed that if an individual trusts in vlog content, they will also trust semi-high speed trains and be more likely to use them. Therefore, in the current study, trust in the content of a video blog should translate to trust in trains and affect the intention. Therefore, the following hypotheses are put forth in this study:

H7: Trust in semi-high speed trains has a positive effect on behavioural intention.

Additionally, the study will explore the mediating role of trust in vlog content in shaping the relationship between vlog coverage and trust in semi-high speed trains, as well as its impact on behavioural intention.

Based on the above hypotheses, this study proposes the following research model (see **Figure 1**).

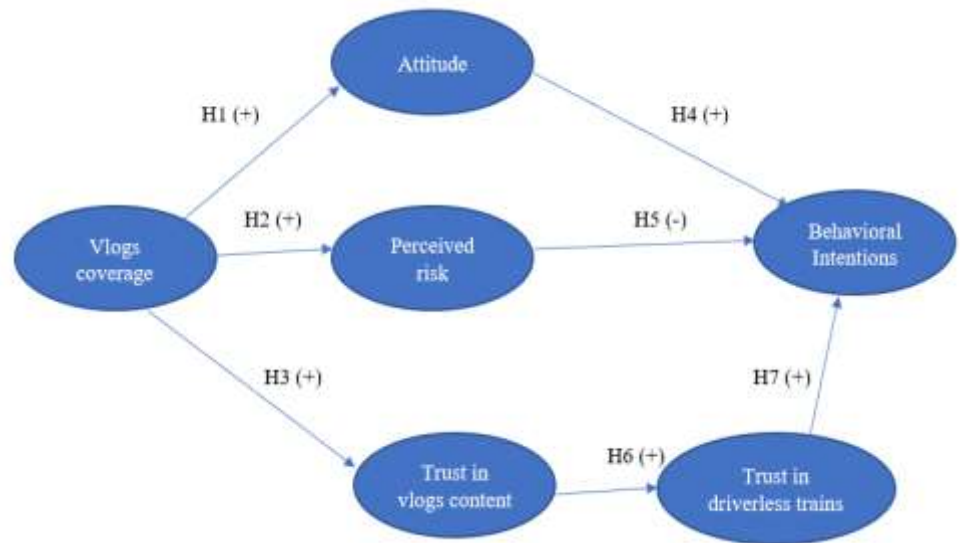


Figure 1. Research model.

4. Research methodology

4.1. Sampling design and inclusion criteria

Convenience sampling method was employed by way of both online and offline respondents as discussed in the data collection section. The target participants were identified from different sources, including the railway platform, social media, and the online communities.

For inclusion criteria, we asked the following qualifier questions in order to be a valid respondent. 1) What is your age? (The participant should be 18 years old or above to ensure the maturity), 2) Have you seen any vlogs related to Vande Bharat Express in the past 3 months, 3) Have you ever travelled in the Vande Bharat express in the past 3 months. By applying these inclusion criteria, we targeted the potential respondents who have knowledge about vlogs, and travelled in the Vande Bharat Express train.

4.2. Measures

The study employed a survey research design and utilized a 7-point Likert-style scale, with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 7 indicating strongly agree, to measure six components. The vlog coverage component was measured using three items adapted from (Kim and Ko, 2012), while trust in vlog content was measured using four items from (Khamis et al., 2017). Trust in semi high-speed train was measured using three items from (Radomska et al., 2019), while attitude was measured using four items from (Lee et al., 2014). Perceived risk was measured using four items from (Han et al., 2020), and behavioural intention was measured using three items from (Thilina and Gunawardane, 2019). To ensure the quality, two expert professors were requested to evaluate the readability of the questionnaire. Minor changes were incorporated based on their valuable feedback. Finally, questionnaire consisting of 21 items was finalised to assess the proposed research model. The questionnaire was organized into six sections to measure various constructs of interest. Following the

qualifier questions, section A requested respondents to fill their demographic details, followed by rest of the questionnaire.

4.3. Data collection

For the offline survey, data was collected from the respondents who were either boarding or deboarding the Vande Bharat Express. The survey was conducted at the Bengaluru railway station, and the respondents were requested to fill out the questionnaire. For the online survey, the questionnaire was floated over the internet, and potential respondents were targeted through Facebook groups and comment sections of travel vlogs.

A total of 338 individuals participated in the study, out of which 89 fully filled questionnaires were collected offline, and the remaining 249 out of 260 were considered for analysis from the online survey. The data was collected from March 2023 to June 2023. The collected data was analyzed using SmartPLS to draw meaningful conclusions.

4.4. Data analysis (why PLS)

SmartPLS is a widely used structural equation modeling (SEM) technique that is suitable for analysing complex relationships between latent variables (Hair Jr et al., 2021). The SEM approach helps in identifying the complex relationships among the constructs and provides a comprehensive understanding of the research model (Urbach and Frederik, 2010). PLS-SEM has been widely used in the hospitality and tourism research (Ali et al., 2018). The analysis was conducted in two stages. Firstly, the measurement model was assessed to evaluate the reliability and validity of the measures. Secondly, the structural model was assessed to test the hypotheses and examine the relationships among the latent variables. The results of the analysis were presented in the form of path coefficients, *t*-values, and R-squared values. The use of SmartPLS allowed for a robust and comprehensive analysis of the data, providing valuable insights into the factors influencing passengers' behavioural intention.

5. Results

5.1. Respondents Demographics

The study included a total of 338 participants, out of which 212 (62.7%) were male and 126 (37.2%) were female. The majority of the respondents were in their 30s (38.1%), followed by those in their 20s (34.02%), 40s (17.75%), and 50s or older (10.05%). In terms of marital status, the majority of the participants were single (68.04%). The survey also revealed that 37.86% of the participants reported a monthly income between 40,000 to 50,000. The demographic information of the respondents is summarized in the following **Table 1**:

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents.

| Demographics | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 212 | 62.07% |
| Female | 126 | 37.02% |
| Age | | |
| 20s | 115 | 34.02% |
| 30s | 129 | 38.01% |
| 40s | 60 | 17.75% |
| 50+ | 34 | 10.05% |
| Marital Status | | |
| Single | 230 | 68.04% |
| Married | 108 | 31.96% |
| Monthly Income (INR) | | |
| Less than 40,000 | 94 | 27.81% |
| 40,000–50,000 | 128 | 37.86% |
| More than 50,000 | 116 | 34.33% |

5.2. Common method bias (CMB)

To address the potential issue of CMB, various steps were taken following the recommended guidelines suggested by Min et al. (2016). Procedural controls were implemented before data collection, like clear instructions about the study’s objective and emphasizing that there were no right or wrong answers. A pilot survey was conducted with university students to ensure the clarity and understanding of the questionnaire items. Moreover, Harman’s single-factor test was conducted by examining the unrotated factor solution in an exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The results revealed that the first factor accounted for only 26.8% of the total variance, which is well below the widely accepted threshold of 50% (Podsakoff et al. 2012). Additionally, a common latent factor analysis (CLFA) was performed, and the results indicated that the common factor explained only 21.3% of the total variance, further supporting the absence of substantial CMB.

Finally, the study used the variance inflation factor (VIF) to assess multicollinearity among the items, and the results indicated no significant multicollinearity. Therefore, the study’s findings are reliable and valid, and the potential issue of common method bias has been adequately addressed.

5.3. Measurement model

To ensure a rigorous analysis of the measurement model, the study adhered to the recommended criteria for obtaining a good fit in PLS-SEM analysis, as put forward by Hair Jr et al. (2021). It was crucial for the factor loadings and composite reliability (CR) values to surpass the 0.7 threshold, indicating the strength of the relationships between the latent constructs. Moreover, a minimum average variance extracted (AVE) value of 0.50 was required to confirm convergent validity. To ensure discriminant validity, Fornell and Larcker, (1981) proposed that the average variance extracted

(AVE) for each construct must surpass the squared inter-construct correlations between the constructs.

For measurement model, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted and the findings are presented in **Table 2**. Consequently, one item from the attitude construct (Att_3) was identified to have factor loadings below 0.7 and hence eliminated. All the remaining 20 items had standardized factor loadings ranging from 0.718 to 0.865, which exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.7. This outcome suggests a strong and reliable measurement model. The results, demonstrated the satisfactory convergent validity of the constructs, with AVE values exceeding 0.5. Additionally, Cronbach’s alpha, Rho A, and composite reliability (CR) values were all higher than the recommended threshold of 0.7, indicating strong internal consistency among the constructs. Furthermore, the effect size (Q2) values for all endogenous variables were greater than zero, which indicates an acceptable level of predictive relevance, as recommended by Hair Jr et al. (2021). Moreover, the HTMT results are presented in **Table 3**. These results further strengthen the reliability and validity of the measurement model and provide a solid basis for further analysis in the study.

Table 2. Results of the confirmatory factor analysis.

| Constructs | Items | Loadings | t-value | Mean | SD | VIF |
|---------------------------------|-------|----------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| Vlogs Coverage | VC_1 | 0.823 | 41.513 | 4.639 | 1.429 | 1.432 |
| | VC_2 | 0.827 | 41.151 | 5.429 | 1.366 | 1.781 |
| | VC_3 | 0.849 | 47.323 | 5.216 | 1.457 | 1.867 |
| Attitude | Att_1 | 0.809 | 33.958 | 4.615 | 1.393 | 1.408 |
| | Att_2 | 0.791 | 28.070 | 5.077 | 1.335 | 1.414 |
| | Att_4 | 0.757 | 21.957 | 4.914 | 1.433 | 1.259 |
| Perceived Risk | PR_1 | 0.784 | 28.397 | 5.044 | 1.393 | 1.540 |
| | PR_2 | 0.758 | 20.893 | 4.373 | 1.481 | 1.619 |
| | PR_3 | 0.839 | 50.996 | 5.083 | 1.469 | 1.817 |
| | PR_4 | 0.799 | 29.361 | 4.411 | 1.483 | 1.686 |
| Trust in Vlog’s Content | TV_1 | 0.777 | 27.782 | 4.234 | 1.474 | 1.441 |
| | TV_2 | 0.718 | 19.755 | 3.077 | 1.657 | 1.447 |
| | TV_3 | 0.826 | 44.812 | 3.982 | 1.484 | 1.614 |
| | TV_4 | 0.750 | 24.916 | 3.118 | 1.461 | 1.525 |
| Trust in Semi-High Speed Trains | TT_1 | 0.876 | 56.594 | 4.595 | 1.546 | 1.917 |
| | TT_2 | 0.864 | 50.417 | 4.260 | 1.837 | 1.962 |
| | TT_3 | 0.846 | 45.407 | 4.491 | 1.862 | 1.789 |
| Behavioural Intention | BI_1 | 0.834 | 38.693 | 3.763 | 1.288 | 1.608 |
| | BI_2 | 0.785 | 31.311 | 3.352 | 1.313 | 1.473 |
| | BI_3 | 0.865 | 52.934 | 3.873 | 1.228 | 1.780 |

Note: SD: standard deviation; VIF: variance inflation factor.

Table 3. Discriminant validity and reliability (HTMT < 0.9).

| Constructs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Attitude | 0.786 | - | - | - | - | - |
| 2. Behavioural intentions | 0.689 | 0.829 | - | - | - | - |
| 3. Perceived risk | 0.650 | 0.738 | 0.796 | - | - | - |
| 4. Trust in semi-high speed trains | 0.599 | 0.677 | 0.632 | 0.862 | - | - |
| 5. Trust in vlog's content | 0.537 | 0.591 | 0.573 | 0.594 | 0.769 | - |
| 6. Vlogs coverage | 0.713 | 0.691 | 0.634 | 0.641 | 0.522 | 0.833 |
| Cronbach's alpha (a) ≥ 0.7 | 0.690 | 0.772 | 0.808 | 0.827 | 0.771 | 0.781 |
| Rho_A ≥ 0.7 | 0.692 | 0.778 | 0.818 | 0.831 | 0.788 | 0.786 |
| Composite reliability ≥ 0.7 | 0.829 | 0.868 | 0.873 | 0.897 | 0.852 | 0.872 |
| AVE ≥ 0.5 | 0.618 | 0.687 | 0.633 | 0.743 | 0.591 | 0.694 |
| effect size (Q2) > 0 | 0.501 | 0.409 | 0.396 | 0.299 | 0.267 | - |

Note: The square roots of the AVE are indicated by the bold numbers in the diagonal row.

5.4. Structural model

The estimation of the research model was carried out based on **Figure 2** and the findings are presented in **Table 4**. The R^2 values presented in the table represent the amount of variation explicated by the remaining constructs in the structural model. Among the constructs, behavioural intention displayed the highest R^2 value of 0.658, indicating that the other constructs accounted for 65.8% of the variation in behavioural intention. Conversely, Trust in vlog's content had the lowest R^2 value of 0.273. Although the R^2 values did not meet the substantial threshold of 0.75 or greater, as suggested by Hair et al. (2019), they still met the moderate criterion set by Cohen et al. (2013) of 0.02 or greater.

The study employed 5,000 bootstrapping re-samples following the guidelines provided by Hair et al. (2011). The use of bootstrapping is a robust and reliable method for assessing the significance of path coefficients and t-statistics in the structural equation model. The results of the analysis indicated that vlogs coverage had significant effects on attitude ($\gamma = 0.715$, t -value = 20.262, $p < 0.001$), perceived risk ($\gamma = 0.636$, t -value = 18.119, $p < 0.001$), and trust in vlogs ($\gamma = 0.524$, t -value = 12.788, $p < 0.001$), thereby providing support for H1, H2, and H3. This suggests that the more exposure viewers have to vlogs about semi-high speed trains, the more positive their attitudes are towards them, the lower their perceived risk, and the more they trust the information presented in the vlogs. Moreover, the study found that trust in vlog content significantly influenced trust in semi-high speed trains ($\gamma = 0.595$, t -value = 16.023, $p < 0.001$), which supports H6. This implies that if viewers trust the content of the vlogs about semi-high speed trains, they are more likely to trust the trains.

Furthermore, the study also revealed that behavioural intention was influenced by attitude ($\gamma = 0.277$, t -value = 5.782, $p < 0.001$), perceived risk ($\gamma = 0.391$, t -value = 8.614, $p < 0.001$), and trust in semi-high speed trains ($\gamma = 0.264$, t -value = 5.046, $p < 0.001$), providing support for H4, H5, and H7. These findings suggest that viewers' behavioural intentions towards semi-high speed trains are positively influenced by

their attitudes towards them, their perception of risk associated with them, and their trust.

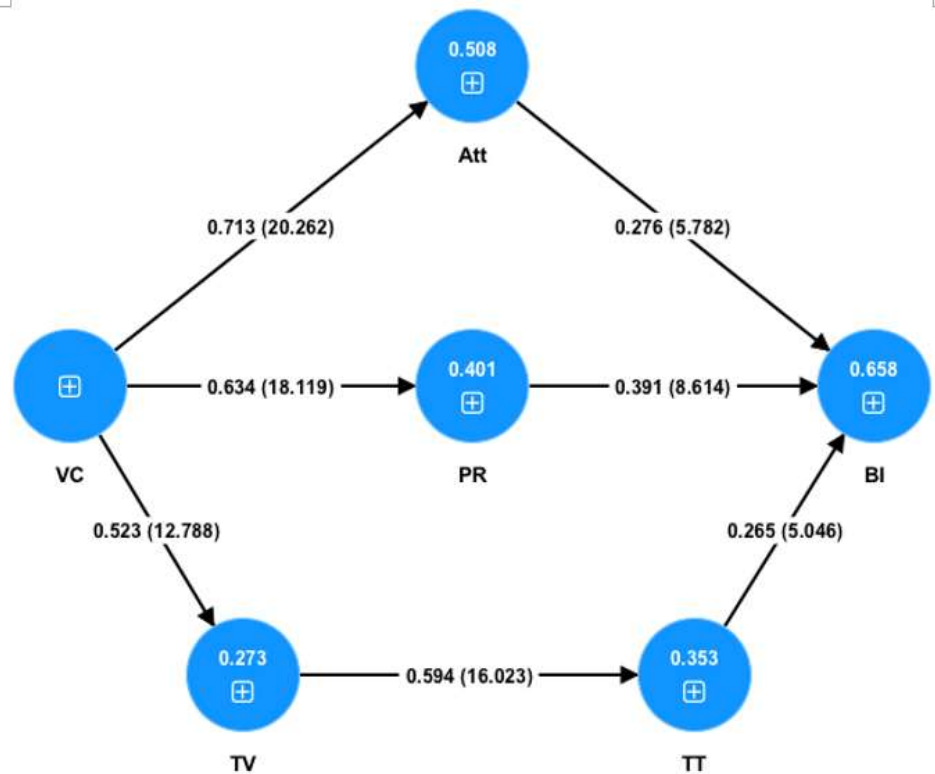


Figure 2. Estimation of the research model.

Table 4. Hypotheses testing.

| H | Path | Estimate | t-value | P-values | Test results |
|----|----------|----------|---------|----------|--------------|
| H1 | VC → Att | 0.715 | 20.262 | 0.000 | Supported |
| H2 | VC → PR | 0.636 | 18.119 | 0.000 | Supported |
| H3 | VC → TV | 0.524 | 12.788 | 0.000 | Supported |
| H4 | Att → BI | 0.277 | 5.782 | 0.000 | Supported |
| H5 | PR → BI | 0.391 | 8.614 | 0.000 | Supported |
| H6 | TV → TT | 0.595 | 16.023 | 0.000 | Supported |
| H7 | TT → BI | 0.264 | 5.046 | 0.000 | Supported |

[VC: Vlogs coverage; Att: Attitude; PR: Perceived Risk; TV: Trust in vlog content; TT: Trust in semi-high speed trains; BI: Behavioral Intention].

5.5. Indirect effects

An analysis of the indirect effects in the research model are presented in **Table 5**. The findings indicate that the attitude plays an important role as a mediator between vlog coverage and the behavioural intention as it shows significant results. Specifically, we observed that vlog coverage had a positive indirect effect on behavioural intention through trust in vlog ($\gamma_{_} = 0.313$, t -value = 8.110, $p < 0.001$) and trust in semi-high speed trains. Also, the influence of vlog coverage on behavioural intention was significantly mediated by the perceived risk.

Moreover, the study found that trust in the content of the vlogs had a positive indirect impact on behavioural intention. through trust ($\gamma_{_} = 0.158$, t -value = 4.660, $p < 0.001$). Subsequently, the result showed that perceived risk had a negative indirect impact on behavioural intention through attitude ($\gamma_{_} = 0.125$, t -value = 6.054, $p < 0.001$).

Overall, these findings highlight the significant mediating role of trust in vlog in predicting travellers’ intentions to travel on semi-high speed trains. The results suggest that vlog content and perceived risk indirectly influence behavioural intention by shaping individuals’ attitudes and trust in semi-high speed trains.

Table 5. Specific indirect effects.

| Path | Estimate | <i>t</i> -value | <i>P</i> values |
|-------------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| VC → Att → BI | 0.198 | 5.218 | 0.000 |
| VC → TV → TT | 0.313 | 8.110 | 0.000 |
| VC → TV → TT → BI | 0.083 | 4.089 | 0.000 |
| VC → PR → BI | 0.249 | 7.641 | 0.000 |
| TV → TT → BI | 0.158 | 4.660 | 0.000 |

6. Conclusion

This research paper investigated the factors influencing trust and behavioural intentions towards Vande Bharat Express, with a particular focus on the role of vlogs as a source of information. The study employed a quantitative methodology to analyse the elements that influence behavioural intentions, using the trust transfer theory as a framework. The study model was validated using the SmartPLS tool, using data collected from respondents who used Vande Bharat Express trains in India. After conducting thorough evaluations of reliability and validity, the study effectively validated the hypotheses. The study found that vlog coverage positively affected attitudes, perceived risk, and trust in vlogs, indicating that exposure to vlogs has a significant impact on viewers’ trust in the information showed. These results are in line with the previous studies of (Aslam et al., 2022; Kim and Ko, 2012). Moreover, trust in vlog content was found to significantly influence trust in semi-high speed trains. The findings also revealed that attitudes, negative perceived risk, and trust in semi-high speed trains influenced behavioural intentions. These results are in line with the previous study (Kim et al., 2020). These results emphasize the importance of shaping positive attitudes, reducing perceived risk, and building trust in order to encourage individuals to choose semi-high speed trains as a mode of transportation.

Furthermore, the study identified important mediating effects. The influence of vlog coverage on behavioural intentions was mediated by trust in vlog and trust in semi-high speed trains, indicating that trust in vlogs plays a crucial role in shaping viewers’ intentions to travel.

Finally, the findings of this study contribute to the understanding of trust formation and behavioural intentions towards travelling in semi-high speed trains. The research underscores the importance of leveraging vlogs and social media platforms as trust-building tools and highlights the need to address perceived risks and cultivate

positive attitudes to enhance the acceptance and adoption of semi-high speed train systems.

7. Discussion and implications

Vlogs have become a prominent global media platform in today's digital world. Companies frequently use vlogs to present and promote their new products and services to potential clients (Wu, 2016). Although vlogs are very common, there has been limited exploration of the trust that travellers have in vlog content and how this trust might be extended to unexpected third parties, particularly in the field of travel and transport literature.

This study aims to fill this significant void by doing a thorough investigation of the trust transfer process, elucidating the complex mechanisms via which trust in vlog coverage is associated with trust in semi-high speed services. The research further investigates the role of attitude in the intricate relationship between vlog coverage, trust in vlog content, perceived risk, and behavioural intention.

The findings have implications that go beyond theoretical contributions and provide useful insights for the practical fields of travel, transit, and the wider hospitality and tourism industry. These insights offer a detailed grasp of the complex dynamics involved in the changing digital media landscape and how it affects consumer perceptions and behaviours in the context of modern transportation networks. Moreover, in the next part we discussed the theoretical implications followed by the practical implication.

7.1. Theoretical implications

The present study offers significant implications by enhancing our understanding of how trust forms, how trust transfer from one medium to the another, and its influence on the behavioural intentions. Firstly, this study contribute the existing literature on the semi-high speed trains by extending the trust transfer theory. Prior studies have tried to explore the behavioural intention towards a new transit systems like (Ng and Phung, 2021), however they used theory of planned behaviour to explain the behavioural intentions in public transportation. This study incorporates and extend the trust transfer theory, making it first study to understand how trust is transferred from one medium (trust in vlogs) to the another (trust in semi-high speed trains). This study offers a theoretical framework, to understand how this process occurs and how theses vlogs can help increase the trust of the travellers. This finding expand our understanding of trust building and trust transfer mechanism with respect to the emerging transportation technologies such as the semi-high speed trains. Secondly, this study will contributes to the existing literature by supporting researchers from the transport background to comprehend what influences the semi-high speed trains adoption in India. The findings of the research revealed that attitude, perceived risk, and trust in trains all these factors are positively and significantly influenced by the vlog coverage. Moreover, result revealed that travellers tend to have high trust in vlog content, a positive attitude towards the semi-high speed trains, and lower perceived risk after watching vlogs. These findings are in line with the (Chen et al., 2022; Lee and Watkins, 2016), the results suggest that the best chance for increasing visit

intention is based on the highest raw coverage and consistency values, through the trust (Chen et al., 2022) and more positive attitudes towards consumer luxury brand perception (Lee and Watkins, 2016). Consequently, the findings support the above study, however researchers have not tested these relationships with respect to the semi-high speed trains. Thirdly, the research contributes to the literature on attitude formation and its relationship with behavioural intentions. These results are in line with the previous studies such as (Harvey et al., 2014; Hwang et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2014), where attitude plays a vital role in behavioural intentions.

Additionally, this research contributes to the literature on the use of social media and vlogs as trust-building tools. The study demonstrates the positive impact of vlog coverage on trust in vlogs and trust in semi-high speed trains. These findings emphasize the importance of utilizing social media platforms to disseminate information and build trust, particularly in the context of emerging transportation systems. This contributes to the broader body of knowledge on the role of social media in influencing consumer behaviour and decision-making processes. The study facilitates the infrastructure governance of Indian railways.

7.2. Practical implications

This research offers valuable insights for policymakers, transportation authorities, and marketing professionals seeking to enhance the acceptance of semi-high speed trains. The findings provide guidance on effective strategies and actions that can be implemented to build trust, shape attitudes, and mitigate perceived risks associated. To start with, the study emphasizes the importance of leveraging social media platforms, specifically vlogs, as a means of building trust and influencing passenger perceptions. Transportation authorities can collaborate with influential vloggers to create informative and engaging content that highlights the safety and positive experiences associated with Vande Bharat Express. By actively promoting and sharing such content on social media channels, they can enhance trust. Secondly, it is crucial to deal with and reduce the perceived risks linked to Vande Bharat Express trains. Efforts should focus on making significant expenditures in infrastructure improvements to reduce the occurrence of accidents and operational issues. Resulting in the improved trust in the semi-high speed trains. These findings provide significant insights for marketing professionals to create focused efforts that aim to foster positive attitudes among potential passengers. By incorporating these suggestions into operational and marketing strategies, stakeholders can greatly help to improving the overall trust and acceptance of semi-high speed train services.

8. Limitations and future research

This study is an attempt to provide valuable insights into the factors influencing trust and behavioural intentions towards semi-high speed trains in India. Therefore, it is imperative to highlight its limitations and emphasize on the potential future research.

Firstly, this research was conducted in a geographical bounded context, focusing on a specific developing country i.e., India. Hence, the generalizability of the findings can be an issue with respect to the other cultural contexts or transportation systems in the world. Therefore, researchers from other countries can explore. Moreover, the

researchers can explore the cross-cultural variations. Secondly, the method employed was the survey research where data was collected through structured questionnaire. Researches in future could look for alternative research methods, like experimental designs, observational studies or mixed method. Thirdly, factors like vlog coverage, attitude, perceived risk, and trust were used to measure the behavioural intention. Future research can use other variables, such as convenience, accessibility, and price sensitivity to explore the impact of these factors on the behavioural intention. Finally, the present study tries to accessed the impact of vlog coverage on the trust building and behavioural intention. Future research could use other psychological processes that can help in trust formation, like social influence, affective responses, and cognitive heuristics.

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