

Perception of Followers Regarding the Role of Social Media Digital Influencers in Tourism on the Decision-Making Process

Peres Rita*, Oliveira Catarina and Dias Nuno

Centre for Tourism Research, Development and Innovation (CITUR) Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies, Estoril, Portugal

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*Corresponding author: Peres Rita, Centre for Tourism Research, Development and Innovation (CITUR) Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies, Estoril, Portugal

Abstract

The role of digital influencers in tourism has been widely recognized, namely by the impact on followers' intentions to adopt the suggestions made by influencers. The online multimedia content shared by influencers, mainly regarding destinations, has been positively affecting purchasing decisions in the tourism sector. Influencer marketing is already recognized as one of the most important approaches of the last decade [1]. The main objective of this research is to understand the relationship between the profile of followers of digital influencers in tourism and the relationship between the dimensions of the experience with the content shared on digital platforms, understanding what most influences the behaviour of followers and how it reflects on their purchase intention. The results show a positive relationship between tourism digital influencers and content based on authentic travel experiences. The outcomes revealed by the study reflect a positive relationship between the dimensions that explain the followers' experience with influencers and the adoption of information in their behavioural intentions of consumption or purchase. The main contribution of this research is to evidence the contextualization of the different dimensions of the follower's relationship with digital influencers in tourism, this relationship can be used by tourism stakeholders to impulse the promotion of destinations. The closeness between influencers and followers makes the audience susceptible to opinions and feedback that can influence decision making when deciding to purchase a service or good related to tourism.

Keywords: Influencers marketing; Followers perception; Tourism digital content

Introduction

Tourism digital influencers share contents especially regarding destinations, which has been having a positive effect in the purchase decision in the sector. When the consumer wants to travel, usually it is on the internet that they look for additional information. Sharing media content such as photos or videos also helps the consumer to develop a certain image which allows to overcome the intangibility connected to tourism services and online shopping [2]. In an online environment where now tourist has a broader access to different sources of information that can shape their behaviors and influence their decisions that their presence and tendencies should be monitored and studied. Tourists' behaviors and attitudes can be tracked and analysed through their social media activities, where it is also possible to follow their purchases and recommendations to other users. The amount of offers available online nowadays for tourism services forces tourists to be more cautious and to investigate more prior to making any decision. Social media users that want

to purchase tourism related services and use those platforms to seek information "(...)have more trust in other travellers' opinions using social media rather than official marketing advice." Zivkovic et. Al. [2]. Influencers marketing literature can be looked into in 3 areas, the first one being the issue on how to identify influencers with influencing power and strategies to make the most of it has states by García, Daly & Sánchez-Cabezudo, [3]; Sheikahmadi, Nematbakhsh & Zareie, [4], secondly how influencers online presence is manage and successful practices accordingly to Audrezet, Gwarlann & Julie [5] and thirdly how does influencers that have their presence on social media impact followers behaviours has consumers [6,7].

In sum, it is intended to study the profile of digital influencers followers, especially their motivations, perceptions and the decision-making process when purchasing services and goods related to travel and tourism and understand the relation between UGC (User Generated Content) and the intention to visit a certain

destination. To be able to reach the main goal, this research also aims to understand several objectives that will help to reach the main one such as:

- i. Characterize the socio-demographic profile of followers.
- ii. Identify the characteristics of content share regarding tourism.
- iii. Identify followers' motivations regarding the follow up with influencers profiles.
- iv. Understand the impact of tourism posts on the purchase decision making process.

In this research is presenting as follows: firstly, the literature review and the main research hypotheses; then address the methodology used; thirdly, the results obtained; after that we will set out our conclusions and the practical implications; and finally, the limitations and future lines of research.

Literature Review

Social media in Tourism

The development of the internet and the marketing development and adaptation to online environment helped the growing importance of digital marketing in tourism. Here with the several tools and space available for communication and promotion stakeholders can post and their value. Hvass & Munar [8] believe that social media appearance changed the way only communication was made with the possibility of contact and interaction not only between users and the brand but also because now tourist can themselves create content on brands behalf which has been integrated in marketing strategies by tourism companies. The Web 2.0 and social media rise allowed the possibility to have develop an interactive relationship between customers and influencers leading to new opportunities to be used in the tourism industry according to Alizadeh and Isa [9]. Content creation, social media use is widely recognized has a critical impact on tourism industry and it is cherished by the industry workers and marketing professionals [10,11], Santiago & Castelo [12], sum the possibilities brought by social media like giving voice to every user allowing them to create, post and share content, growing and giving them an active place in the community. They are not only content creators but also passive couriers of brand messages which explains why e-WOM is so relevant for marketing strategies. The same author characterizes e-WOM as a set of actions like sharing ideas, experiences, and opinions that users have in a digital environment. These actions are understood by consumers and given more credibility than traditional messages by corporate brands. Additionally, information shared on online social networks represents an important source of information for consumers. When these messages are positive, they can have a beneficial effect for brands. The development of social media and its use in the tourism industry has been highly noted and is a currently researched topic. The role it plays in Tourism business

is seen in: information seeks, decisions support, promotion of business (services and good) and engagement with consumers [13].

In tourism, social media should be used to communicate with consumers and potential consumers benefits and attractiveness of a certain destination. Videos and images have a strong influence in the customer decision process so when promotion on social media destinations is capturing their followers' attention [14]. Another characteristic of social media, relevant to tourism marketing, is that it allows interaction between posts and followers, this can lead to increased engagement with the audience and promote interaction and dynamics. Although different researchers found that different social media is used for online search of information depending on the travel stage (Verma et al., 2011) [11], it is in the pre-travel stage that travels use more social media to plan and gather information regarding a destination [10,11,13]. Hun et al., [15] cited by Lou & Yuan 2019 describe digital influencers as ordinary people that were empowered by communications and technologies to create and post content on social media are also individuals that have social influence over their followers. Influencers are content producers that have followers on social media platforms due to their content share in video, text, or pictures [16]. Micro-influencers in the digital world have a role of change makers presenting new practices to their small followers' community. Due to their close relation with their followers, they represent an important channel for a successful communication strategy. Peres and Silva (2021) findings suggest that micro-influencers play a significant role in terms of influencing consumer purchase decision-making in the tourism and hospitality; about 79% of surveyed consumers who follow micro-influencers' content feel their choice is influenced and consider that the contents shared enable consumers to form an idea of what their stay will be like, due to some of the micro-influencers' characteristics.

In the tourism industry, the influence of social media has been already noticed specially on how tourists have changed their purchases on destinations, hotel and travel based on the contents that were consumed on social media made by digital influencers [17]. Online content helps to overcome the tourism intangible characteristics of online purchases. Since it is not possible to test tourism services and products such as hotel stays, transportation prior to purchase it is through the content online like suggestions, feedback and photos that potential tourists can preview their experience. The preview allows tourists with visit intentions to be able to create an image of the services they are looking for. Nowadays, it is known that influencers have a role in tourists' behaviours regarding purchase intentions and decisions [2]. It is when they share their own experience related to a destination through social media posts that an image for the potential tourist is created opening with this space to motivate them to become consumers [18]. The purchase decision process in tourism has been study and it has been shown that social media influencers

impact followers and tourists travel intentions [7] and boost the possibility to followers to visit a specific destination shared by influencers [19]. Nowadays, it is through social media that most information is looked for (which is also where influencers have their channels to share their contents [20-22]). This fact has been getting more and more attention since social media is the preferred channel to spread information regarding different services and products [23]. Looking at how social media has been studied in the tourism industry context, with Leung, Law, Hoof, and Buhalis (2013) it is possible to see that the content that was used to analyze studies from 2007 to 2011 identified two major topics. The first one being focused on the consumer, here it was mostly analyzed how social media is a platform used by tourists to look for information when planning to travel giving relevant information to make decisions, it was also noted that the role of social media to find an alternative or to influence the purchase was rarely studied [24]. The second one is related to supplier-based. There were other studies that investigated the source of information displayed on social media, and in the context of tourism the origin of the information that is posted online is used as guides for followers with interest in the tourism products and services becoming possible travelers.

Research methods

The general aim of this research was to point out the relationship between digital influencers in tourism and their followers in the purchase decision making process. Specifically, throughout the research it was analyze the relationship between the influencers and social media, named the characteristics of online content share, characterize the sociodemographic profile of followers, identify followers' motivations on the profile of digital influencers, understand the impact of media content related to tourism on the online decision-making process to purchase tourism/ travel services. So, for this research 2 models were developed, aimed at being able to answer the objectives proposed in the beginning. Followers were the target group studied, and the starting point of the model was built to analyze the environment where followers act as main characters.

Firstly, it was important to understand the relationship between followers and influencers and all the relevant layers that were part of it. The typology of contents is related to the type of contents that are search, the type of publication the format of how the content in deliver in the digital platforms, the proximity is the perception of the closeness between both parts and lastly the relevant characterizes that make influencers must catch followers' attention and follow their content. Secondly, the quality of the content seen in the follower's point of view was also studied, the information could be sought online or offline, but it was on the first one that the decision would be made. When choosing a destination promoted by an influencer what were the relevant factors in the influencer's profile and content that led to credibility to impact the purchase decision make process.

Thirdly the motivations that led followers to follow specific digital influencers with travel and tourism content allowed them to have a broader view on how influencers were seen and the perceived image that was created for their success. Lastly, it was also studied the experience that followers have with content related to tourism in online platforms and which characterizes of the online profiles were considered the responsible for the success of influencers. This experience reflects their intentions to visit a destination promoted by influencers.

Justification and Hypothesis

Followers' motivation to follow the online profile and the perception of proximity with influencers were studied together. The motivations presented in the inquired aimed to give a wide option to select the ones that best suit their intentions and actions when following the online profiles. In another hand, the proximity with influencers was an open question with a quality answer given and study individually. This is in line with the authors McKnight et al., [25], that referred that intention to follow the advice is one of the most relevant consumer behavioural intentions since it provides a solid signal of how the consumer will behave in the future. This means that the intention to follow the advice obtained in an online travel community implies the intention to behave in a determined way, according to the comments, recommendations and suggestions of other community members. Moreover, several authors have noted the decisive role that the information obtained in online communities may have on the consumer decision process [26], the analysis of the intention to follow the advice in an online travel community may be especially useful to understand travelers' behaviour. So, it is hypothesized in this study that: H1: The proximity with the influencers affects the followers' motivations.

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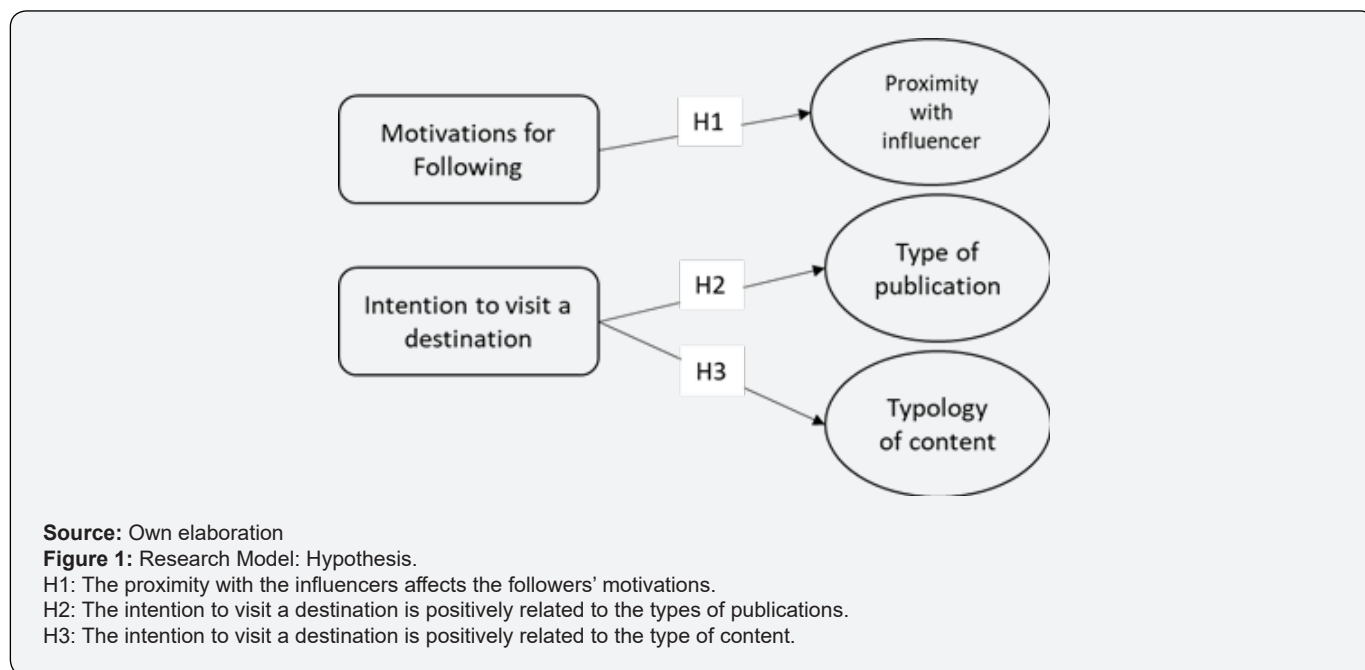
The second hypothesis of this model studies the relation of the intention to visit a destination- promoted by a travel and tourism digital influencer- and the types of publications (format) that followers are more influenced by: landscape photography, photos with people, videos with people, landscape videos, text and audio. All 6 had to be rated from the proposed scale available where 1 was "zero impact" and 5 "high impact". According with Lee et al. [27] echoed this finding, as they found that embedding captivating and interactive content pages such as videos and photographs on Facebook events significantly influences attendees' perceptions of usefulness, ease of use, and enjoyment. Thus, photographs and videos are critical to influencing travel information seekers' enjoyment and adoption of UGC. Interestingly, these antecedents have been applied in different contexts. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H2: The intention to visit a destination is positively related to the types of publications.

The third hypothesis of this model studies the relation of the intention to visit a destination- promoted by a travel and tourism digital influencer- and the types of content that followers pay more attention to on social media. Consumers utilize various social media platforms for travel planning. Chung, Han, and Koo [28] contended that PU and social relationships significantly influence travel information adoption, suggesting that the type of event and the social media platform determine the usefulness of the UGC. Their results indicate that travelers' emotional affections will be

high on social media platforms with high social presence, meaning that the platform accommodates content such as pictures, video, and other graphical images that increase users' interactivity. The type of content most search online was given in a list where more than 1 option could be selected. Based on this statement, it is hypnotized in this study that:

H3: The intention to visit a destination is positively related to the type of content (Figure 1).



Data Collection and Sample

To know and understand the behaviour of the audience that follower's tourism and travel digital influencers, a questionnaire was conducted. The key themes approach to investigate were social media, influencers, decision making process and tourism and travel in Portugal. The questionnaire was available from March 3rd 2021till April 26th, 2021, and there were 297 valid answers that were used for the study. This questionnaire was created on Microsoft Forms and shared on Facebook and Instagram. The questionnaire contains 26 questions arranged in four groups according to the type of information that each group was intended to collect. The survey was designed in Portuguese. Since Likert-type scale is mostly use [29,30] when the research aims to scale the information regarding emotions and attitudes [29,31] has was this questionnaire that aimed to collect information regarding travel and tourism influencers and their follower's relationship. This information was stated, and 5 options were given in a scale from strongly influence to zero and 1 if the question was not applicable. The organization of this questionnaire intended to be a logical path through which participants could go through sequentially. Starting with understanding followers' online presence and use of

social media and their behaviour, choices and opinions on travel and tourism during May- December 2020 and it ended with social demographic characterization. Since it is not possible to question all internet users that follow Portuguese's tourism and travel influencers, there is the need to select a representative sample that can represent similar behaviour comparting to the population of interest. For this specific study, a non-probabilistic sampling was applied since it intended to be measuring a group of people that was expected to represent the population. Due to the theme and the area of studied the method applied for the implementation of the questionnaire was snowball sampling. Portuguese Influencers in tourism and travel were contacted by email and social media requesting to answer and share among their communities to reach the intent population. It was important that people who answered the questionnaire were actively using social media and blogs to search for more information regarding destinations and tourism services and goods.

Sample Profile

To have a better understating of the population that was answering the questions, demographic information was requested

to characterize the group correctly. By having the information like gender, age, academic degree, and social media where they had an account it was possible to prove statements and findings described in the beginning of this research. When looking for age, the options provided were in range. In this sample, 44,1% have ages between 18-25 years old, 15,5% have ages between 26-33, 17,5% between 34- 41, 11,8% have ages between 42-69, 9,1% 50-58 and only 2% have more than 58 years old. Regarding education and academic formation 248 had a superior degree and 35 were still in high school. When looking over gender, 226 were female and only 71 male (less than 25% of overall sample). The demographic characterization ended with their presence on social media. It has requested to select, minimum 1 and no maximum, which social media platforms they had an account. From all the answers, 93,6% of people who answer the inquiry affirmed they had an Instagram account, 92,3% Facebook, 64% LinkedIn, 53,2% YouTube, 47,1% on Pinterest, 34,3% on Twitter, 22,2% on Tik Tok, 15,8% on Snapchat, 10,4% on Blogs e 3,7% said other, underling that were social media that were not contemplated in the given opinions. Social media networks such as Instagram, Tik Tok, YouTube, Snapchat, Tumblr, Twitter, and Facebook are where most of influencers have their impact on consumers. Creating an account on this platform is free and it is possible that organically influencers start to build their fanbase accordingly to the success of their contents.

Data Analysis Procedures

The procedures regarding data analysis included the descriptive analysis and hypothesis testing. SPSS was used as a tool to teste and measure the variables collected. To be able to confirm the hypothesis, tests and analysis were performed with the Pearson correlation test. For these analyses the Pearson correlation was used. Statistic tests are used to check and confirm

if the differences that were observed in the sample are statistically significant, which is important because if they are statically significant the conclusions in the sample analyses can be inferred to the population. Through Pearson coefficient (r), explain by Marco [32], is used in studies that analyze the relationship between variables such as result of scales constructions providing a linear association between variables that go from -1 to 1. The closer the value is to extreme values the more the association is. 5% is the reference value used to test the hypotheses, this means that the error probability is 5%. When the value is inferior to 5% means that exists a significative relationship among both variables.

Results, Discussion and Analysis

The dimensions that were studied next were between the key factors that led to the success of digital influencers and the perceived relationship between influencers and the followers. This relation is possible to be seen in the table 1 below. There are statistically positive relationships between the classifications of the relationship between tourism digital influencers and: relevance of share of authentic experiences (r=0,254, p<0,001), share of unique details related to the destination (r=0,269, p<0,001), advised based on experience (r= 0,290, p< 0,001), opportunity to interact in real time with locals and followers (r=0,321, p<0,001), content creation for the specific target (r=0,269, p<0,001), presence in social media, which allows the diffusion of their contents (r=0,361, p<0,001), presence in more than one digital social platform (r=,143, p=0,018), frequent publications (r=0,242, p<0,001) and the promotion of national and international destinations (r=2,01, p=0,001). It is possible to conclude that, people who classified the relationship strong between digital influencers and their followers give more importance to the above referred aspects related to the success of social media profiles with contents regarding travel and tourism.

Table 1: The success of digital influencers and the perceived relationship between influencers and their followers. Source: Own elaboration SPSS Output.

N = 274 Success of digital influencers		Relationship between tourism digital influencers and their followers
Sharing authentic travel experiences	r	,254(**),000
	p	
Sharing unique details related to the destination	r	,269(**),000
	p	
Advice based on experience	r	,290(**),000
	p	
Opportunity to interact in real time with locals and followers	r	,321(**),000
	p	
Creation of content directed to the target audience	r	,269(**),000
	p	
Presence in social network that promotes the dissemination of its contents	r	,361(**),000
	p	

Presence in more than a social media platform	r	,143(**),000
	p	
Frequent publications	r	,242(**),000
	p	
National destination promotion	r	,107,076
	p	
National and international destinations	r	,201(**),001
	p	

So, the **H1**: the proximity with the influencers affects the follower's motivation is confirmed.

The second analysis conducted was between the experience between influencers and followers and their intention to visit a destination based on their promotion and the form of content consumed on social media. The four dimensions presented on next table the table gather several information collect from the inquiry and were set together accordingly to the themes and similar information collected as below:

Direct Influence from Influencers:

- i. Digital Influencers were important to decide to travel and get to know destinations.
- ii. Digital Influencers had a relevant role in collecting information regarding a destination that was wished to visit.
- iii. Digital Influencers had a relevant role in comparing more than one destination.
- iv. Digital Influencers boosted the decision to purchase travel/ tourism service or good related.
- v. Digital Influencers were used to collect more information after the decision and purchase of a travel and tourism service or goods.

In-depth Information Analysis:

- i. Frequently visit social media and blogs before deciding on a destination.
- ii. Trust on the recommendations given by digital influencers.
- iii. Attention to comments made on influencers posts affect my idea.
- iv. Through multimedia videos (videos and photos) a perspective of how the experience will be is created.
- v. The more credible the influencer is the most influence it will have in the decision of
- vi. purchase.
- vii. Online platforms are a source to collect information and it will still be used.

Social Media and Blogs

- i. Social Media development made the decision easier to select the visit to a destination.
- ii. Read online blogs and follow social media influencers is one of the main ways to collect information regarding a destination.
- iii. Information collects through online channels such as blogs and influencers social media.
- iv. Is more relevant than in traditional places.

Impact of Payment to Influencers

- i. Payed Influencers (cash or services) Negatively affects the decision to purchase.
- ii. Payed Influencers have biased opinions (Table 2).

The motivations "1. Direct Influence of Influencers" ($t_{218} = -3.896, p < 0.001$), "2. In-Depth Information Analysis" ($t_{218} = -3.859, p < 0.001$), and "3. Social Media and Blogs" ($t_{218} = -5.120, p < 0.001$) are higher for those who made posts on social media compared to those who did not, with statistically significant differences. In the sample, motivation "4. Negative Impact of Payment to Influencers" is higher for those who did not make posts on social media compared to those who did, but the observed differences are not statistically significant ($p > 0.050$). Concerning the relationship between the Dimensions of Experience with digital influencers and the content shared on their platforms and what tourism and travel-related content the follower consults on the social media platforms where they have an account result verify statistic positive relationships between the digital contents (table 3):

Mainly:

- i. Landscape photography and the experience 1." Influencers direct influence ($r=0,133, p=0,023$), 2" Deep Information analysis" ($r=0,157, p=0,007$) and 3" social media and Blogs" ($r=0,161, p=0,006$).
- ii. Photography with people and the experience 1." Influencers direct influence ($r=0,320, p<0,001$), 2" Deep Information analysis" ($r=0,0278, p<0,001$) and 3" social media and Blogs" ($r=0,242, p<0,001$).

Table 2: Followers Motivations to engage Digital Influencers. Source: Own elaboration SPSS Output.

		N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	gl	p
Direct Influence from Influencers	No	156	2,97	0,90	-3,896	218	*** 0,000
	Yes	64	3,49	0,86			
In-depth Information Analysis	No	156	3,36	0,81	-3,859	218	*** 0,000
	Yes	64	3,81	0,72			
Social Media and Blogs	No	156	3,22	0,81	-5,120	218	*** 0,000
	Yes	64	3,83	0,79			
Impact of Payment to Influencers	No	156	3,50	0,90	1,541	218	0,125
	Yes	64	3,29	1,02			

iii. Videos with people and the experience 1” Influencers direct influence (r=0,309, p<0,001), 2” Deep Information analysis” (r=0,290, p<0,001) and 3” social media and Blogs” (r=0,226, p<0,001).

iv. Landscape Videos and the experience 2 “Deep Information Analysis “(r=131, p=0,025), 3” social media and Blogs” (r=0,134, p=0,023) and 4” Payed influencers” (r=126,

p=0,023).

v. Text and the experience 1 “Direct influencers influence” (e=0,178, p=0,002), “2 Deep Information Analysis” (r=0,151, p=0,010) and 3 “Social Media and Blogs” (r=0,134, p=0,023).

vi. Audio and experience 1” Direct Influencers Influence” (r=0,214, p<0,001), 2 “Deep Information Analysis” (r= 0,168, p=0,0004) and 3 “Social Media and Blogs “(r=0,151, p=0,010).

Table 3: Influencers Experience Analysis. Source: Own elaboration SPSS Output.

N = 292		1. Direct Influence from Influencers	2. In-depth Information Analysis	3. social media and Blogs	4. Impact of Payment to Influencers
Landscape Photography	r	,133(*),023	,157(**),007	,161(**),006	,080,172
	p				
Humanized photographs	r	,320(**),000	,278(**),000	,242(*),000	-,019,753
	p				
People Videos	r	,309(**),000	,290(**),000	,226(*),000	,047,423
	p				
Landscape Videos	r	,088,132	,131(**),025	,133(*),024	,126(*),031
	p				
Text	r	,178(**),002	,151(**),010	,151(**),010	,075,205
	p				
Audio	r	,214(**),000	,168(**),004	,151(**),010	,000,997
	p				

The above findings support Kotler et al., (2017) on the role develop by digital influencers to create digital content that is relevant for their audience. Also, most internet users not only trust influencer’s opinion but they also request it, taking into consideration more than compared to traditional ways of publicity and experts’ opinions. The influence that exists from influencers to followers supports the development of destination image which leads to a feeling of anticipation and expectation of the experience. This is relevant because it is how tourists feel towards a destination, (Chetthamrourngchai, 2017). People who give higher importance to digital share content have strong experience with digital influencers and the content they share in their platforms.

The analysis confirms the **H2**: The intention to visit a destination is positively related to the types of publications. The relation between the 2 dimensions: experience with influencers and the intention to visit a destination based on their promotion and the types of content most view related with travel and tourism was conducted with Pearson correlation has it is possible to see on table 4.

The above table shows positive relationships with a statistic meaning between the following content themes:

i. Accommodations and direct influence from influencers and in-depth information analysis.

- ii. Destinations and direct influence from influencers, in-depth information analysis and social media and blogs.
- iii. Mini -Holidays/ city breaks and direct influence from influencers.
- iv. Romance and direct influence from influencers and social media and blogs.

Table 4: Relationship between experience with influencers and the types of content related with travel and tourism. ** p < 0,01, * p < 0,05, Source: Own elaboration SPSS Output.

N=296		Direct Influence from Influencers	In-depth Information Analysis	Social Media and blogs	Impact of Payment to Influencers
Gastronomy & wines	r	,064	,079	,066	-,017
	p	,272	,173	,258	,768
Accommodation	r	,159(**)	,157(**)	,066	,026
	p	,006	,007	,260	,654
Destination	r	,180(**)	,184(**)	,134(*)	-,034
	p	,002	,001	,021	,562
Museums & monuments	r	,016	,059	,067	,026
	p	,779	,312	,247	,652
Events	r	,084	,040	,096	,074
	p	,146	,488	,097	,206
Commercial Spaces	r	,065	,014	,005	,018
	p	,263	,805	,934	,763
Religious events	r	-,046	-,101	-,080	-,050
	p	,426	,081	,171	,393
Urban Art	r	,038	,093	,018	-,098
	p	,516	,108	,761	,091
Nature	r	,055	,038	,029	,056
	p	,345	,515	,624	,340
Sports	r	,007	,017	,060	,019
	p	,903	,773	,299	,739
Sun & Sea	r	,026	,037	-,025	-,013
	p	,660	,521	,670	,827
Family Tourism	r	,036	,019	,090	,050
	p	,531	,744	,123	,390
Golf	r	-,052	-,083	-,100	,009
	p	,371	,153	,085	,879
Accessible Tourism	r	,032	,039	-,002	-,011
	p	,583	,507	,967	,845
Health and well-being	r	-,024	,003	-,057	,064
	p	,684	,958	,324	,271
Nautical	r	-,076	,001	-,013	-,055
	p	,189	,991	,819	,345
Outdoor Activities	r	-,026	-,071	-,057	,029
	p	,652	,220	,329	,615
Citybreaks	r	,142(*)	,073	,088	-,023
	p	,014	,212	,131	,699
Romance	r	,121(*)	,084	,130(*)	-,036
	p	,038	,148	,025	,532

The analysis shows that followers are influenced by travel and tourism influencers and the contents most relevant are accommodation, destinations, mini-holidays/ city breaks and romance. It is already broadly known that followers turn to blogs and social media to obtain certain information. Hughes et al., (2019) also found out that sponsored and played posts affect online engagement but depending on the characterizes of the type and form of content. For influencers, social media opened doors to create, post and share content, and the development of their profiles made them grow and have an active voice in a community becoming relevant assets for marketing strategies has referred by Santiago & Castelo [12]. E-WOM influences the consumer decision making when purchasing or following an influencer's opinion more than compared to traditional marketing. As stated by Goldsmith and Clark [33] followers give more importance to influencers perspective over brand and products and social media showed that the more personal share of opinion the biggest the influence is.

So, the **H3** is then confirmed, meaning that the intention to visit a destination is positively related to the type of content.

Conclusions, Practical Implications, Limitations and Future Research

The findings show a positive relationship between the dimensions that explained the experience of the followers with the influencers and the adoption of information on behavioural intention. Followers 'turn to influencers' posts to help their decision-making, as they represent already lived experience. Influencer's characteristics that are determinant in the decision-making process, are credibility, honesty, quality, attractiveness, and the creativity of shared content, are considered the most important characteristics. When analyzing the distinct experience dimensions with the digital influencers and their content share it is possible to identify key successful factors [34]. Looking for the dimensions it is possible to understand that: deep information analyzing is highly recognized and can be seen in actions like: Social media and blogs are frequently visited before influencers make any purchase decision, their content is trustworthy and recommendations are taken into consideration, followers pay attention to comments made in different posts, the media content allows to create expectations and image the future trip, the more credible the influencer is the more influence it will have in the decision making process and consumers intent to keep relying in this digital source of information in online platforms to obtain information. It was also possible to verify that negative Impact on influencers payment on their content, which means that the fact that some influencers are paid in monetary, services or products affects in a negative way the follower's decision toward the purchase intention. Influencers' opinions are viewed as not that must worthy since they are paid to promote a product or brand. Concerning the social media and Blogs, it was possible to show that social media development made the process easier

when concerning the process of deciding regarding a tourism destination. Destination information is obtained online by consulting blogs or social media with relevant information on the theme and for travelers, information obtained in this way is more relevant when comparing to the traditional ways.

Finally, the influencers direct influence, it was showed that travelers assume influencers importance to travel and get to know a specific destination, which means that the content created by these influencers have a significant role on information search regarding the purchase done. Digital influencers can also assume a role when comparing different available options, they have the power to impassionate the intent purchase. Influencers also assume a role when it concerns obtaining more information. Their role may appear after the purchase is done, but it's responsible for local choices when consumers are looking for more information regarding a destination that was already chosen [35]. The objective of this research was achieved, the relationship that exists between followers and influencers are based on trust on the content share and the credibility of what is said on social media. Digital influencers in tourism can play a significant role in promoting destinations because: they are aware of the digital environment in which they move, have a close relationship with their followers and are able to influence decision making and encourage followers to travel.

Practical Implications

Outcomes from this research and the implications on tourism marketing are mostly related with followers' perspective and motivations. From their point of view, it was possible to have access to the type and form of contents that have the most influence when seeking for information regarding a destination or a service or good in tourism. Secondly, it was possible to understand why, and which tiers followers recognize influencers knowledge and expertise according to the type of content. The successful factors for the growth of influencers support the identified tiers [36]. Thirdly, the relationship that exists between followers and influencers reflects the perception that exists from the point of view of people who consume content and who create it. The belief of this existing relationship and the online interactions following the contents posted on social media also support the virtual connection. The findings show which motivations, type and format of content have more impact and are more valued by followers of travel and tourism social media influencers.

Research Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The surveys were conducted during a period of lockdown due COVID-19 and intense measures that did not allow to be face-to-face with people and ask them to fill the answers, since all information was gather with participants that were in groups related to travel and tourism and people to whom they forward the link it was not possible to have a broad sample. Due to the

theme study choosing to be on social media, travel and tourism, followers, and consumers behaviour there are only a few academic studies that dive into these areas. More investigation is required in this area, not only is important to study consumers behaviour to develop the correct marketing strategies but it is also important to, socially, understand the patterns and the way our society lives when it comes to technology. Additionally, and to conclude, the fact that all social media websites and platforms were considered, if the study had focus only in 1 for example Instagram the study could bring valuable information for future studies and campaigns. The research was also done under a specific audience, changing the geography, extending it could be interesting to study since the conclusions could vary due to diverse cultural contexts.

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