Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management
JTHEM
EISSN: 0128-178X
Volume 9 Issue 36 (June 2024) PP. 01-17
DOI 10/35631/JTHEM.936001



JOURNAL OF TOURISM, HOSPITALITY AND ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT (JTHEM)
www.jthem.com

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS AND THE EFFECT ON TRAVEL MOTIVATION AMONG YOUTH

Mohamad Aidil Zaffran Muhamad Asri[1], Siti Yuliandi Ahmad[1*], Siti Salwa Md Sawari[2], Nurul Fardini Zakaria[3]

[1] Department of Tourism, International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia
Email: sitiyuliandi@iium.edu.my
[2] Department of Tourism, International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia
Email: salwa@iium.edu.my
[3] Department of Tourism, International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia
Email: fardini@iium.edu.my
[*] Corresponding Author

Article Info:

Article history:
Received date: 13.03.2024
Revised date: 15.04.2024
Accepted date: 13.05.2024
Published date: 25.06.2024

To cite this document:

Asri, M. A. Z. M., Ahmad, S. Y., Sawari, S. S. M., & Zakaria, N. F. (2024). Social Media Influencers And The Effect On Travel Motivation Among Youth. *Journal of Tourism Hospitality and Environment Management, 9* (36), 01-17.

DOI: 10.35631/JTHEM.936001.

This work is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Abstract:

In recent years, social media platforms have spawned many influencers and internet celebrities who actively engage in marketing and promotion strategies. The trend of incorporating social media influencers into marketing strategies is rising. In the current technological era, these influencers, especially those on TikTok, have gained immense popularity and are crucial in influencing people, particularly the younger demographic of social media users. This study aims to investigate the content of TikTok and the impact of TikTok influencers on young people's travel motivation. This study employs descriptive and Pearson correlation analyses as the chosen quantitative research methodologies. A structured instrument using a survey was distributed to Malaysian youth. The purpose of the survey was to examine the relationship between TikTok influencers and the travel motivation of young people. The results of this study indicate a correlation between TikTok influencers and youth travel motivation. The captivating content created by these influencers, which includes visually appealing travel destinations, exciting activities, and one-of-a-kind cultural experiences, has a substantial effect on shaping the travel motivation of young people. By leveraging the power of TikTok influencers, travel-related businesses, organisations, and entrepreneurs can improve their marketing strategies to reach and engage the youth demographic. Understanding the impact of TikTok influencers on the travel motivation of young people can aid in developing marketing campaigns that resonate with this demographic. This research supports the growth of the tourism industry by providing insights for stakeholders to enhance their marketing strategies and cater to the preferences of young travellers. It emphasises the influential role of TikTok influencers in encouraging youth to travel and shaping their destination preferences. Incorporating these influencers into marketing efforts can effectively engage

Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management
JTHEM
EISSN: 0128-178X
Volume 9 Issue 36 (June 2024) PP. 01-17
DOI 10/35631/JTHEM.936001

with the youth demographic, leading to improved outcomes and contributing to the expansion of the tourism industry.

Keywords:

Content; Motivation; Social Media Influencers; Travel

Introduction

Malaysia's tourism industry is an important economic sector that significantly contributes to the nation's growth. Malaysia earned several youth receipts in 2022, totalling RM0.24 billion from 238,730,000 international youths (Tourism Malaysia,2022). The total youth receipts have indicated that the tourism industry directly impacts the economy. The tourism industry can thrive if it focuses on trends and has a specific target market, especially among youth.

Malaysia can continue to attract international youths and generate substantial tourism revenues by focusing on emerging trends and targeting specific markets. Understanding the factors that motivate individuals to travel is crucial for destination marketers, as it allows them to create marketing strategies that cater to travellers' diverse needs and desires. By adhering to these principles and employing efficient marketing strategies, Malaysia's tourism industry can flourish and impact the country's economy positively.

In this age of advanced technology, the tourism industry has recognised the potential of the youth demographic as a new target market, primarily due to its pervasive presence on social media platforms (ElJalil et al,2018). Millions of users are attracted to social media platforms such as TikTok, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook due to their immense popularity and integration into daily life. In recent years, influencer marketing has exploded, with social media influencers endorsing products and services across multiple industries, including cosmetics, technology, and travel. These influencers wield considerable sway on multiple platforms, including TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube.

According to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), out of a total population of 32 million, 24.5 million are Internet users. At the same time, 7.5 million have no interest in internet access for various reasons (Grosělj et al.,2019). Most Malaysians view the internet as a means of communication by utilising applications such as WhatsApp, TikTok, and online travel guides. Among these platforms, TikTok has emerged as a popular application allowing users to create and share 15-second to one-minute videos. It has become a preferred platform for creative expression due to its filters, effects, and music editing capabilities. In addition, TikTok's algorithm is designed to present users with engaging content, making it simple to discover new and popular videos.

TikTok had amassed 14.59 million internet users in Malaysia who were at least 18 years old by early 2022, making it a powerful advertising platform (ByteDance Advertising Resources, 2022). According to data from ByteDance, 61.2% of Malaysian adults aged 18 and older were exposed to TikTok advertisements, accounting for 49.4% of all Malaysian internet users. In addition, 56.8% of TikTok users in Malaysia are female, and 43.2% are male (Thailand, 2021). This demonstrates the platform's popularity among Malaysian internet users and presents an opportunity for marketers to reach a significant portion of the country's population.

Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management
JTHEM
EISSN: 0128-178X
Volume 9 Issue 36 (June 2024) PP. 01-17
DOI 10/35631/JTHEM.936001

TikTok has become the sixth most popular social media network in Malaysia. However, its significance lies more in its effectiveness for marketers than in its direct impact on the tourism industry. The platform allows brands to advertise to Malaysia's 14.6 million internet users, roughly 45 per cent of the country's population (Ling et al., 2023). As a result, TikTok has become an efficient and cost-effective marketing and advertising platform, serving primarily business objectives rather than travel-related content.

TikTok has become a powerful platform for influencer marketing, with numerous individuals and businesses utilising its reach to promote their products and services. TikTok influencers have amassed large followings and use the platform to interact with their audience and promote various products. They are frequently praised for their uniqueness, authenticity, and capacity to connect with their audience (Li et al., 2020). TikTok's user-friendly video sharing and editing tools facilitate the creation of engaging content that resonates with their followers, thereby amplifying their influence in promoting brands and experiences. Thus, this leads to the aim of this study determining the TikTok influencers' content and the impact that influences youths' motivation to travel domestically.

Literature Review

Motivation

Motivation is essential to comprehending youth behaviour, and researchers have investigated its various dimensions and factors. Motivation to travel is a frequently studied topic in tourism and hospitality. Various factors contribute to individuals' Motivation to travel, such as personal preferences, socio-cultural influences, and the desire for new experiences (Çöp et al., 2020). These studies have revealed that Motivation to travel is a complete phenomenon, influenced by various individual and external factors (Han et al., 2020). For instance, Pizam and Mansfield (202) emphasise the importance of understanding the factors that drive individuals to engage in different tourist activities.

Motivation can be divided into intrinsic and extrinsic categories, which, respectively, represent internal drives and external influences. Extrinsic Motivation is driven by external factors such as rewards or recognition, whereas intrinsic Motivation derives from personal interests and enjoyment. Understanding these motivational factors is essential to comprehend the underlying causes of youth behaviour. According to Khanh, N. T., & Phuong, V. H. (2021c) tourists' travel motivations, time perspective and city image are significantly and positively associated with their intention to visit city tourism. This study also reports that tourists' time perspective and city image are significantly and positively related to their travel motivation which is in turn significantly and positively correlated to their intention to engage in city tourism. Understanding youth motivation is essential for comprehending and anticipating youth behaviour. Personal interests and enjoyment influence intrinsic Motivation, whereas extrinsic Motivation is influenced by external rewards or recognition. Assessing Motivation is complex, necessitating the use of a variety of methodologies to capture the complexity of individuals' motivations. Socio-psychological and cultural factors play significant roles in determining the decisions and preferences of youths. Socio-psychological motives serve as push factors, driving individuals to satisfy needs, whereas cultural motives serve as pull factors, luring youths to destinations with distinctive qualities. The Motivation of youth travel has been extensively studied, revealing its impact on various youth behaviours. Furthermore,

Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management
JTHEM
EISSN: 0128-178X
Volume 9 Issue 36 (June 2024) PP. 01-17
DOI 10/35631/JTHEM.936001
motivations are not static and can change over time, highlighting the need for ongoing research to comprehend and meet the evolving needs of youths.

Cuadrado et al. (2020) have highlighted the pull motivation element on social networking sites. The study presented features of a site capable of attracting travellers on social media and the push-and-pull motivating component. The highlighted also sought to comprehend how both motivational elements might contribute to the success of marketing tactics. This study utilised the quantitative research approach to determine the connection between market segmentation and social media pull factor. Two hundred twenty-one respondents completed the questionnaires in total.

Content Shared by TikTok Influencers

Social media content such as images and videos may entice other users to experience the same activity as their social media influencer. For example, according to Katsikari et al. (2020), "visitors (or potential youths) utilising social media platforms are drawn to photos of the attractions and destinations they intend to visit" (p.4). Moreover, it was discovered that sharing trip experiences as social media content allows other users to see' and 'live' the same experience, even if they are not physically present (Wang et al., 2012). As a result, other users may have experienced the virtual environment.

As stated in the previous section, youth motivation has encouraged people to visit the destination based on their travel experiences (Prebesen et al., 2010). In addition, a social media influencer's post may be one of the intrinsic incentive elements that affect youth decisions. It is supported by Tsankova's (2020) research finding that "...social media users find content to be enjoyable, pleasant, intriguing, amusing, and entertaining" (p.47). Finally, social media content such as comments, images, and videos can help other users make decisions and provide trip inspiration (Manap & Adzharudin, 2013). Therefore, the following hypothesis may be derived from the current studies:

H1: There is a positive relation between the content shared by TikTok influencers and youth motivation.

Impact of Social Media Influencer

The posts and content of social media influencers will increase the engagement of other users, which is a vital communication tool for promoting tourism destinations. According to Tsankova (2020), it was also stated that "Social media is a crucial marketing communication tool for the majority of companies today because it allows for increased consumer engagement" (p.8). Therefore, communication between social media influencers and other users is essential, given that other users will read or view the posts and perceive their enjoyment and veracity.

Other than that, the engagement made by social media influencers and users is effective for marketing because it helps to influence people's travel motivation and decision-making (Bansal et al., 2014). In addition, the Malaysian hotel industry has discovered that a strong engagement with internet users, mainly youths, will encourage them to visit Malaysia (Yoong & Lian,2019). According to Razali (2020), "...consumers with personal relationships and friendships with social media influencers will be eager to purchase the products recommended by social media influencers" (p.22). This statement by Razali supports the impact in influencing youths' Motivation.

Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management
JTHEM
EISSN: 0128-178X
Volume 9 Issue 36 (June 2024) PP. 01-17
DOI 10/35631/JTHEM.936001

Scott (2018) noted in his study that the travel information shared by social media influencers surpasses that of businesses. This is because users are more likely to trust the influencer's personal experience. Therefore, users have created travel motivation because they desire the same travel experiences as social media influencers. Consequently, the following hypothesis can be inferred from the study:

H2: There is a positive relationship between the impact of TikTok influencers and youth motivation.

Methodology

This study applied the quantitative method as its research approach. According to Devault (2019), quantitative methods will make the data more dependable and less contentious. The result will be presented in a statistical format that can be easily analysed and interpreted. In addition, having complex statistics in research methodology will increase the value and significance of the analysed data. Furthermore, a cross-sectional study will be employed with this research strategy. According to Cherry (2019), cross-sectional research is conducted between 2 and 7 May 2023. As a result of the reliability of the data collected, this method can help present the group population and highlight solid conclusions based on the findings. Moreover, it can assist the researcher in developing hypotheses for future research support (Cherry,2019).

Population and Sampling Technique

The study population is nine million Malaysian youth in Malaysia. This is because they are viewed as frequent social media users and the new market for the tourism industry (Smith et al., 2021). The sample size was determined using Tabachinich and Fidell (2013). Tabachnick and Fidell recommended a sample size of at least 80, where $N > 50 + 8m$ (m is the number of predictor variables). However, due to time constraints, the sample size will focus on 287 respondents from Southeast Asian Johore. The respondents were selected using systematic random sampling where the researcher distributed the questionnaire using an nth interval at a certain location in Johore.

Pilot Study

A pilot study can be defined as a preliminary test, a small-scale study to test the reliability of the research instruments. A total of 30 respondents were collected to conduct the pilot testing. After conducting the pilot test, the researcher needs to fix any redundancy in the questionnaire survey, and some of the questions might be eliminated from the question items. In addition, the researcher can check the reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's Alpha value. Cronbach Alpha is commonly used for a questionnaire's reliability and internal consistency (Ritter,2010). As a result of the pilot study, Cronbach's Alpha value is presented in the table below.

Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management
JTHEM
EISSN: 0128-178X
Volume 9 Issue 36 (June 2024) PP. 01-17
DOI 10/35631/JTHEM.936001

Table 1: Pilot Study Cronbach Alpha of All Variables

Reliability Statistics		
Variables	**Cronbach's Alpha**	**N of Items**
Content shared by TikTok Influencers (IV1)	.741	10
Impact of TikTok influencers on tourismdestination choice (IV2)	.853	10
Youth motivation on choosing their tourismdestination choice. (DV)	.852	10

Instrument

All items in the instrument were adapted and adopted from previous studies and validated by an expert before the pilot test was conducted. The instrument was tested among 30 respondents for internal consistency and item validation to ensure all items measure the concepts currently being investigated.

Table 2 Instrument

Section	Items	Author/Year	Measure
Section A: Demographic	1. Age 2. Gender 3. Race/Ethnicity 4. Level of Education 5. Employment Status 6. Social Media Platform that uses. 7. Social Media uses frequencies (daily) 8. Number of trips in the previous 6 months. 9. Preferred social media to find travel information. 10. Reason for using TikTok.	Chu (2020)	Nominal
Section B (a): Content Shared by TikTok Influencers	1. Inspires to travel and explore new destinations. 2. Provide useful information and tips. 3. Unique content. 4. Features sustainable and responsible tourism practices. 5. Highlight cultural aspects. 6. About local food and cuisines. 7. Tips on budget-friendly trips.	Ariffin, A. A. M., & Al-Manasra, M. S. (2021)	1= Strongly Disagree 2= Disagree 3= Neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly

Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management
JTHEM
EISSN: 0128-178X
Volume 9 Issue 36 (June 2024) PP. 01-17
DOI 10/35631/JTHEM.936001

	8. Luxury and high-end travel experiences. 9. Promote responsible tourism practices. 10. Features local and authentic experiences rather than youthy and commercialised ones.		Agree
Section B (b): Impact of TikTok Influencers	1. Impact on destination choice. 2. Trust the recommendation for selecting travel destination. 3. Introduce the destination that not aware before. 4. Visit after seeing in on the influencers' feed. 5. Encourage to travel to destinations that have not considered before. 6. Influenced to choose specific type of destination in Malaysia. 7. Consider important sources when planning to travel. 8. More likely to visit a youth destination in Malaysia that is featured by multiple influencers. 9. Changed youth perception on certain destination. 10. Influenced my decision to extend my stay.	Hassan, S., & Omar, W. Z. W. (2020)	1= Strongly Disagree 2= Disagree 3= Neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly Agree
Section C: Youth's Motivation on choosing the tourism destination choice.	1. Prefer destinations that offer unique experiences rather than popular ones. 2. Prefer recommended by someone who knows. 3. Travel decisions are influenced by the content shared. 4. Prefer activities that align with interests. 5. Prefer not crowded places. 6. Prefer a destination that is known for its natural scenery and outdoor activities. 7. Cost is an important factor in	Che Azhar, M. S., Hashim, N. H., & Zulkepli, M. (2019)	1= Strongly Disagree 2= Disagree 3= Neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly Agree

Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management
JTHEM
EISSN: 0128-178X
Volume 9 Issue 36 (June 2024) PP. 01-17
DOI 10/35631/JTHEM.936001

	decision-making. 8. Prefer a destination that is known for its cultural heritage and history. 9. Prefer eco-friendly destinations and promote sustainable tourism. 10. Willingness to pay a high price for a place that offers unique cultural experiences.		

Results

Profile of respondents

Table 3 summarises sample profiles in terms of demographic characteristics. As in the table, most of the respondents are youth aged 23, which is 69.6%. In addition, most are females; 64.7% and 35.3% are male respondents.

Furthermore, most respondents are from the group of students (84.3%), consisting of bachelor's degree students and 89.2% of the respondents. The question regarding social media usage was also asked in the demographic section. As shown in the table, 48% of respondents indicated that TikTok was their primary social media platform, followed by Instagram, with 33.3% of the total respondents. The final question asked respondents about their daily social media usage frequency. As a result, 47.1% of respondents reported a usage period between 4-6 hours, while 36.3% reported travelling between 1-3 hours.

Table 3: Demographic

Characteristics	Descriptions	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	36	35.3
	Female	66	64.7
Age	18	1	1.0
	20	1	1.0
	21	6	5.9
	22	8	7.8
	23	71	69.6
	24	14	13.7
	25	1	1.0
Race/Ethnicity	Chinese	1	1.0
	Malay	101	99.0
Level of Education	No Formal Education	1	1.0
	Primary Education	1	1.0

Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management
JTHEM
EISSN: 0128-178X
Volume 9 Issue 36 (June 2024) PP. 01-17
DOI 10/35631/JTHEM.936001

	Secondary Education	4	3.9
	Diploma	5	4.9
	Bachelor's Degree	91	89.2
Employment Status	Student	86	84.3
	Unemployed	1	1.0
	Self-Employed	3	2.9
	Employed Part-time	2	2.0
	Employed Full-time	10	9.8
Social Media Uses	Facebook	6	5.9
	Instagram	34	33.3
	TikTok	49	48.0
	Twitter	13	12.7
Daily Usage of social media	1-3 hours	37	36.3
	4-6 hours	48	47.1
	7-10 hours	10	9.8
	Less than 1 hour	2	2.0
	More than 10 hours	5	4.9

Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Table 4 shows respondents' perspectives on content shared by TikTok influencers on tourism destination choice. The result shows that "The travel influencers I follow share content about local food and cuisine." has the highest mean of 4.29 (sd=0.971). Then, a mean of 4.13 (sd=0.908) was recorded for "The travel influencers I follow share content that provides useful information and tips for planning my trips", followed by "The travel influencers I follow share content that depicts affordable travel options and budget-friendly tips", with a mean of 4.10 (sd=1.020). Furthermore, "The travel influencers I follow share content that inspires me to travel and explore new destinations" recorded a mean of 4.09 (sd=1.006). "The travel influencers I follow share content highlighting the cultural aspects of their destinations", recorded a mean of 4.02 (sd=1.005). While the rest of the items recorded a mean score of below 4.00. The lowest mean score is shown for the item "The travel influencers I follow share content that promotes responsible tourism practices and encourages sustainable travel behaviours", mean = 3.65, (sd=1.149). This result indicates that most respondents view many influencers sharing content about local food and cuisine. They also agree that the influencer in TikTok provides useful information and tips for planning my trips. Unfortunately, promoting responsible tourism practices and encouraging sustainable travel behaviours among influencers seem less seen among TikTok influencers.

Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management
JTHEM
EISSN: 0128-178X
Volume 9 Issue 36 (June 2024) PP. 01-17
DOI 10/35631/JTHEM.936001

Table 4: Summary of Means

Variables		Mean	Std. Deviation
Content Shared by TikTok Influencers on Tourism Destination Choice (IVI)			
Content 1	The travel influencers I follow share content that inspires me to travel and explore new destinations.	4.09	1.006
Content 2	The travel influencers I follow share content that provides useful information and tips for planning my trips.	4.13	0.908
Content 3	The travel influencers I follow share content showcasing unique, unusual experiences.	3.96	0.994
Content 4	The travel influencers I follow share content that features sustainable and responsible tourism practices.	3.75	1.103
Content 5	The travel influencers I follow share content highlighting the cultural aspects of their destinations.	4.02	1.005
Content 6	The travel influencers I follow share content about local food and cuisine.	**4.29**	0.971
Content 7	The travel influencers I follow share content that depicts affordable travel options and budget-friendly tips.	4.10	1.020
Content 8	The travel influencers I follow share content that showcases luxury and high-end travel experiences.	3.68	1.127
Content 9	The travel influencers I follow share content that promotes responsible tourism practices and encourages sustainable travel behaviors.	3.65	1.149
Content 10	The travel influencers I follow share content that features local and authentic experiences rather than youthy and commercialised ones.	3.91	1.054

The interaction of social media influencers with users was another factor influencing young users' desire to travel. In addition, the respondents were questioned regarding their thoughts on how social media influencers shape people's opinions and behaviours. Because social media platforms are so widely used by people today, many respondents agreed that social media influencers significantly impact the number of people who decide to go on vacation. Therefore, the findings indicate that the role of social media influencers is helpful for internet marketing, and this is supported by the fact that it is effective.

Table 5 shows respondents' perspectives on the impact of TikTok Influencers on Tourism Destination Choice. The result shows that "Social media influencers have introduced me to destinations in Malaysia that I was not aware of before." has the highest mean of mean= 4.10 (sd=0.939). Afterwards, a mean of 4.02 (sd=0.933) was recorded for "I have visited a youth destination in Malaysia after seeing it on social media influencer's profile", followed by "Social

Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management
JTHEM
EISSN: 0128-178X
Volume 9 Issue 36 (June 2024) PP. 01-17
DOI 10/35631/JTHEM.936001

media influencers have influenced my decision to choose a specific type of youth destination in Malaysia (e.g., cultural, nature, adventure, etc.)", with a mean of 3.96 (sd=1.080) and item "Social media influencers have changed my perception of certain youth destinations in Malaysia" mean=3.87 (sd=1.078). Furthermore, the next impact of Tiktok seen in item 5 and 7 "Social media influencers have encouraged me to travel to destinations that I would not have considered before" "I consider social media influencers' content as an important source of information when planning my travel to a destination in Malaysia" with value of mean=3.81. Whereas item "Social media influencers significantly impact my destination choice for my next vacation in Malaysia" shown mean of 3.79 (sd=1.093). Then, item "I trust the recommendations of social media influencers for selecting a youth destination in Malaysia", mean=3.77 (sd=1.024) and item "I am more likely to visit a youth destination in Malaysia that is featured by multiple social media influencers", recorded mean=3.75, (sd=1.114). Lastly, item "Social media influencers have Pr in a youth destination in Malaysia" mean=3.63 (sd=1.143). This result indicates that most respondents have introduced them to destinations in Malaysia that they were unaware of before. They also agree that the respondent visited a youth destination in Malaysia after seeing it on social media influencer's profile. However, the result indicated that less influencer have in youth destinations in Malaysia.

Table 5: Summary Of Means

Variables		Mean	Std. Deviation
Impact of TikTok Influencers on Tourism Destination Choice			
Impact 1	Social media influencers significantly impact my destination choice for my next vacation in Malaysia.	3.79	1.093
Impact 2	I trust the recommendations of social media influencers for selecting a youth destination in Malaysia.	3.77	1.024
Impact 3	Social media influencers have introduced me to destinations in Malaysia that I was not aware of before.	**4.10**	0.939
Impact 4	I have visited a youth destination in Malaysia after seeing it on social media influencer's profile.	4.02	0.933
Impact 5	Social media influencers have encouraged me to travel to destinations that I would not have considered before.	3.81	1.167
Impact 6	Social media influencers have influenced my decision to choose a specific type of youth destination in Malaysia (e.g., cultural, nature, adventure, etc.).	3.96	1.080
Impact 7	I consider social media influencers' content as an important source of information when planning my travel to a destination in Malaysia.	3.81	1.088
Impact 8	I am more likely to visit a youth destination in Malaysia that is featured by multiple social media influencers.	3.75	1.114

Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management
JTHEM
EISSN: 0128-178X
Volume 9 Issue 36 (June 2024) PP. 01-17
DOI 10/35631/JTHEM.936001

Impact 9	Social media influencers have changed my perception of certain youth destinations in Malaysia.	3.87	1.078
Impact 10	Social media influencers have Pr in a youth destination in Malaysia.	3.63	1.143

Table 6 shows 10 items related to respondents' Motivation in choosing their tourism destination choice. The result shows that "The cost of travelling to a youth destination in Malaysia is an important factor in my decision-making process," recorded the highest mean of mean= 4.29(sd=0.940). Afterward, a mean of 4.26, (sd=0.922) was recorded for "I prefer youth destinations in Malaysia that are off the beaten path and not crowded", followed by "I am more likely to visit a youth destination in Malaysia if it is known for its natural scenery and outdoor activities' and "I am more likely to visit a youth destination in Malaysia if it is known for its natural scenery and outdoor activities", with a same value of mean of 4.22. Furthermore, the next Motivation is "I am more likely to visit a youth destination in Malaysia if it is recommended by someone I know", mean= 4.11 (sd=0.943)". Next is "I prefer to travel to youth destinations in Malaysia that offer unique experiences rather than popular one", mean=4.10, (sd=0.92). While the rest of the items recorded mean score of below then 4.00. The lowest mean score is shown for item "I am willing to pay a higher price to visit a youth destination in Malaysia that offers unique cultural experiences", mean = 3.65, (sd=1.174). This result indicates that the main Motivation of respondent in choosing the destination is the cost of traveling followed by surroundings that off the beaten path and not crowded.

Table 6: Summary Of Means

Variables		**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Youth Motivation on Choosing Their Tourism Destination Choice			
Motivation 1	I prefer to travel to youth destinations in Malaysia that offer unique experiences rather than popular ones.	4.10	0.928
Motivation 2	I am more likely to visit a youth destination in Malaysia if it is recommended by someone I know.	4.11	0.943
Motivation 3	My travel decisions are influenced by social media content about youth destinations in Malaysia.	3.80	0.944
Motivation 4	I am more likely to choose a youth destination in Malaysia if it offers activities that align with my interests.	4.22	0.951
Motivation 5	I prefer youth destinations in Malaysia that are off the beaten path and not crowded.	4.26	0.922
Motivation 6	I am more likely to visit a youth destination in Malaysia if it is known for its natural scenery and outdoor activities.	4.22	0.940
Motivation 7	The cost of travelling to a youth destination in Malaysia is an important factor in my decision-making process.	**4.29**	0.940

Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management
JTHEM
EISSN: 0128-178X
Volume 9 Issue 36 (June 2024) PP. 01-17
DOI 10/35631/JTHEM.936001

Motivation 8	I am more likely to choose a youth destination in Malaysia if it is known for its cultural heritage and history.	3.73	1.187
Motivation 9	I am more likely to visit a youth destination in Malaysia if it is eco-friendly and promotes sustainable tourism.	3.94	1.051
Motivation 10	I am willing to pay a higher price to visit a youth destination in Malaysia that offers unique cultural experiences.	3.65	1.174

Table 7 displays the calculated means of all items based on the variables. According to the summary, the Motivation of youth has the highest mean score of 4.03, indicating that youth are neutral towards the items. Meanwhile, the average mean for shared content and the impact of TikTok influencers is 3.85 and 3.95; this indicates that most respondents agreed with most of the questions listed in both variables.

Table 7: Summary of All Variables

	Mean
Content Shared by TikTok Influencers	3.95
Impact of TikTok Influencers	3.85
Youth Motivation	4.03

Note: 1 "Strongly Disagree", 2 "Disagree", 3 "Neutral", 4 "Agree", 5 "Strongly Agree

Pearson Correlation

The second purpose was to determine the relationship between content posted by tiktok influencers, the influence of TikTok influencers, and travel motivation among Malaysian young. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between the measured variables is displayed in Table 8 below.

In order to address the second purpose of the study, the next part describes the direct links between the independent and dependent variables, as determined by correlation analyses conducted with SPSS.

According to Table 8, the content shared by TikTok Influencers (IV 1) has a strong positive relationship with youth motivation (DV), with an R-value of 0.719. Moreover, the impact of TikTok Influencers (IV 2) has also produced the same result, which is a strongly positive relationship with youth's Motivation (DV) (r=0.696). Both values indicate that when the independent variable's value rises, the dependent variable also rises.

Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management
JTHEM
EISSN: 0128-178X
Volume 9 Issue 36 (June 2024) PP. 01-17
DOI 10/35631/JTHEM.936001

Table 8: Correlation Analysis Between IV and DV

Independent Variables		Dependent Variables
	p	Youth's Motivation
Content Shared by TikTok Influencers	0.001	0.719
Impact of TikTok Influencers	0.032	0.696

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed)

Discussion

Based on the findings, it is indicated that most respondents follow influencers sharing content about local food and cuisine. In today's digital age, many influencers have embraced the power of social media to share captivating content centered around local food and cuisine (i.e Lee et, al. 2021; Ingrassia et al., 2022; Shoukat et, al. 2023). Through mouthwatering visuals and engaging narratives, they celebrate the rich diversity of culinary traditions in their respective regions, promoting cultural appreciation and encouraging gastronomic exploration among their followers (Ingrassia et, al. 2022). These influencers serve as culinary ambassadors, fostering a global appreciation for the authentic flavours and unique stories that local food and cuisine have to offer.

Furthermore, the respondent acknowledges that TikTok influencers offer valuable information and travel tips. TikTok influencers have emerged as invaluable resources for travel enthusiasts seeking information (Wengel, et, al. 2022) and tips to enhance their journeys. Through short, engaging videos, these influencers provide a dynamic and accessible platform for sharing their travel experiences. From destination recommendations to packing hacks and local insights, TikTok influencers offer valuable advice that caters to diverse traveller interests. Their visual storytelling inspires desire to travel and serves as practical guides (DeVito, 2022). In a world where travel options abound, these influencers curate content that helps viewers plan memorable trips, discover hidden gems, and navigate cultural nuances. In doing so, they democratise travel knowledge, making it accessible to a global audience and fostering a sense of adventure in the digital age.

Unfortunately, this study found that these influencers seem to place less emphasis on promoting responsible tourism practices and advocating for sustainable travel behaviours. TikTok influencers, while adept at entertaining and inspiring, often fall short when it comes to championing responsible tourism and sustainable travel. Their content tends to prioritise aesthetics and thrill-seeking over ethical considerations (Sng, & Pang, 2021). Encouragingly, there's room for these influential voices to pivot towards a more responsible narrative, fostering awareness about the importance of preserving destinations, respecting local cultures, and minimising ecological footprints for a more sustainable travel industry.

Regarding the impact of TikTok influencers on destination choices, the findings reveal that most respondents were introduced to previously unfamiliar Malaysian destinations through these influencers. The survey findings show a significant trend wherein the majority of respondents were introduced to previously undiscovered destinations thanks to the influence of these social media content creators (Tamang, & Maharjan, 2022). Through their captivating

Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management
JTHEM
EISSN: 0128-178X
Volume 9 Issue 36 (June 2024) PP. 01-17
DOI 10/35631/JTHEM.936001
content, TikTok influencers effectively broaden travellers' horizons, shedding light on lesser-known gems in Malaysia that might otherwise have remained hidden from their view. They also confirm that they visited youth-oriented destinations in Malaysia after discovering them on social media influencer profiles.

These outcomes indicate that the primary Motivation for respondents when selecting a destination is the cost of travel, followed by a preference for less-travelled and less-crowded locations. For the respondent, they were choosing a travel destination primarily affordable, with cost being the decisive factor (Christoforou, et, al. 2021). Furthermore, respondents prefer off-the-beaten-path and tranquil locations, steering clear of crowded tourist hotspots (Han, 2019). This reveals a desire for economical yet unique travel experiences, emphasising the importance of budget-conscious exploration and a quest for peaceful, unspoiled destinations in today's travel landscape.

Recommendation

Along with the desire to support the growth of tourism by providing insight to stakeholders to improve marketing strategies and meet the needs of young tourists, this study can be used as a guide that focuses more on the role of TikTok influencers. The cooperation of various parties such as the government, especially involving tourism industry players such as tourism companies and individuals, is also seen as important by giving more platforms to TikTok influencer groups to also play a role in the tourism sector. Exploration of various other factors that influence Motivation is also suggested for future studies to help improve the tourism industry in Malaysia.

Conclusion

The impact of TikTok influencers on young people's travel motivation and destination preferences was revealed using Pearson correlation analyses, namely content shared by TikTok influencers and the impact of social media influencers. Local food and cuisine was identified as the most content viewed. Furthermore, influencers in TikTok provide useful information and tips for planning trips. However, promoting responsible tourism practices and encouraging sustainable travel behaviours among influencers seem to be less seen among influencers in TikTok.

The influencers also play a role in introducing new destinations in Malaysia that they were unaware of before. Hence, influence others to visit a youth destination in Malaysia by social media influencer's profile. The Motivation of youth has the highest mean score. The main Motivation of respondents in choosing the destination is the cost of travelling followed by surroundings that are off the beaten path and not crowded. Content shared by TikTok Influencers has a strong positive relationship with youth motivation. Moreover, the impact of TikTok Influencers shows a strongly positive relationship with youth's Motivation. Both values indicate that when the independent variable's value rises, the dependent variable also rises.

Acknowledgement

This research received no specific funding from a public, private or nonprofit organisation.

Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management
JTHEM
EISSN: 0128-178X
Volume 9 Issue 36 (June 2024) PP. 01-17
DOI 10/35631/JTHEM.936001

References

Çöp, S., Ibiş, S., & Kizildemir, Ö. (2020, October 31). Seyahat Motivasyonlarının X, Y ve Z Kuşaklarına Göre Farklılıklarının İncelenmesi Üzerine Bir Araştırma. https://scite.ai/reports/10.26466/opus.693787

Christoforou, Z., De Bortoli, A., Gioldasis, C., & Seidowsky, R. (2021). Who is using e-scooters and how? Evidence from Paris. *Transportation Research. Part D, Transport and Environment*, *92*, 102708. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trd.2021.102708

Cuadrado, E., Tabernero, C., Castillo-Mayén, R., Luque, B., & Moreno-Bella, E. (2022). motives for using social networks and social network addiction in a time of pandemic. Cyberpsychology Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace, 16(5). https://doi.org/10.5817/cp2022-5-3

DeVito, M. A. (2022). How Transfeminine TikTok Creators Navigate the Algorithmic Trap of Visibility Via Folk Theorization. Proceedings of the ACM on Human-computer Interaction, 6(CSCW2), 1–31. https://doi.org/10.1145/3555105

ElJalil, S., Helmy, N., & Elhalem, K. (2018). Towards identification of new tourism industry occupations for curricula development of egyptian tourism and hospitality higher education. International Journal of tourism and Hospitality Management, 2(1), 112-136. https://doi.org/10.21608/ijthm.2018.29024

Grošelj, D., Reisdorf, B., & Petrovčič, A. (2019). Obtaining indirect internet access: an examination how reasons for internet non-use relate to proxy internet use. Telecommunications Policy, 43(3), 213-224. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2018.07.004

Han, J. (2019). Vacationers in the countryside: Traveling for tranquility? Tourism Management, 70, 299–310. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.09.001

Han, H., Meng, B., Chua, B., & Ryu, H B. (2020, September 10). Hedonic and Utilitarian Performances as Determinants of Mental Health and Pro-Social Behaviors among Volunteer Tourists. https://scite.ai/reports/10.3390/ijerph17186594

Hysa, B., Karasek, A., & Zdonek, I. (2021). Social Media Usage by Different Generations as a Tool for Sustainable Tourism Marketing in Society 5.0 Idea. *Sustainability*, *13*(3), 1018. MDPI AG. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su13031018

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, 8(1), 50. https://doi.org/10.3390/joitmc8010050

Khanh, N. T., & Phuong, V. H. (2021a). Studying tourist intention on city tourism: the role of travel motivation. International Journal of Tourism Cities, 8(2), 497–512. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijtc-03-2021-0042

Ling, A. C. H., Subramaṇiam, T. N., & Nordin, N. E. (2023). A Study On Factors Influencing Live Streaming Shopping Among Generation Z In Ipoh, Perak. *International Journal of Management Studies and Social Science Research*, *04*(06), 64–74. https://doi.org/10.56293/ijmsssr.2022.4527

Lee, P., Köseoğlu, M. A., Qi, L., Liu, E. C., & King, B. (2021). The sway of influencer marketing: Evidence from a restaurant group. International Journal of Hospitality Management, 98, 103022. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2021.103022

Shoukat, M. H., Selem, K. M., Elgammal, I., Ramkissoon, H., & Amponsah, M. (2023). Consequences of local culinary memorable experience: Evidence from TikTok influencers. Acta Psychologica, 238, 103962. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2023.103962

Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management
JTHEM
EISSN: 0128-178X
Volume 9 Issue 36 (June 2024) PP. 01-17
DOI 10/35631/JTHEM.936001

Sng, K., Au, T. Y., & Pang, A. (2019). Social media influencers as a crisis Risk in Strategic communication: Impact of indiscretions on professional endorsements. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, *13*(4), 301–320. https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118x.2019.1618305

Tamang, A., Chan, C. P., & Maharjan, G. (2022). The opportunities and challenges of the rise of TikTok as destination exploration among youth; A case study of Nepal. Retrieved from 365197888

Tourism Malaysia (2022), "Fact and Figures Overview". retrieved from https://www.tourism.gov.my/statistics

Wengel, Y., Ma, L., Ma, Y., Apollo, M., Maciuk, K., & Ashton, A. S. (2022). The TikTok effect on destination development: Famous overnight, now what? Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism, 37, 100458. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jort.2021.100458

Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved