

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON TRAVEL DECISIONS

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ABSTRACT

Social media has highly transformed the way people research, plan and organize their trips, with travel influencers playing a central role in this transformation. This study examines how the content posted by travel influencers on social media platforms like YouTube and Instagram influences user actions, trust and travel planning. Through a structured survey, the study takes a quantitative, cross-sectional approach to examine patterns of influence. Findings suggest even passive influencer followers are affected by the influencer's content- particularly, for deciding the destination and experiences. Instagram ranks as the top source for travel inspiration, while trust in influencer content remains moderate due to perceived exaggeration. Despite that, influencer content often tends to induce emotional responses and saving of their content for future recommendations. The study concludes that the travel intents are greatly inspired by social media influencers, although their influence final on the final decisions are subtler. Transparency and authenticity are essential in defining user-trust and long-term impact.

KEYWORDS: *Travel Decisions, Social Media Influencers, Destination Choice, Content Authenticity, Digital Influence*

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