



Impact of travel influencers on their followers

SRI VARSHINI.R, Student

SUBIKSHA.J, Student

**Dr. Ranjana Tiwari, Professor School of Commerce,
JAIN Deemed to be University, Bengaluru**

Abstract

Over the past decade, social media has changed our lives and brought with it more than a hundred professional careers that no one ever dreamed could exist. People who didn't want to live in orthodox fashion found new income-generating avenues because of it. One of such professions is travel influencers. In the field of travel, tourism, and culture, travel influencers are Internet celebrities who post on social media about their travel experiences. This paper focuses on the effect that these travel influencers have on their followers.

Keywords: Travel influencers, social media, followers, travel decisions, tourism marketing, influencer partnership, travel blogs, travel vlogs, tourists.

Introduction

The travel and tourism industry is a substantial segment in today's world. People from all over the world despite race, ethnicity, language or culture are all fascinated by the term "Travelling". Traveling exhibits one's life; their personality and the approaches in their life. More than exploring the places or the locations and creating memories, travel has also become a livelihood of some population. This particular segment of people are known as 'Travelers' or 'Travel influencers'. They create a travel experience in order to gain popularity among the people and to influence or lead them to do the same. Travel influencers are sponsored by influential companies to promote their travel packages or the products they use. The more prominent an influencer is, the better it is for the company they are endorsing. In the context of deciding a local travel destination, by influencing a potential customer's purchase/travel intention, these influencers frequently build a destination image of a tourism area, (Jeong & Jang, 2011). In the context of global competition, DMOs can use influencers to reach more people, as they normally do not have as many engaged followers, and to attract demographic segments that seem more influenceable via social media, such as women and digital natives, (Mokhare et al., 2021).

Review of Literature

1. The scholar Lama (2021), did a study on Challenges in Developing Sustainable Tourism Post COVID-19 Pandemic . The objectives of research were to understand the impact of the pandemic on key components of tourism and to determine the major challenging aspects in developing sustainable tourism post COVID-19. The chapter is based on qualitative research and a convenience sample was used for this study. He found that there is a huge impact of Covid in the tourism industry.
2. The scholar Chatterjee (2021), did a study on the role of social media in promoting sustainable tourism in the states of Assam and Odisha . The objectives of research provide insights on sustainable tourism and related products of the above-mentioned destinations that need to be promoted on social media. The research methodology for the study was based on identifying domestic tourist respondents from other Indian states who were visiting the major tourist destinations of Assam and Odisha. The initial sample included those respondents who were willing to participate and devote quality time with the researchers to undergo the interview process. In the second phase, the final data was collected from 220 domestic tourist respondents who were visiting Assam and Odisha from other states. He found out that the evolution of the internet over the years has brought about a paradigm shift in global consumption trends.
3. The scholar Asan (2021), did the study on the impact of the travel influencers on bicycle travelers. The objectives of research were to find the impact of the travel influencers on their followers in the context of bicycle touring as a sustainable special interest tourism type. He used qualitative research that was carried out through in-depth interviews. A scale development study was carried out in light of the themes and coding acquired. In the second phase, a survey was conducted with 915 participants. The finding states that travel influencers act as tourism actors and to measure their effects on their followers.
4. The scholar Yilmaz (2020), did the study on the sharing experiences and interpretation of experiences: phenomenological research on Instagram influencers. The objectives of research examine Instagram travel influencers' views on their experiences. He used data that were collected via semi-structured online interviews with 12 influencers, as well as reflective journals, and document review techniques. The finding suggests that being an influencer is a job that requires responsibility and competence. Influencers have a mediating role between the brands and the consumers. It was also found that the job difficulties experienced by the participants include workload, need for approval and impression management.
5. The scholar Dabijab (2021), did a study on the impact of social media influencers on travel decisions. The objectives of research were to find the role of customer journey constructs (including desire, information search, evaluating alternatives, purchase decisions, satisfaction and experience sharing) in mediating the interrelation between SMI trust and the dimensions of customer journeys. He used USmart PLS to analyze the data collected, the results indicate that consumer trust in SMIs has a positive effect on each phase of travel decision-making.
6. The scholar Maggiore (2022), did a study on the travel bloggers' wonderland: mechanisms of the blogger – follower relationship in tourism and hospitality management – a systematic literature review. The objectives of the research were to find the relationship between the travel bloggers and followers has implications for tourists' decision-making process. He used systematic literature review, and 76 papers

- were selected. A thematic map of the literature and a summary of key findings are proposed. His finding was authenticity is the main reason for following the travel blogger but other factors such as transparency and credibility can also erode the relationship between the followers and the influencer.
7. The scholar Gholamhosseinzadeh (2021), did a study on the tourism netnography: how travel bloggers influence destination image The objective of the research was to find how the promoted destination image was perceived by the followers. He used netnography in his study. His finding of the study offers a protocol for using netnography to identify destination image attributes via social media communications, as well as theoretical and managerial implications in tourism promotion and digital marketing.
 8. The scholar Seçilmiş (2021), did a study on How travel influencers affect visit intention? The roles of cognitive response, trust, COVID-19 fear and confidence in vaccines. The objective of the study was to identify the relationship in the influence mechanism process. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the data collected from social media users in Turkey. According to the study's findings, different dimensions of TI influence cognitive response and trust, which in turn influences visit intention. Second, the expertise and attractiveness of the indirect effect of content on visit intention, as mediated by cognitive response and trust, have been determined.
 9. The scholar Madureira (2021), did a study on How Stimulus from social media influencers to the Portuguese tourism and travel industry in the COVID-19 era. The objective of the study was to identify the untold challenges due to Covid -19 pandemics on travel and tourism especially in Portuguese. The finding of the study suggests that social media influencers can boost the travel and tourism industry by expressing that a place and its tourism service and product are safe in this time of fear of traveling due to the pandemic.
 10. The scholar Tafesse (2021), did a study on how followers' engagement with Instagram influencers: The role of influencers' content and engagement strategy. The objective of the study is to measure the influencers' content and engagement strategy (follower count, follower count, content volume, and domains of interest) are related to followers' engagement behavior on Instagram, both independently and interactively. The researcher used a unique dataset of Instagram influencers compiled by scraping an online influencer database. According to the findings, follower count and content volume are negatively related to follower engagement, whereas follower count is positively related to follower engagement.
 11. The scholar Tafesse (2021), did a study on how social media influencers' community and content strategy and follower engagement behavior in the presence of competition: an Instagram-based investigation. The objective of the study is to draw on insight from social influence theory. A web-scraped data set of Instagram influencers was used in this study. It assessed community strategy by looking at influencers' number of followers, number of followers, and breadth of interest; content strategy by looking at modality type and number of posts; competition by looking at the number of influencers operating in the same primary domain of interest; and follower engagement behavior by looking at the number of likes and comments. The findings can help brands identify appropriate influencers for collaborations. For example, brands can assess the suitability of influencers for collaboration based on the number of followers they have, the number of posts they share, and the number of competitors they have.

12. The scholar Wang (2019), did a study on Examining destination images from travel blogs: a big data analytical approach using latent Dirichlet allocation. This study's main objective was to propose and test a big data analytical approach based on latent Dirichlet allocation to extract attributes of online destination images from 140,286 travel blogs about 20 Chinese cities. The results show 14 dimensions with 54 attributes of destination images of the cities studied. Therefore, the finding of the study was some interesting discoveries between online destination images and tourism cities. The implications for tourism research and practise are also summarized in this study.
13. The scholar Wong (2019), did a study on sharing memorable tourism experiences on mobile social media and how it influences further travel decisions. The objective of this research is to investigate the relationship between sharing memorable ethnic minority tourism experiences (MEMTEs) on mobile social media and intentions to visit other ethnic destinations. The research methodology of the study is to analyze survey data from 279 tourists, partial least squares structural equation modeling and Sobel tests were used. The findings of the study shows that three MEMTE dimensions (scenery, entertainment, and interaction) influence tourists' sharing behavior, and that sharing behavior during trips moderates the effects of during-trip experiences (scenery and interaction) on tourists' post-trip intentions to visit other destinations.
14. The scholar Dreil (2020), did a study on selling brands while staying “Authentic”: The professionalization of Instagram influencers. This objective of the study examines the professionalization of Instagram influencers. The research methodology combines data from 11 interviews with travel influencers with a visual and textual content analysis of their 12 most recent Instagram posts (N = 132). The finding of the study demonstrates how the influencer's increasing professionalization influences their relationship with their audience, the advertisers they work with, and the Instagram platform.
15. The scholar Parody (2020), did a study on travel behavior changes during the COVID-19 pandemic in Japan: Analyzing the effects of risk perception and social influence on going-out self-restriction. This objective of the study is to find the effects of risk perception and social influence. The research methodology of the study is a panel web-survey conducted targeting residents of the Kanto Region, including the Tokyo Metropolis. In addition to describing the observed patterns in behavioral change, we modeled behavioral changes of four key, non-work-related activities: (i) grocery shopping, (ii) other types of shopping, (iii) eating out, and (iv) leisure. The finding of the study suggests that in the context of non-binding requests, soft measures such as campaigns to promote a reduction of non-essential travel might be more effective if they (i) properly convey the severity of the threat posed by COVID-19 as well as its coping mechanisms, and (ii) appeal to the group, rather than the individual, emphasizing the behavior (or at least the perception of behavior) of others.
16. The scholar Sharma (2020), did a study on Impact of COVID-19 outbreak over Medical Tourism. The objective of the study is to understand and elucidate the impact of this pandemic on Indian Medical Tourism industry along with suggestions for recovery .The finding of the impact of the Pandemic on the Medical Tourism industry will experience a significant lag in its projected growth. It is critical for all countries that cater to medical tourism, as well as all internationally recognised hospitals and health care services, to plan and act in order to minimise damage and maximise recovery from medical tourism.

17. The scholar Yetimoğlu (2020), did a study on Influencer Marketing for Tourism and Hospitality. The objective of the study is to understand how Influencers can spread a company's message to a wider audience that a company may never be able to reach. The methodology of the study is to analyse and observe various influencers and monitor the marketing strategy used by the influencer. The finding of the study states that people give higher levels of credibility to what Instagrammers, Youtubers, Bloggers, Twitterers, and others say and do. It has become one of the hottest new ways in recent years to influence potential guests' purchasing decisions and create high-quality content without the high costs associated with most marketing efforts.
18. The scholar Guerreiro (2019), did a study on social Networks and Digital Influencers: Their Role in Customer Decision Journey in Tourism. The objective of the study is to understand the relationships between digital influencer, social media and the customer decision journey. The researched used survey method to collect data and analyse them. The findings from 244 social media users show that the majority of people use social media when planning a trip, but sharing the experiences of other travellers is not a factor. While digital influencers have little overall impact, their followers value their content, visit the sites they recommend, and share their own experiences, mostly on Instagram.
19. The scholar Ingrassia (2022) ,did a study on Digital Influencers, Food and Tourism—A New Model of Open Innovation for Businesses in the Ho.Re.Ca. Sector.The objective of this study looks at Chiara Ferragni's activity and the communication dynamics she used on her Instagram (IG) profile to promote Italian tourist destinations and "local food & wine." It specifically assessed the contribution of local food as an evocative factor in the appreciation of a tourist destination, as well as its power in various contexts. The researcher used netnographic analysis, hundreds of posts on the influencer's Instagram profile were identified. Following that, the AGIL model (Adaption, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latent Pattern Maintenance) was used to assess the main dimensions of this communication campaign as well as its effectiveness in relaunching touristic catering sectors. The finding of the research proposes a new open innovation model for advertising and promoting food and catering businesses.
20. The scholar Jay (2020), did a study on role of Social Media Influencers in Tourism Destination Image: How Does Digital Marketing Affect Purchase Intention? The objective of the study was to assess the impact of social media influencers, destination image, and brand image on the purchase intentions of tourists who visited the popular tourist destination of Bratan Lake in Bedugul. The study population was made up of foreign tourists, and the sample size was 179. The convenience sampling technique was used to select respondents. After that, the data was processed and analysed using structural equation modelling and PLS software. The finding of the research shows that social media influencers, destination image, and brand image all have a positive and significant impact on purchase intent.
21. The scholar Živković (2014), did a study on the impact of social media on tourism. The objective of the study is analysing the tourist decision making while deciding the destination. The survey method was used to collect the data .The finding of the study shows advanced technologies provide a new customised tourist offer based on their identified needs. Since the advent of sophisticated Web 2.0 technology, which has strongly influenced and transformed the travel decision-making process, modern tourists have been more than active. Many polls show that approximately 50% of people are likely to download.

22. The scholar Karim(2018), did a study on the impact of social media on tourism industry growth in Bangladesh. The objective of the study to investigate the reasons behind tourism industry growth is A survey with 1,060 respondents, including various professionals, was conducted to look into the factors driving the tourism industry's expansion. The study finds that Bangladesh's tourism industry has recently grown due to social media. 97.26% of participants in this study believe that social media has a big impact on Bangladesh's tourism industry's expansion.
23. The scholar Liu (2019), did a study on the roles of social media in tourists' choices of travel components. The objective of the study is to examine how social media influences travellers' travel decisions in order to identify the roles of social media. This article aimed to determine the roles that social media played in the tourists' choices of six travel components by interviewing 21 travellers who had just returned from vacations (destination, transportation, accommodation, food and dining activities, attractions, as well as shopping and leisure activities). The roles of need generator, supporter, guide, and approver have been identified. Future research ideas are also discussed, along with theoretical and practical implications.
24. The scholar Rahman (2020), did a study on impact of social media on youths to enhance the tourism in Bangladesh. The objective of this study is to determine how this public network has affected the younger generation in particular, who may help Bangladesh's tourism industry gain international recognition. The methodology of the research ,160 students from various universities participated in a survey to examine the impact of social media on tourism. The finding of the research shows that have been made for the tourist agencies to use in order to expand the marketing sector and this era of international tourism.
25. The scholar Negi (2020), did a study on impact of Instagram and Instagram influencers in purchase consideration in India. The objective of the study is to investigate the various marketing strategies used by Instagram influencers, which may have an effect on how consumers choose products when they shop online. The study also evaluates the impact and reach of using a variety of users, including bloggers, celebrities, and others. The current study examines the opinions of 200 Indian women and identifies the major factors that influenced their purchasing decisions.
26. The scholar Sheela (2020), did a study on Effectiveness of social media On Youth in Relation to Their Social Life in Kerala. The objective of the study is to examine how social networking sites affect young people's interpersonal relationships in Kerala state. Being a social animal, humans depend heavily on their interpersonal relationships. Therefore, it is necessary to examine how social networking sites affect interpersonal relationships through a sociological perspective. The sample size of the study ,there are more than 300 Social Networking Sites (SNS) and the total number of people using Social Networking Sites around the world is 1.73 billion according to 2013 Sensex.

Statement of the problem

Tourism industry is a booming industry in today's world. In such a fast changing industry, Travel influencers majorly contribute to its growth. The main problem of this study is to analyze whether the travel influencers leave an authentic impact on their followers and also whether their followers make important travel decisions based on the travel influencer's suggestion.

Need of the study

It is essential to keep in mind that social media marketing is mostly about participation, sharing, and collaboration rather than just simple advertising and selling. Research on a topic that is not only a current trend but also the future of the tourism sector is all the more compelling because the social media space is inhabited by more than a billion users, therefore creating the necessity. Modern tourism marketing initiatives frequently use the internet, with blogs, online advertising, email, and social media platforms all playing significant roles. The volume and types of influencer partnerships with travel firms to promote their products are growing along with the prominence of influencers on social media.

Objectives of the study

- To determine the importance of travel blogs and vlogs to viewers while making a travel decision.
- To analyze whether the travel blogs and vlogs are considered as authentic content by the tourists.

Conceptual Explanation

The independent variable here is the “Travel influencer’s marketing” towards persuading their followers to recognise their content as an authentic source to plan for vacation. The experimenter manipulates or modifies the independent variable, which is thought to have a direct impact on the dependent variable. Travel influencers have a freedom to express their views, feelings and emotions that they face during their travel. This takes a toll on their follower’s everyday lives. Travel influencers use their “Quality of content” and “Trustworthiness” as an important tool to make an impact on their followers. A variable that represents a quantity that varies as a result of the manipulation of other quantities in an experiment is referred to as a dependent variable. The dependent variable here is the ‘Social media user’s travel intention’. Social media influencers have freedom to express their thoughts without any barriers. This helps them to create an impact amongst millions of people using social media directly or indirectly.

Discussion

Travel influencers

An internet personality who regularly posts on social media about travel, tourism, and culture is known as a travel influencer. Their writing is typically seen as a reliable source of information, impacting the thoughts and perceptions of their readers' travel plans and shaping the way we think about the world.

They frequently collaborate with airlines, travel agencies, tour operators, and local businesses to promote their brands, goods, or services in exchange for a benefit, which is typically free travel. Influencers in the travel industry make money through affiliate links and brand partnerships.

Social Media

Social media refers to methods of communication where individuals produce, share, and/or exchange knowledge and concepts in online groups and networks. Some examples of Social Media include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and so on.

Followers

The social media site Twitter had a major role in the development of the term "follower," which now describes individuals who have subscribed to certain material, other users, interests, or businesses. Each user on Twitter has a timeline where certain posts, also known as tweets, are displayed. A user can get in touch with an account directly if they follow it, in addition to having access to the account's material on their timeline. The word "follower" is now used on Facebook, Instagram, and Flickr, among other social media platforms. The reach and coverage of an account are closely correlated with the number of followers it has. As a result, this figure is crucial for internet marketing.

Conclusion

This study was mainly undertaken to analyze the impact of travel influencers on their followers. This paper gives a deeper understanding of how travel influencers actually create an impact in a layman's day to day life. The marketing initiative has opened up new opportunities for the tourist sector as well as for social media, a significant breakthrough in internet-based technology. It is necessary for service providers to grow through the application of tourist psychology and the utilization of successful influencer marketing strategies in such a way that distinctive personalized products and services are generated such that the entire process of serving and experiencing tourism products is enjoyable and that the service provider and customer, respectively, will be the main. The usage of social media in tourism has been demonstrated to be a remarkably charitable, efficient, and emotive manner of grabbing audiences in a highly trustworthy and open way throughout this post. The study's overall findings are focused on literature review and its objectives.

References

- Asan, K. (2022). Measuring the impacts of travel influencers on bicycle travelers. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 25(6), 978-994.
- Yılmaz, M., Sezerel, H., & Uzuner, Y. (2020). Sharing experiences and interpretation of experiences: A phenomenological research on Instagram influencers. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 23(24), 3034-3041.
- Chakravarty, U., Chand, G., & Singh, U. N. (2021). Millennial travel vlogs: emergence of a new form of virtual tourism in the post-pandemic era?. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*.
- Femenia-Serra, F., Gretzel, U., & Alzua-Sorzabal, A. (2022). Instagram travel influencers in# quarantine: Communicative practices and roles during COVID-19. *Tourism Management*, 89, 104454.
- Lama, R., & Rai, A. (2021). Challenges in developing sustainable tourism post COVID-19 pandemic. In *Tourism Destination Management in a Post-Pandemic Context* (pp. 233-244). Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Chatterjee, J., & Dsilva, N. R. (2021). A study on the role of social media in promoting sustainable tourism in the states of Assam and Odisha. *Tourism Critiques: Practice and Theory*.
- Pop, R. A., Săplăcan, Z., Dabija, D. C., & Alt, M. A. (2022). The impact of social media influencers on travel decisions: The role of trust in consumer decision journey. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 25(5), 823-843.

- Maggiore, G., Lo Presti, L., Orlowski, M. and Morvillo, A. (2022), "In the travel bloggers' wonderland: mechanisms of the blogger – follower relationship in tourism and hospitality management – a systematic literature review", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 34 No. 7, pp. 2747-2772. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-11-2021-1377>
- Gholamhosseinzadeh, M. S., Chapuis, J. M., & Lehu, J. M. (2021). Tourism netnography: How travel bloggers influence destination image. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 1-17.
- Seçilmiş, C., Özdemir, C., & Kılıç, İ. (2022). How travel influencers affect visit intention? The roles of cognitive response, trust, COVID-19 fear and confidence in vaccines. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 25(17), 2789-2804.
- Femenia-Serra, F., Gretzel, U., & Alzua-Sorzabal, A. (2022). Instagram travel influencers in# quarantine: Communicative practices and roles during COVID-19. *Tourism Management*, 89, 104454.
- Tafesse, W., & Wood, B. P. (2021). Followers' engagement with instagram influencers: The role of influencers' content and engagement strategy. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 58, 102303. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102303>
- Tafesse, W., & Wood, B. P. (2022). Social media influencers' community and content strategy and follower engagement behavior in the presence of competition: an Instagram-based investigation. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, (ahead-of-print).
- Wang, R., Hao, J. X., Law, R., & Wang, J. (2019). Examining destination images from travel blogs: A big data analytical approach using latent Dirichlet allocation. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 24(11), 1092-1107.
- Wong, J. W. C., Lai, I. K. W., & Tao, Z. (2020). Sharing memorable tourism experiences on mobile social media and how it influences further travel decisions. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 23(14), 1773-1787.
- Van Driel, L., & Dumitrica, D. (2020). Selling brands while staying "Authentic": The professionalization of Instagram influencers. *Convergence*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856520902136>
- Parady, G., Taniguchi, A., & Takami, K. (2020). Travel behavior changes during the COVID-19 pandemic in Japan: Analyzing the effects of risk perception and social influence on going-out self-restriction. *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 7, 100181.
- Sharma, A., Vishraj, B., Ahlawat, J., Mittal, T., & Mittal, M. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 outbreak over medical tourism. *IOSR Journal of Dental and Medical Sciences*, 19(5), 56-58.
- Yetimoğlu, S., & Uğurlu, K. (2020). Influencer marketing for tourism and hospitality. In *The emerald handbook of ICT in tourism and hospitality*. Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Guerreiro, C., Viegas, M., & Guerreiro, M. (2019). Social networks and digital influencers: Their role in customer decision journey in tourism. *Journal of Spatial and Organizational Dynamics*, 7(3), 240-260.
- Ingrassia, M., Bellia, C., Giurdanella, C., Columba, P., & Chironi, S. (2022). Digital Influencers, Food and Tourism—A New Model of Open Innovation for Businesses in the Ho. Re. Ca. Sector. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 8(1), 50.
- Jaya, I. P. G. I. T., & Prianthara, I. B. T. (2020, April). Role of Social Media Influencers in Tourism Destination Image: How Does Digital Marketing Affect Purchase Intention?. In *3rd International Conference on Vocational Higher Education (ICVHE 2018)* (pp. 9-20). Atlantis Press.

- Magno, F., & Cassia, F. (2018). The impact of social media influencers in tourism. *Anatolia*, 29(2), 288-290.
- Karim, Z. (2018). The impact of social media on tourism industry growth in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 6(8), 463-482.
- Liu, X., Mehraliyev, F., Liu, C., & Schuckert, M. (2020). The roles of social media in tourists' choices of travel components. *Tourist Studies*, 20(1), 27-48.
- Rahman, N. N., & Begum, M. (2020). Impact of Social Media on Youths to Enhance Tourism in Bangladesh.
- Negi, N., & Pabalkar, V. (2020). Impact of instagram and instagram influencers in purchase consideration in India. *European Journal of Molecular & Clinical Medicine*, 7(11), 68-86.
- Sheela, K. D. (2021). Effectiveness Of Social Media On Youth In Relation To Their Social Life In Kerala. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education (TURCOMAT)*, 12(6), 923-933.
- Radhakrishnan, P., Sriram, N., & Manivannan, N. (2020). Usage of Social Networking Tools by Rural Youth in Transfer of Technology-An Overview. *Asian Journal of Agricultural Extension, Economics & Sociology*, 38(2), 44-57.
- Bharucha, J. (2018). Social media and young consumers behavior. *International Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 7(6), 72-81.

