

Vloggers in Tourism Sector

Associate Professor Dr. Helen Abd El-Hamid Abd El-Hakim Mohamed^{1*}

^{1*}Higher Institute of Specific Studies Heliopolis, Cairo, Egypt.

* **Correspondence:** Dr. Helen Abd El-Hamid Abd El-Hakim Mohamed

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ABSTRACT: The rise of digital media has transformed the travel and hospitality sector, with video content creators “vloggers” emerging as influential figures in shaping travel narratives. digital media platforms has revolutionized the travel and hospitality sector through platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, where video content creators (video bloggers) create and share travel-related content. These influencers often provide first-hand experiences, recommendations, and visual narratives that shape audience perceptions of destinations. The influence of video content creators in tourism is a growing research field, focusing on traveler decision-making patterns, travel destination promotion, branding, and the socio-cultural impact of digital media.

The research explores the video content creators' “vloggers” role in tourism, their influence on consumer decision-making, and the implications for tourism marketers and destination management organizations (DMOs). The issue will involve an interdisciplinary approach, combining theories from marketing, media studies, psychology, and tourism management. The present study determines how video content creators influence modern tourism, creating a new paradigm in travel destination promotion and travel consumption.

The present study examines the following key questions:

How do video content creators impact travelers' destination choices?

What characteristics define successful travel vlogs?

How do tourism businesses engage with video content creators for marketing purposes?

Keywords: *Tourism, Social Marketing, Process Management, Vlog.*

1- Introduction

The travel and hospitality sector has always been driven by marketing campaigns, word-of-mouth, and personal recommendations. In the past decade, a new form of marketing has taken center stage: digital influencers, commonly known as vloggers. With the rise of platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, video content creators have increasingly become key players in promoting tourist destinations, travel experiences, and related services. This shift in the tourism marketing landscape is driven by the growing reliance on digital media platforms for travel inspiration, the increasing demand for authentic content, and the changing nature of traveler decision-making patterns in the digital age.

The present study aims to analyze the role of video content creators in the travel and tourism sector by focusing on their influence on consumer decision-making, the types of content they create, and their partnerships with tourism boards and brands. Additionally, the research evaluates how video content creators contribute to the evolving nature of travel marketing and the challenges and opportunities that arise from this new paradigm (Murtaza et al., 2024).

2- Research Objectives

1. Assessing the Influence of Vlogs on Destination Choices: To evaluate the extent to which travel vlogs impact destination selection among potential travelers.
2. Identifying the Characteristics of Engaging Vlogs: To analyze the key features that contribute to the success of travel vlogs.
3. Examining the Audience Engagement Patterns: To investigate how different content types influence viewer engagement.

4. Analyzing the Tourism Business Strategies: To explore how tourism companies utilize vlogger partnerships for marketing and outreach.
5. Understanding the Traveler Behavior Changes: To gain insights into how vlogs affect travel planning and decision-making processes.

3- Importance and Problem of This research

Understanding the dynamics between video content creators and travel and tourism sector is crucial for marketers, businesses, and travelers. As vlogs increasingly become a primary source of travel information, The present study contributes valuable insights into contemporary travel behaviors and marketing practices.

4- Literature Review

Social Media Influence Theory (SMIT)

SMIT enable users to generate content that influencing others' perceptions and behaviors. video content creators act as opinion leaders, using visual storytelling to create an immersive experience for their audience. The issue aligns with the digital media platforms Influence Theory, which explains how influencers shape consumer choices and preferences through parasocial relationships (one-sided emotional attachments to influencers) (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021).

Self-Categorization Theory

Self-categorization theory suggests that individuals classify themselves based on group identity, which influences behavior. In tourism, video content creators cater to specific audience segments—backpackers, luxury travelers, eco-tourists—allowing viewers to relate based on shared interests. This identification often emulates the vlogger's behavior, including destination choice and travel styles (Trepte & Loy, 2017).

Role of video content creators in Tourism

Vloggers as Destination Promoters: video content creators often act as destination ambassadors by creating authentic, engaging content that shows specific tourist attractions, local culture, cuisine, and experiences. This personal, on-the-ground perspective helps potential tourists visualize their own experiences. Compared to

traditional marketing, vlogging offers an authentic and unscripted portrayal of destinations, which enhances trust and credibility (Yousaf, 2022).

Case Study Example: Popular travel video content creators like Conor O'Donnell and Petros have many followers, and their videos often become a reference for travel planning. Their content covers off-the-beaten-path locations and engages in adventurous, cultural, and entertaining immersion, which has led to an increased influx of tourists to these areas.

Impact on Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs)

DMOs have increasingly integrated vlogger collaborations into their marketing strategies. Video content creators are essential in promoting destinations, particularly for millennial and Gen Z travelers. DMOs often partner with video content creators for sponsored trips, allowing influencers to showcase unique or less popular destinations (Zhou, 2024).

Examples of DMO-Vlogger Partnerships: The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and Visit Dubai have worked with travel influencers to promote tourism. During the 'Another City Trip' campaign, organized by Eindhoven, 17 international video content creators are invited to many programs that require active participation: handicraft sessions, cycling together, shopping, and tasty food and beverages. This Another City Trip campaign received numerous rewards in competitions like the Dutch Interactive Prizes and the challenge of the American Marketing Institute (Eindhoven, 2019). These campaigns redefine the destination's image by emphasizing themes like adventure tourism, gastronomy, or luxury travel.

Sustainability in Tourism Influencing

Sustainability is a growing concern in tourism, and video content creators play a significant role in shaping sustainable travel behavior. Influencers who promote eco-friendly practices—such as responsible tourism, supporting local communities, and low-impact travel—encourage viewers to adopt these practices during their trips (Baltezarević et al., 2022).

Example: video content creators like Eva Zu Beck have made conscious travel choices part of their brand, highlighting sustainable tourism efforts and eco-conscious destinations. This advocacy increases awareness and encourages responsible tourism.

Consumer Decision-Making

Impact of video content creators on Travel Choices: video content creators influence various stages of travel decision-making, from the inspiration phase to final bookings. Vlogs inspire viewers to travel, helping them discover new destinations or experiences they may not have initially considered. They also provide practical information, such as accommodation, travel tips, and logistics, which aid in the travel process (Cheng et al., 2024).

traveler decision-making patterns Research: Studies have shown that travel vlogs significantly impact younger travelers' decision-making processes. According to a report by Google, 66% of consumers watch travel-related videos when deciding on a trip.

Emotional Engagement and Trust Building

Video content creators foster emotional engagement through personal narratives, engaging visuals, and real-time interactions, building trust with their audience. This trust becomes a driving factor in travel-related decision-making. Research into parasocial relationships (one-sided relationships where viewers feel emotionally connected to influencers) indicates that viewers are more likely to trust and follow advice from influencers with whom they feel personally connected (Zhang, 2022).

Case Example: Vloggers Kara and Nate, who document their experiences traveling to over 100 countries, have cultivated a loyal fan base. Many of their followers use their travel itineraries and tips as direct guides, leading to an observable impact on tourism traffic to destinations.

Vloggers and Destination Branding

Shaping Destination Image: Video content creators contribute to the construction and reconstruction of a destination's image. The visual content directly influences how viewers perceive the atmosphere, attractiveness, and safety. Positive portrayals of

destinations can increase tourist interest, as negative depictions can harm a location's reputation (Peralta, 2019).

Example: Vlogger travel accounts of countries like Iran or North Korea have significantly altered public perceptions of these destinations, challenging the stereotypes and showcasing the culture and landscapes beyond political narratives.

Digital Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)

Travel vlogs function as electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), where vlogger's reviews and recommendations are more credible than traditional advertising. The interactive nature of vlogs, through comments and Q&A sessions, further amplifies this effect, as viewers feel they receive personalized advice (Filieri et al., 2023).

Socio-Cultural and Ethical Considerations

Cultural Representation and Sensitivity: While vlogs provide an opportunity for cultural exchange, they also raise concerns about misrepresentation and exploitation. Video content creators may unintentionally perpetuate stereotypes or focus on superficial aspects of a destination without fully understanding local customs or history. The issue requires more ethical and culturally sensitive travel content (Bloom & Johnston, 2013).

Over-tourism and the Vlogger Effect

Popular travel video content creators contribute to over-tourism, where the increased visibility of destinations leads to unsustainable tourism growth. Places like Bali, Santorini, and Iceland have seen significant surges in tourist numbers, partly driven by influencer marketing, which strains local resources and infrastructure (Gretzel, 2019).

Case Study: The influx of tourists to the Philippines' Boracay Island—partly spurred by online influencers—led to severe environmental degradation, forcing the government to close the island for rehabilitation in 2018.

5- Methodology of Empirical Study

Exploring the impact of vloggers on tourism requires a mixed-methods approach:

To comprehensively assess the impact of video content creators on the travel and hospitality sector, this study adopts a mixed-methods approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. This approach will allow for a nuanced understanding of how video content creators influence traveler decision-making patterns, tourism marketing strategies, and the broader tourism landscape. This investigation will use data collected from surveys, interviews, content analysis, and case studies to triangulate findings and ensure robust and generalizable results.

Research Design

This investigation follows a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, where quantitative data is collected and analyzed first to identify trends and patterns, followed by qualitative data collection to explore these findings in greater depth. This design allows for the integration of both numerical and textual data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

Qualitative Research

Interviews with Tourism Stakeholders:

Conducting interviews with stakeholders to explore the strategic use of vlogs in destination promotion. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the representatives from tourism businesses that have collaborated with video content creators. The interviews aimed to understand:

- The nature of vlogger partnerships
- Perceived effectiveness of these collaborations
- Strategies for selecting suitable video content creators

To explore how video content creators are perceived by travel and tourism sector professionals, in-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including:

- Tourism board representatives.
- Hotel and resort managers.

- Tourism marketers and public relation professionals.
- Destination management organizations.

Interview Protocol:

Semi-structured interviews were used to allow for flexibility while ensuring consistency across interviews. Topics covered included:

The role of video content creators in marketing strategies: How important are video content creators as part of your destination's marketing efforts? Do you allocate budget specifically for influencer partnerships?

Perceptions of vlogger effectiveness:

In your experience, do video content creators drive more bookings or increase awareness for destinations?

How do they compare to traditional advertising methods?

Challenges and concerns:

What are the main challenges in working with video content creators?

Are there concerns about authenticity or the portrayal of destinations?

Ethical considerations:

Do you think there is a responsibility for video content creators to promote sustainable tourism or engage in responsible marketing?

Sampling:

A purposive sampling strategy was used to select 15-20 tourism professionals from different regions and market segments. These stakeholders were selected based on their experience working with influencers and their ability to provide insights into the impact of video content creators on tourism marketing.

Data Analysis:

Interviews were transcribed, and thematic analysis was used to identify key themes related to vlogger influence, authenticity, and ethical considerations in tourism

marketing. A coding framework was developed based on the interview questions and emergent themes, and the data was analyzed for patterns.

Content Analysis of Vlogs:

Analyzing numerous travel vlogs to assess how they represent destinations, promote specific activities, and influence viewer engagement.

Content analysis was used to examine a sample of travel vlogs to understand how video content creators represent destinations, activities, and experiences. A purposive sample of 50 travel vlogs were selected from different platforms (YouTube, Instagram, TikTok), ensuring diversity in terms of video content creators' target audiences, content styles, and geographical focus.

Analysis Criteria:

Themes: The key themes covered in the vlogs, such as cultural exploration, adventure tourism, food experiences, eco-tourism, or luxury travel.

Presentation Style: The tone, editing style, and level of personal storytelling used by video content creators to engage their audiences.

Audience Interaction: Comments and viewer feedback were analyzed to understand audience perceptions of authenticity and trust.

Ethical Considerations: How video content creators address or fail to address sustainability, cultural sensitivity, and responsible travel practices.

Data Analysis:

The content was coded using both deductive and inductive coding strategies, based on pre-identified themes (e.g., destination representation, influencer transparency) and emerging patterns from the data. The analysis helps uncover how video content creators create narratives around destinations and what factors influence their audience's trust in these portrayals.

Quantitative Research

Survey: Conducting large-scale surveys to assess how often they use travel vlogs in their decision-making process and the degree of influence video content creators

have on their travel choices. An online survey was distributed to a sample of 500 travelers who regularly watch travel vlogs. The survey included questions on:

Frequency of vlog viewing

Impact of vlogs on destination choice

Preferred characteristics of travel vlogs

Engagement Analysis: Using YouTube metrics (views, likes, comments) and digital media platforms analytics to measure engagement and infer the impact on tourism movement.

Survey of Tourism Consumers (travelers)

To assess the influence of video content creators on travel decisions, an online survey was conducted among travelers who actively follow travel video content creators. The survey targeted individuals aged 18-45, as this demographic is most likely to engage with digital influencers in the travel space.

Survey Instrument:

The survey consisted of closed-ended questions designed to gather data on the following:

Demographics: Age, gender, travel frequency, digital media platforms usage, etc.

Vlogger Influence on Travel Decisions:

How often do you watch travel vlogs?

Has a vlogger influenced your decision to visit a particular destination? (Yes/No)

Which platform do you follow travel video content creators on? (YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, etc.)

On a scale of 1-5, how much trust do you place in the recommendations of travel video content creators? (1 = Not Trustworthy, 5 = Highly Trustworthy)

Content Preferences:

What type of content do you engage with most often? (e.g., destination reviews, cultural experiences, travel hacks)

How much does a vlogger's portrayal of a destination influence your perception of that place?

Travel Spending:

Have you ever booked travel-related services (e.g., accommodation, flights, activities) directly because of vlogger content? (Yes/No)

Sampling:

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select participants based on their digital media platforms habits and travel behaviors. The survey aimed for a sample size of 500 respondents, ensuring a diverse group in terms of age, geographic location, and travel frequency.

Data Analysis:

Data collected from the survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics (to summarize patterns) and inferential statistics (to test for significant relationships). While chi-square assessed the relationship between demographic factors and vlogger influence on travel choices, regression analysis was employed to identify the most impact factors on the travel decisions.

Analysis of Engagement Metrics on digital media platforms:

In addition to surveying consumers, This investigation also examined the engagement metrics of popular travel video content creators on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. This analysis helped quantify the level of audience interaction with travel content and explored how specific types of content correlate with higher engagement.

Data Collection:

Publicly available data on vloggers' digital media platforms was collected, including:

Video views and likes.

Comments and shares.

Follower growth trends over time.

Audience demographics (if available).

Analysis:

Content was categorized based on theme (e.g., destination reviews, vlogger travel tips, cultural experiences) to determine which types of content generate the most engagement. Regression analysis was applied to explore the relationship between specific content types and audience engagement, helping to determine the effectiveness of various vlogging strategies in driving audience interaction.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

The results from the quantitative and qualitative components are integrated during the interpretation phase of the research. For example:

The quantitative survey may show that a significant portion of consumers book travel experiences based on vlogger recommendations. Qualitative interviews may reveal that tourism marketers view video content creators as essential for reaching younger, more engaged audiences.

Content analysis may indicate that certain destinations are portrayed more authentically than others, which will be cross-referenced with survey data on consumer trust in vlogger content.

By integrating the findings from both methods, This investigation offers a holistic view of how video content creators influence consumer decision-making, tourism marketing practices, and the broader travel and tourism sector.

6- Limitations

While the mixed-methods approach provides a comprehensive view of the research problem, there are several limitations:

Sampling Bias: Survey participants may not fully represent the entire traveler population, as This investigation will primarily focus on digital media platforms users who follow travel vloggers.

Subjectivity in Content Analysis: The interpretation of vlogs may vary depending on the researcher's perspective, especially when assessing themes like authenticity and ethical considerations.

Influencer Diversity: This investigation may not account for all possible types of video content creators, especially those who focus on niche travel topics or have smaller audiences.

Despite these limitations, the mixed-methods design provide valuable insights into the growing role of vloggers in the travel and tourism sector.

7- Final Remarks

This mixed-methods approach allows for a robust examination of how vloggers influence both tourism traveler decision-making patterns and industry practices. By combining quantitative surveys, engagement analysis, and qualitative interviews and content analysis, This investigation provides a nuanced understanding of the impact of travel video content creators on the modern tourism landscape. The findings from The present study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on digital influencers and provide actionable insights for tourism marketers, video content creators, and policymakers.

8- Results

Survey Findings:

Destination Choice: 65% of respondents indicated that travel vlogs significantly influence their choice of travel destinations.

Preferred Vlog Characteristics: Authenticity (78%), storytelling (72%), and production quality (65%) were identified as the most valued characteristics.

Content Analysis:

Common Themes:

Local culture: 70%

Food experiences: 60%

Adventure activities: 55%

Engagement: Vlogs featuring personal narratives and interactions with locals received higher engagement rates compared to purely informational content.

Interviews:

Tourism businesses reported positive outcomes from collaborating with video content creators, including increased brand awareness and higher booking rates. Key insights included:

Importance of aligning with video content creators whose audience demographics match the brand's target market.

Preference for video content creators who focus on storytelling and authentic experiences.

9- Discussion

The findings suggest that video content creators play a vital role in influencing traveler decision-making patterns in the travel and hospitality sector. Their ability to create relatable and engaging content positions them as effective communicators of travel experiences. As traditional marketing methods evolve, the collaboration between video content creators and tourism businesses represents a significant shift in how destinations are promoted.

Implications for Marketing:

Targeted Partnerships: Tourism businesses should prioritize collaborations with video content creators who align with their brand values and target audiences.

Content Strategy: Businesses can enhance their marketing strategies by leveraging authentic storytelling that resonates with potential travelers.

Final Remarks and Future Research Directions:

Video content creators are integral to the modern tourism landscape, influencing destination choices and shaping traveler perceptions. As digital content continues to evolve, understanding the impact of video content creators will be essential for tourism marketers and businesses aiming to connect with a diverse audience. Video content creators have become pivotal players in the travel and hospitality sector, significantly shaping traveler decision-making patterns and destination branding. While their influence presents numerous opportunities for travel destination promotion and sustainable tourism advocacy, it raises concerns about cultural representation and over-tourism.

Future research could focus on understanding the long-term impacts of vlogger partnerships on less popular destinations, the ethics of influencer marketing in tourism, and the effectiveness of vlogs in promoting sustainable travel behaviors. Further interdisciplinary studies combining marketing, media psychology, and tourism management will help clarify the evolving dynamics between video content creators and tourism development.

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مدونو الفيديو في قطاع السياحة

الملخص

لقد أحدث تطور وسائل الإعلام الرقمية تحولاً في قطاع السفر، والضيافة مع ظهور منشئي محتوى مدونو "الفيديو" كشخصيات "الفيديو مؤثرة في تشكيل سرديات أحدثت. السفر منصات الوسائط الرقمية ثورة في قطاع السفر والضيافة من خلال منصات، TikTok و Instagram و YouTube مثل حيث ينشئ مدونو الفيديو محتوى متعلقاً بالسفر غالباً. ويشاركونه ما يقدم هؤلاء المؤثرون تجارب وتوصيات وسرديات بصرية مباشرة تشكل تصورات الجمهور يُعد. للوجهات تأثير منشئي محتوى الفيديو في السياحة مجالاً بحثياً، متنامياً يركز على أنماط اتخاذ القرار لدى المسافرين والترويج لوجهات، السفر والعلامات، التجارية والتأثير الاجتماعي والثقافي للوسائط يستكشف. الرقمية البحث دور منشئي محتوى مدونو "الفيديو في" الفيديو، السياحة وتأثيرهم على اتخاذ قرارات، المستهلك وآثارهم على مسوقي السياحة ومنظمات إدارة ستتضمن. (DMOs) الوجهات القضية نهجاً متعدد، التخصصات يجمع بين نظريات من التسويق ودراسات الإعلام وعلم النفس وإدارة تحدد. السياحة الدراسة الحالية كيفية تأثير منشئي محتوى الفيديو على السياحة، الحديثة مما يخلق نموذجاً جديداً في الترويج لوجهات السفر وتجارب. السفر

تتناول هذه الدراسة الأسئلة الرئيسية: التالية

كيف يؤثر منشئو محتوى الفيديو على خيارات المسافرين للوجهات السياحية؟

ما هي سمات مدونات الفيديو السياحية الناجحة؟

كيف تتفاعل شركات السياحة مع منشئي محتوى الفيديو لأغراض التسويق؟