

LAB University of Applied Sciences  
Tourism and Hospitality Management, Lappeenranta  
Degree Programme in Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management  
Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management

Katherine Lalangan

# **Social Media in Tourism: The Impacts of Travel Content on YouTube and Instagram**

Thesis 2020

## **Abstract**

Katherine Lalangan

Social Media in Tourism: The Impacts of Travel Content on YouTube and Instagram, 81 pages, 4 appendices

LAB University of Applied Sciences

Tourism and Hospitality Management, Lappeenranta

Degree Programme in Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management

Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management

Bachelor's Thesis 2020

Instructors: Mr. Sami Lanu, Senior Lecturer, LAB University of Applied Sciences and Ms. Virpi Ristimäki, Managing Director, LAB University of Applied Sciences

The purpose of this study is to show the immense effects that travel social media content has on the tourism industry in order to help people within the industry have a broader view on the content. The aim is to illustrate the importance of them which people may not notice. The data surrounds Instagram and YouTube.

Data was collected through primary research of Google form questionnaires for the travel influencers of Instagram and YouTube and the influencer followers. Secondary data of other theories was collected to represent the marketing perspective of the travel content. Connections between the creator, viewer, and marketing concept were created. A case study was conducted with YouTube Sailing SV Delos to illustrate the connection analyses.

Based on the findings, travel content impacts the creator by allowing them to make a hobby into a way of living, in addition to viewer support and possible compensation. The content impacts the follower by providing entertainment, travel education, tips from experts, and inspiration from travel role models. The marketing role can be impacted either positively from content marketing or negatively from content demoting. All variables can connect through the social feedback cycle, rendering the sequence from the influencer and possible marketing partnership, to creating content and travel marketing to the viewer, to the viewer possibly contacting the travel businesses for their own journey.

Keywords: influencer, content creator, travel, marketing, YouTube, Instagram

## Table of contents

1	Introduction .....	5
2	Objective of the Study .....	6
3	Prior Knowledge and Observation .....	6
3.1	Twitter .....	7
3.2	Facebook .....	8
3.3	Instagram .....	8
3.4	YouTube .....	9
4	Delimitations of the Study .....	9
5	Research Questions .....	10
6	Literature Review .....	11
6.1	YouTube .....	11
6.1.1	History .....	11
6.1.2	Current Statistics .....	13
6.1.3	Business on YouTube .....	13
6.2	Instagram .....	14
6.2.1	History .....	15
6.2.2	Current Statistics .....	16
6.2.3	Business on Instagram .....	16
6.3	Social Media Influencers .....	17
6.4	Marketing in Short .....	19
6.4.1	Destination Marketing .....	20
6.4.2	Digital, Social Media, and Content Marketing .....	21
6.4.3	Social Media Influencer Marketing .....	22
6.4.3.1	The Value of Influencer Marketing .....	22
6.4.3.2	Brand Partnerships with Travel Influencers .....	23
6.4.4	International and Travel Marketing Implementation .....	23
6.5	The Travel Journey and the Internet .....	24
7	Research Method .....	26
7.1	Primary Research .....	26
7.1.1	Travel Influencers .....	27
7.1.2	Travel Influencer Followers .....	28
7.1.3	Errors .....	28
7.2	Secondary Research .....	29
8	Primary Research Findings and Analyses .....	29
8.1	Travel Influencer Questionnaire Results .....	29
8.2	Travel Influencer Analysis .....	31
8.2.1	Personal Experiences and Travel Tips .....	32
8.2.2	Meeting New People and Connecting with Organizations .....	32
8.2.3	Obligations, Setbacks, and Pressure .....	34
8.2.4	Post Limitations .....	35
8.3	Follower Questionnaire Results .....	36
8.4	Follower Analysis .....	39
8.4.1	Follower Travel Content Interest .....	39
8.4.2	Destination Desire and Travel Inspiration .....	40
8.4.3	Instagram and YouTube for Travel Research .....	41
8.4.4	Spoiling Travel Experiences .....	42
8.5	Follower, Travel Influencer Connection .....	43
8.5.1	Content Creating Alone .....	43

8.5.2	The Influence .....	44
8.5.3	Differing Perspectives .....	45
8.5.4	The Social Media Tourism Experience: It's All a Loop .....	46
9	Secondary Research: Perspective of Marketing .....	46
9.1	The Marketer's Concern .....	46
9.2	The Marketer's Reaction.....	47
9.3	Travel Businesses Cannot Control Everything.....	48
9.4	The Content Creator as the Marketer .....	49
9.4.1	Honest Guide and Other YouTube Guides vs. Prague.eu.....	50
9.4.2	More YouTube Vloggers .....	52
9.4.3	Social Media Content, Travel, and International Marketing .....	52
10	Quick Research Analysis Summary.....	55
11	Overall Connection – Assorted Analysis.....	57
11.1	The Purchase Funnel .....	58
11.2	The Social Feedback Cycle.....	59
11.3	New Model: The Social Feedback Cycle of Influencer Travel Content 60	
12	Case Study: Brady Trautman of SV Delos.....	62
12.1	Trautman's Interview .....	63
12.1.1	Feedback from Their Viewers .....	65
12.1.2	Sponsors and Partnerships.....	65
12.2	Email Interview with Past Winning Crew Members.....	66
12.2.1	Lisa Hopf.....	66
12.2.2	Dave Levine .....	68
12.2.3	Paul Carroll .....	68
12.3	Case Study Analysis.....	69
12.3.1	Impact on the Crew.....	69
12.3.2	Impacts on their Viewers.....	71
12.3.3	Impacts as a Marketer.....	72
13	Conclusion and Future Research .....	73
	Tables and Figures .....	76
	References.....	77

## Appendices

Appendix I	Questionnaire – Travel Influencer
Appendix II:	Questionnaire – Travel Influencer Follower
Appendix III:	Case Study Interview Questions
Appendix IV:	Email Interview – Past Winners

# 1 Introduction

When people think of the primary stakeholders of the travel industry, they may list travel agencies, businesses, transportation companies, tourists, hotels, and restaurants. Though as a tourist, how did one first have the idea and desire of traveling to one particular destination just for leisure? Reflecting back on time, there is only one possible answer: they heard about it. They saw pictures of it. They read information about that destination that intrigued them enough to hop on a plane, train, or car, and travel hours for a new adventure. If they did not gather information from someone personally, then they must have gathered information from the media—the first point in their customer journey.

Social media has become a modern trend of the 21st century, allowing people to publish content in the form of text, picture, video, and audio through a digital platform. The world has advanced from face-to-face interaction, to a channel that has the ability to transmit data in vast regions of the world in such high speeds. The use of social media has become an extremely powerful tool for communication, social networking, and business networking. There are three different types of social media: platform, content, and interactions. Social platforms are social networks, forums, and message boards (i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn). Social content can include multimedia content, such as blogs, photo and video sharing, and podcasts (i.e. YouTube, Instagram) or reviews, ratings, and recommendations (TripAdvisor, Yelp). (Evans & Bratton 2008, p. 33.) All types of media can range from personal or informal, to business or professional.

The publication of social content is one of the core elements that influences several different societies and associations. This thesis will be covering the impacts of travel influencer social media content on the tourism industry, and focusing on travel content in YouTube and Instagram.

## **2 Objective of the Study**

The reason why this topic was chosen is because, for a traveler, YouTube travel vloggers<sup>1</sup> can be a substantial influence in choice of destination and activities. They have given ideas on what countries to visit, what attractions to explore, and what local activities visitors can participate in.

As travelers are only viewers, they may only pay attention to the influence these content creators have on *them*—how about the impact on the destinations themselves? The organizations involved? Even the publishers themselves? The purpose of this study is to show the immense effects that travel social media content has on the tourism industry in order to help people within the industry have a broader view on the content, and to illustrate the importance of them that people may not notice.

## **3 Prior Knowledge and Observation**

Social media can serve as a web-based platform where people can freely post about their own opinions, suggestions, and simply their own life and routines. As content creators typically post on a regular basis, this attracts followers and gives them the opportunity to have a closer connection to their viewers, also known as the travel industry clients; these influencers create their own audience. When looking at the travel content in a business perspective, these publications are like an extensive version of a “customer review.” This brings up the idea that strangers trust other strangers more than the business who would try to sell their own products (Christou & Gretzel 2016, p. 159). Travel influencers initially have a better connection with the clients than the destination sellers themselves do, considering clients choose to be a viewer of the content. Some social media also allows creators to see their analytics on their own content, including demographics of the viewers, what type of engagement viewers have on their post, and time of engagement (Instagram 2020d; YouTube 2020b).

---

<sup>1</sup> Someone who creates “vlogs” (video blogs)

Just like customer reviews, travel content creators are a big factor of setting the reputation of the location; they account for being part of the client's first impression. When a traveler does research on where they should go, they commonly look for tips and suggestions on where/what to visit, rather than where/what *not* to visit. Evidently, this brings a positive impact of promoting the destination. However, clients may run into posts on why a particular place should not be visited, creating a bad reputation on that destination.

### **3.1 Twitter**

Twitter is a platform which is mainly text-based. Users are able to create a post, or tweet, with a maximum of 280 characters. They may attach media such as a limit of four pictures, or one video, including GIFs. However, the use of hashtags (#) helps categorize the tweet, as well as (help users) find posts that relate to what they are looking for. Additionally, there are trending tweets that users can see, calculated by how often a hashtag is used in a period of time. (Twitter 2020.)

For content creating, Twitter may be useful for personal subjects and focus more on quick, short, and simple content. However, for travel content, creators commonly publish an extensive version of their experiences and their opinions. The limitations on Twitter may not be the most suitable as a primary platform for travel content creators, though there are two circumstances when this media is useful: Twitter can be used for short personal posts along with photos, discussing recommendations, or posting a link to another website; Twitter is used as a secondary media. Travel influencers are not likely to use Twitter as their *only* channel for publishing, due to their limitations. Travel content followers also favor detailed opinions about travel and may not use Twitter as their primary source of research. Studying this topic, Twitter may only provide a small amount of information, and not enough data to analyze.

### **3.2 Facebook**

Facebook is the most used social media in the world. This platform allows you to post text, stories<sup>2</sup>, photos, videos, and even create albums for videos and photos. Users can also broadcast live streams, create pages, groups, and events that others can follow. On Facebook, people are able tag locations and use hashtags on posts, as well as find certain content using the search bar. (Facebook 2020.)

This channel has several diverse tools useful in creating content. However, in observation of solely travel pages, Facebook seems to be more in use for companies and organizations, rather than personal travel content for an audience. Creators do not seem to have much response from followers, in terms of “likes” and comments, compared to media like Instagram and YouTube. Similar to Twitter, Facebook may likely be used as a secondary channel for popular influencers. Although Facebook has more photo and video content, this media is still primarily text-based, as evident in the “What’s on your mind?” text when initially posting content. When viewers look for travel content, they would be most attracted to the image of the destination (Kiderra 2019).

### **3.3 Instagram**

Instagram is an image-based social media which allows users to post a limit of ten photographs and/or videos per post, stories, and Instagram Television (IGTV) video series. People can save a collection of stories to put on their Instagram page as a highlight, as well as broadcast a live stream. Within every post, users can create their own caption, use hashtags, and tag locations. With the searching tool, one can find related posts using those tags. Instagram also has an Explore page which contains content that the user might like, based on their engagement in certain posts. (Instagram 2020c.) For travel influencer followers, if they engage in numerous travel content, they are likely going to find travel posts on their Explore page.

---

<sup>2</sup> Photo or video posts that disappear after 24 hours of publishing



Instagram's primary use is for publishing visual content, which can make this social media one of the most useful channels for travel content creators. Publishers have the opportunity to capture focus from their followers on an image for every post, rather than text. Additionally, viewers are significantly more attracted to and affected by photos more than by text. (Kiderra 2019.) With this emotional connection to travel photos, this may increase the viewer's desire to go to that destination.

### **3.4 YouTube**

YouTube is simply a video-based social media platform that allows users to upload recordings with a description, create video playlists, and broadcast a live stream. Users can search for these videos, as well as look at trending videos. (YouTube 2020a.)

For content creators, vlogging and creating videos on YouTube may be the most extensive way that one can publish their travel experiences and responses. Creators are able to verbally announce the most detail, putting all content within the video. For those that create vlogs, rather than posting a photo later in the day and having a follow-up caption to expand on their journey, they are able to comment on what is happening right at that moment. Additionally, vlogs give the opportunity for viewers to be put in the shoes of the video-taker and have a step-by-step journey, making the connection with followers more personal. Even if the video content is a list, advice, or any type of sit-down recording, the creator is still talking to the audience, rather than posting a text that viewers will only read through a screen. Video content allows the audience to have the best understanding of the creator's personality and their experiences.

## **4 Delimitations of the Study**

Travel content on social media effects the travel industry in endless ways many may not imagine, such as education and the publishers themselves. For this reason, a specific scope must be set for the study. Research is revolved around impacts of travel social media content on the tourism industry—deconstructing “social media” and “tourism industry.”

Considering this is a worldwide topic, the study is limited to English.

Social media content is limited to travel content on Instagram and YouTube.

The scope of the tourism industry was narrowed down to travel consumers/viewers, travel content creators (not including company-based content), and the role of destination travel marketing.

For empirical data collecting, research is reduced under the circumstances that respondents claim they watch or follow travel content, as well as this being obvious from their engagement with the travel influencers. These content creators must have 5,000 or more followers, as well content about them traveling to several different places or serve as a travel guide. Number of followers will be divided by the following: 5,000 to 10,000; 10,000 to 50,000; 50,000 to 100,000; 100,000 to 500,000; 500,000 to 1,000,000; 1,000,000 to 2,000,000.

Some considerations that may affect the data are that some travel content or research about travel may not be in English. When capturing videos or photos, some attractions may not allow cameras. Some viewers may be inspired by travel influencers, but not have the financial or physical ability to fulfil their desire.

## **5 Research Questions**

The purpose of the research is to find the impacts of travel social media content on the creators, their viewers, and the creator's marketing role. To do this, one must find the relationships between the three variables in regard to the Instagram and YouTube content themselves, thus asking:

1. What kind of impact does travel content have on the creator, the follower, and the marketing of the travel-tourism industry?
2. How do publishers and their travel content connect to their viewers and marketing?
3. How can a distinct relationship between the creator, the viewer, and concept of marketing be determined?

These questions will assist in finding individual impacts of travel content as well as how each variable relates and influences each other. In the end, a map or chart will be illustrated to show the relationship between the three variables in regard to the travel content.

## **6 Literature Review**

Before diving into this research, a study of other background information on the history, current statistics, and business side of YouTube and Instagram was conducted. Additionally, this section explores the aspects of social media influencers and several marketing methods, including destination, digital, social media, influencer, international, and travel marketing. Social media use of travelers and consumers was then considered for this research.

### **6.1 YouTube**

YouTube has become the world's largest video community on the Internet. Users are given the freedom to post [non-copywritten] videos of their own, advertise brands, and monetize their work. This section touches on the YouTube's story, their most recent statistics, and what kind of business YouTube offers.

#### **6.1.1 History**

YouTube was founded in February 2005 by Jawed Karim, Steve Chen, and Chad Hurley (Jarboe 2011, p. 3). The idea was proposed because Karim had noted that finding and sharing videos online was challenging. Therefore, the three decided to construct a video-sharing site. Karim and Chen built the functions of the website while Hurley designed layout. The most surprising fact was that they were a crew of former PayPal employees who had no interests or experience in marketing. (Jarboe 2011, p. 3.)

The first video posted on YouTube was on the 23 of April 2005 at 8:27PM (assuming PST). The video is called "Me at the zoo," featuring Karim at the San Diego Zoo. This video has 88.35 million views as of March 2020. In May 2005, YouTube Beta was released, and users began to upload videos. In November

2005, “YouTube received \$3.5 million in funding from Sequoia Capital.” (Jarboe 2011, p. 5.) The following month, YouTube was officially launched.

YouTube initially began as a service for sharing only personal videos. However, a skit video re-enacting Saturday Night Live’s “Lazy Sunday” had a hit of 1.2 million views on December 27. The viral effect helped users discover the site, which in the Hitwise Intelligence Analyst Weblog (Prescott, cited in Jarboe 2011, p. 6), YouTube visits sky-rocketed by 83 percent in one week, surpassing the number of visits to Google Video. Soon after, “Lazy Sunday” was removed in respect of copyrights to Saturday Night Live.

YouTube continued to outrun the number of visits to Yahoo! Video Search and Google Video. By 2006, viewers watched over 100 million videos per day (Jarboe 2011, p. 8). In August 2006, YouTube established video advertisements and brand channels, as well as banner ads, promotions, and sponsorships.

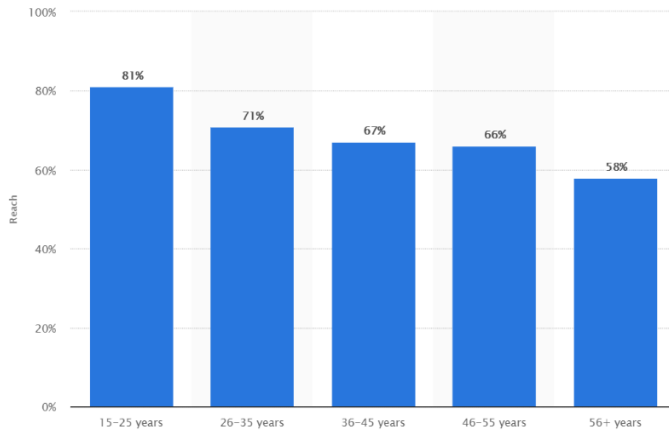
In October 2006, the creators made a game-changing decision to allow Google to acquire YouTube for \$1.65 billion in a stock-for-stock pay. Prescott (cited in Jarboe 2011, p. 10) thought that this was an innovative choice because with Google’s engineering team, they can create new and better features for YouTube, making this process much cheaper than buying.

In 2007, YouTube held their first awards, diversified their website in language (English and French), streamed political debates, and established InVideo ads that pop up at the bottom of videos. They also created the YouTube Partner Program, inviting users to partner with the company. Creators would receive “rewards from their work and receive the same promotional benefits given to YouTube’s professional content partners” in hopes to “inspire [their] users to continue to create compelling, engaging, and viral content for the YouTube community.” (Jarboe 2011, p. 14.)

Throughout the following years, more elements were added, such as video annotations, internet-based ads on partner sites, and YouTube Live. They have partnered with companies like CBS and Crackle to broadcast television episodes, movies, and musical performances. YouTube still continues to add more features and grow as a company.

### 6.1.2 Current Statistics

According to Statista, there was a total of 1.47 billion YouTube users worldwide in 2017, and the number has still grown throughout the following years (Clement 2018). In 2018, there were up to 192 million viewers from the United States. In the third quarter of 2019, 81 percent of internet users ages 15 to 25, 71 percent



**Figure 1. Percentage of U.S. internet users who use YouTube as of 3rd quarter 2019, by age group (Clement 2019c)**

of internet users ages 26 to 35, 67 percent ages 36 to 45, 66 percent ages 46 to 55, and 58 percent of internet users over the age of 56 use YouTube (Clement 2019c). The weight of usage shifts most towards millennials under the age of 26 (Figure 1).

For every minute, more than 500 hours of videos were uploaded on YouTube as of May 2019, which was a 40 percent growth from 2014 (Clement 2019a). Alexa discovered in 2019 that on average, YouTube viewers spend 11 minutes and 24 seconds per day; Pew Research Center study in 2018 calculated nearly 70 percent of videos people watch come from the recommendations; and Pew Research Center study in 2019 concluded over 70 percent of views are from a mobile device (cited in Cooper 2019). YouTube has grown into such an active website, becoming the world's largest video community on the Internet.

### 6.1.3 Business on YouTube

YouTube has become a common platform where businesses create advertisements and promotions of their products, as well as partnerships with other users. As described in section [6.1.1](#), YouTube has a Partner Program which grants creators complimentary resources and features for their videos, and monetize their content. The company has set up requirements to do so, such as having more than 1,000 subscribers and more than 4,000 credible watch hours within the 12 months. (Google 2020.) The main channel of the earning money comes from ads, views, and YouTube Premium subscribers who watch their content.

There are three main types of video ads on YouTube: TrueView Ads, Preroll Ads, and Bumpers. TrueView Ads include Video Discovery Ads which brand videos appear in related videos, search results, and the main page. These ads also refer to In-Stream Ads, which appear before viewers watch a video. Users are allowed to skip these ads. However, Preroll Ads are non-skippable ads that are played prior to watching a video. Bumpers are short, non-skippable, six-second ads that are played before a selected video. In addition, there are also Overlay In-Video ads that appear at the bottom of the video. (Oetting 2020.)

YouTube has a platform called YouTube Studio where creators are able to see analytics on their channel and videos. The analytics include growth in views and watch time for individual videos and in summary, impressions and engagements of the audience, and demographics of the audience. There is even a Realtime Activity feature to see a channel's live viewer engagements from different sources. Users are able to see these analytics visually as well. (YouTube 2020b.)

With the convenience of these three tools, businesses are able to utilize their use on YouTube as a marketing platform. They can earn money from the views, use the numerous methods of advertisements, and keep track of user engagement to see what type of audience they attract and what channels they come from. This will help them know where to push their product/service forward.

Not only is this beneficial for businesses, but content creators as well. Content creators are able to be self-employed through YouTube and use this as an advantage to start their own business, partner with other companies and create connections, or just simply have the freedom of creating what they want and conveniently earn a living.

## **6.2 Instagram**

Instagram is known for the simple and minimalistic style of application in posting visual content. Users are able to post photos and videos, create 24-hour story posts, and advertise their page. This section discusses the history of Instagram, their current statistics, and the business side of Instagram.

### 6.2.1 History

The kickstart of Instagram was initiated by Kevin Systrom in early 2010. Systrom was fond of the idea of photo sharing, and had his trial creation of Burbn, inspired by his favor of whiskey and bourbon. This was an app used for posting plans, checking in, and photo sharing. (Blystone 2019.) However, he wanted to increase the social capabilities of his idea through a mobile app. Later that year, he partnered with Mike Krieger to help build the photo-sharing app. They wanted to include attractive features, such as photo filters. Krieger and Systrom were focusing on a minimalistic-type app for easy-use, and narrowed down the features to photos, comments, and likes. Merging the words “instant” and “telegram,” they changed the app name to Instagram. Eight weeks later, they had revamped the mobile app, created a beta version for friends to test, fixed what was needed, and launched the mobile app.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2010, Instagram was launched (Blystone 2019). Within only a few hours, users rapidly increased to 25,000, and Instagram became the top free photo-sharing app. After two months, the mobile app had already reached over one million users. This was an absolutely shocking success to Systrom and Krieger.

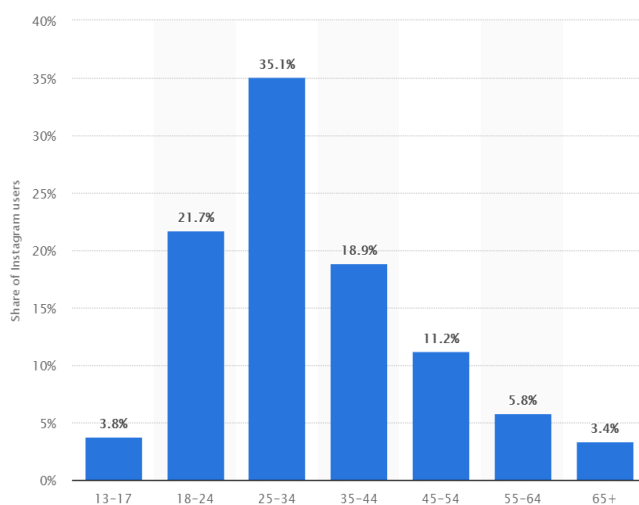
By February 2011, Instagram received \$7 million in funding from a group of investors, such as Benchmark Capital (Blystone 2019). The mobile app gained interest of several other leading social media companies such as Twitter and Facebook. In March 2011, Twitter offered nearly \$500 million in stock, but Systrom declined the proposal to keep Instagram an independent company. However, in April 2012, “Facebook acquired the company for the landmark sum of \$1 billion in cash and stock” (Blystone 2019) and promised to keep Instagram’s independent management. At this point, Instagram had finally allowed Android users, skyrocketing number of downloads over one million within a few hours.

By the end of 2013, Instagram increased to 150 million users, creators were able to upload videos, users were able to directly message others, and sponsored photos and videos were launched (Ahmad 2014). Now, there are features such as Instagram stories where people are able to publish an image or video for 24

hours, IGTV allowing users to create a series for videos over one minute, and Instagram Live. On Instagram stories, there are “stickers” that users can add to their post, including polls, “Ask me a question” response boxes, and quizzes, to interact more with their followers.

### 6.2.2 Current Statistics

As of June 2018, Instagram has reached about one billion monthly active users worldwide (Clement 2019b). As the mobile app grows, the United States leads the number of users with 120 million users, next to India with 80 million viewers as of January 2020 (Clement 2020a). Within the United States, 3.8 percent of



Instagram users are ages 13 to 17, 21.7 percent are ages 18 to 24, 35.1 percent are ages 25 to 34, 18.9 percent are ages 35 to 44, 11.2 percent are ages 45 to 54, and less than 10 percent are over the age of 55 (Figure 2). Users are weighted most towards young adults ages 18 to 34 (Clement 2020b).

**Figure 2. Distribution of Instagram users in the United States as of February 2020, by age group (Clement 2020b)**

According to Salman Aslam (2020), over 50 million photos have been shared, and number of photos and videos uploaded per day reaches over 100 million as of January 2020. Users spend an average of 28 minutes per day on Instagram. Even though the U.S. has the highest number of Instagram users compared to each nation alone, the remaining sum outside the U.S. accounts for 89 percent.

### 6.2.3 Business on Instagram

On Instagram, there are several features that can help one’s business, whether this is for an established company or one’s own content creation. Users are able to define their account as a business account. They can select what category they fit into: personal blog, product/service, musician/band, travel, health/beauty, and various other options. Having a business account allows people to contact them directly through their profile.



Business accounts also have Promotions, in which any user can choose an Instagram post or story as a sponsored ad. Users select where the ad will send clickers (one's profile, website, or direct message) and choose exactly what audience to feature the ad to (age, gender, locations, interests). After creating the promotion, a price and duration meter is displayed which users can adjust and see an estimated reach (e.g. \$5 daily in 7 days amounts to \$35 spending, and 5,500 to 15,000 estimated reach). (Instagram 2020a.)

When publishing content on a business account, people are able to tag business partners as "Paid partnerships with." Those businesses are able to see the activity and engagement on that post. If the business page sells physical goods, companies can also market products using Instagram Shopping. This feature allows users to tag specific points of the photo that leads clickers to view more information and how to buy the product. (Instagram 2020b.)

Lastly, there is the Insights feature that shows analytics on the sponsored ads, individual posts, and follower activity and demographics. The business feature on Instagram is beneficial to companies who want to have a social media marketing platform, as well as to those who want to market their own product or entertainment.

### **6.3 Social Media Influencers**

A social media influencer is exactly what the term sounds like: someone on social media who influences their viewers. More specifically, Influencer Marketing Hub defines influencers on social media as, "people who have built a reputation for their knowledge and expertise on a specific topic" (2020). Creators generally have a defined subject of their content and post regularly to keep their followers coming back and engaged.

Influencers can be categorized in various ways, such as content (art, entertainment, lifestyle, travel) and number of followers. The number of followers can classify one into the following groups, respectively from smallest to largest: nano-influencer, micro-influencer, macro-influencer, and mega-influencer. Upon research, there does not seem to be a defined number for these groups, considering several different numbers of scale were found. The groups generally range

around under 10,000 as nano, 10,000 to 100,000 as micro, 100,000 to 1,000,000 as macro, and over one million as mega. This scale will be used throughout this study to avoid confusion.

With the increase of influence and number of viewers, social media influencer words become powerful. In short, influencers grow into “opinion leaders” (Jarboe 2011, p. 34). Because these influencers have a reputation and knowledge regarding the subject of their content, and have a publicly known face on social media, viewers see more value in those creators. Viewers recognize those they see often on social media, who have a large number of followers, and invest a great deal of their time around the content they create. According to Hanim Özgen and Metin Kozak, “social media was essentially developed as an extended concept of traditional word-of-mouth (WOM) advertising,” (cited in Teare, Bowen & Baloglu 2015, p. 230) now having electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). With eWOM, creators are able to influence thousands, even millions, of people faster than ever.

Travel influencers can be categorized into other subgroups, such as travel influencers in sustainability, family travel, solo travelers, and outdoor adventures. These influencers typically post their personal experiences and travel tips, and serve as a travel guide or entertainment to their viewers. Other examples of their content can be challenges (e.g. having a 20-euro budget in Paris), places to shop/eat/visit, and linguistics. Some travelers create content in unique subjects; for instance, traveling on a low budget, visiting less known or less desirable destinations, and travelers who serve as a social advocate.

For example, Alex Reynolds (also known as @lostwithpurpose on Instagram), a micro-influencer according to the scale estimated in section [6.3](#), is a bold and inspiring woman of color that backpacks solo. On her Instagram, she has a story highlight called “Diverse Reads” to encourage people to expand their viewpoints in the books they read. By doing this, she asks for suggestions on readings of “authors who are not white Western men” in effort to “diversify the perspectives and stories” she reads. “Gender, color, orientation, origins – they all influence the way you think and the works you create.” (Lostwithpurpose 2020.) Suggestions were published for her followers to see. She also posted a YouTube video that

discusses true tourism in Pakistan and the challenges of visiting as a colored woman (Lost with Purpose Travel Blog 2019). Although Pakistan is a country she truly loves, she did not want destination marketers to falsely advertise the tourism there. Reynolds was able to use the social media resources she had to send the message out to her viewers.

#### **6.4 Marketing in Short**

Marketing is the practice of communicating with the public or individuals for the purpose of promoting and advertising a certain product or service. Marketing is done in various forms, such as face-to-face (also known as word-of-mouth, or WOM), television commercials, website ads, and social media ads. One of the main principles in marketing is the four P's: product, price, promotion, and place (Jarboe 2011, p. 30). The marketer must know what product (or service) they are selling, at what price will this efficiently sell, their method of promotion, and where to promote the product.

Philip Kotler, a professor in marketing, developed the concept of marketing 1.0 to marketing 4.0 to represent the evolution of marketing (cited in Fuciu & Dumitrescu 2018, p. 45). Marketing 1.0 was based on practices of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century of simply creating products and offering a limited number of production to a large number of clients. Marketing 2.0 introduces the concept of actually defining the customer wants and needs that must be fulfilled. Marketing 3.0 expands this topic by considering the thoughts and feelings of the consumers, establishing a more empathetic way of marketing. Sellers recognize human values and aspirations, rather than treating them as simple costumers. Lastly, marketing 4.0 reaches beyond humans themselves towards technology and artificial intelligence. Marketers have acknowledged the social evolution within the society and the use of networking through a digital platform. Sellers have begun to operate their businesses through the interweb to improve customer interaction.

For this research, there are a number of important marketing methods in relation to travel social media content: destination marketing, digital marketing, social media marketing, influencer marketing, and travel-international marketing.

### **6.4.1 Destination Marketing**

Destination marketing derives from the promotion of what tourism has to offer. There are five main elements which tourism offers, according to Victor Middleton and Jackie Clarke: “destination attractions; destination facilities and services; accessibility of the destination (including transport); images, brands and perceptions; price to the visitor” (cited in Soteriades 2012, p. 108). The destination provides the whole experience of the client. As a result, destination marketing is defined as the sum of activities and services packaged for a traveler to provide a total experience at a place of visit (Murphy et al., cited in Uysal, Harrill, & Woo 2011, p. 103). Destination marketing is imperative in the sustainability and growth of tourism.

As global tourism grows, there are four key aspects that have been considered, all of which were noted by Steven Pike and Stephen Page (2014, pp. 1-2): first, from Neil Leiper is that most tourist activities take place at particular destinations; second, from the United Nations World Tourism Organisation, stating that analyses in tourism are surrounded by the movement in destinations; Nigel Morgan and his research partners then noted that destinations are the largest products within the travel and tourism industry; last, several regions, state, and cities help fund destination marketing organizations (DMO) and use them as their primary tool to attract tourists and visitors to their area. While the industry grows, destinations and tourism activities are becoming an exceedingly competitive business to compel travelers to visit locations.

In terms of destination marketing organizations, these companies commonly promote the location’s culture, tourism activities, package experiences, and transportation. For example, the main navigation bar in VisitFinland.com has travel information, about Finland, destinations, seasons, and experiences (Visit Finland 2020). The home page contains articles about Finland, activities based on topics such as accommodations, families, and well-being, and the company highlights Finland’s sustainability, sauna culture, and Lapland’s winter wonderland. Similar to VisitFinland, VisitBritain.com contains suggestions on different regions to visit, activities, and practical information on accommodation and transportation (Visit Britain 2020). They present suggestions on what to explore and they blog about

their destination. These resources are easily accessible and useful for travelers and tourists who want to know more about what destination is best for them, what activities they can do, and how they will package and plan their whole itinerary of their trip.

#### **6.4.2 Digital, Social Media, and Content Marketing**

As presented within the marketing 4.0, companies have gone beyond in-person promotion into the digital world, also considered as digital marketing. Digital marketing is the practice of advertising through emails, websites, online ads, mobile applications, and other platforms through the Internet (Chaffey & Smith 2017, pp. 13-14). Becoming involved with clients that have these technological resources easily in hand help businesses stay in contact with their customers and keep a consistent “dialogue.” While people are able to communicate with companies in an instant, these firms build a closer relationship to their clients.

Digital marketing is a vast concept and branches off to multiple different channels, such as social media in the case of this research. Social media marketing is the practice of expanding marketing systems on social media platforms, including content within mobile apps, social networking websites, and review and recommendation websites (Chaffey & Smith 2017, pp. 225-227). Marketers are able to take advantage of social media’s ability of reach. The media can create this viral effect to where consumers share their positive thoughts on certain products and are instantly broadcasted to an audience. This publisher becomes the consumer content marketer creating a sequence of their own audience who subsequently may consume the same product and share their thoughts to another variety of audiences. Content marketing can also be defined as, “a set of activities of creating and distributing content that is relevant to the lives of customers but also strongly associated with a certain brand” (Kotler, Kartajaya & Setiawan 2016, p. 84). Accordingly, sharing negative comments may have the same viral affect, which can be considered the disadvantage of the media. Social media has altered the dynamics of marketing and allows people to choose what they see and speak how/what they want. While “social is the most honest of any media” (Swankie, cited in Chaffey & Smith 2017, p. 228), this creates an innovative challenge for marketers to think critically on what methods to use to grow closer to their clients

and make their products more compelling, as well as keep their online reputation prominent.

### **6.4.3 Social Media Influencer Marketing**

When marketing on social media, one must recognize the algorithm. This refers to the frequency and analytics of what demographics of people see and on which platforms they engage. Influencer marketing can be referred to as “a rapidly growing industry that attempts to promote products or increase brand awareness through content spread by social media users who are considered to be influential” (Carter, cited in Sigala & Gretzel 2018, p. 148). As creators are able to influence thousands of people with a click of a button, they are broadcasting their content to a massive audience; this can be viewed as a form of mass marketing in a business perspective, increasing brand recognition.

#### **6.4.3.1 The Value of Influencer Marketing**

According to Krasniak, the most important social media platforms which influencer marketing is implemented is Instagram (89 percent influencer marketing use), Facebook and Twitter (both 70 percent), and YouTube (59 percent) (cited in Sigala & Gretzel 2018, p. 148). Content creators help market products and services in exchange for a benefit such as compensation, special deals, or free products/services. The most common ways influencers engage in this marketing method are new product launch, promotion, and creating content revolving around the product/service (eMarketer, cited in Sigala & Gretzel 2018, p. 150). Sadie Thoma stated that between 2017 and 2018, watch time had doubled on review videos on “which product to buy” (cited in Cooper 2019). Influencer marketing is beneficial in the fact that consumers look for those who have had real experiences and genuine reviews on products they are curious about, rather than the company that will obviously only publish positive comments on their own product.

Other unique practices of influencer marketing include inviting influencers to special events (e.g. a festival or social media meetups) located in touristic places for free, expecting them to document and share their experiences to their viewers. Brands also feature “influencers in their branded posts, influencers being invited

to host contests or giveaways, as well as having influencers take over the brand's social media channel." On the other hand, finding information on viewer feedback from an influencer marketing project can be a blur. Methods in efforts to define returns include using special links, QR codes, and promotional codes when consumers purchase a product. (Sigala & Gretzel 2018, p. 151.)

#### **6.4.3.2 Brand Partnerships with Travel Influencers**

Travel influencers have partnered with airlines, hotels, restaurants, and other non-travel related brands (Bregman 2018). Murad Osmann (@muradosmann), an Instagrammer with over 4 million followers, is known for his style of photo-capturing, "#followmeto," where his wife grabs his hand and leads him to beautiful and breathtaking places. He partnered with Renaissance Hotels in Dubai and published an image of him and his wife in an infinity pool, facing a background of Dubai's skyline, and his iconic #followmeto image.

Johnny Jet (@johnnyjet), an Instagrammer with then 27.9 thousand followers, partnered with Hawaiian Airlines. Although he has much fewer followers than Osmann, the company was able to spend less money, and they were aware of the loyalty of his audience. He is known for his expertise in budget travel and is seen as a genuine man. (cited in Bregman 2018.)

Other partnerships include Eric Stoen (@travelbabbo) and his partnership with Voodoo Doughnut, showcasing their exotic toppings and flavors, in addition to Damon and Jo's (@damonandjo) partnership with LifeStraw in efforts to provide safe drinking water for communities in Kenya. Being an influencer is not just creating content and gaining views; this can create connections and deals with external companies. (cited in Bregman 2018.)

#### **6.4.4 International and Travel Marketing Implementation**

Reviewing the previously discussed marketing methods (destination, digital/social media, and influencer), international and travel marketing can be implemented in each approach.

International marketing is simply defined as expanding marketing practices beyond national borders, advertising to more than one country (Charles & Anderson

2016, p. 3). For destination marketing, the purpose is to promote their area to compel non-locals to visit. Destination marketers hope to reach those beyond not only county borders, but international tourists. For digital and social media marketers, the Internet allows people to communicate with others without face-to-face interaction, as well as customize their own channels, what they see, and who views what they publish. Because the Internet is nearly without limits, people are able to market and promote what they choose to vast regions in the world. This can apply to social media influencer marketing as well, as their content is a powerful channel. Diving deeper into travel influencer marketing, they are able to advertise through social media worldwide, as well as in person as they constantly move from country to country.

Travel marketing is defined as “the collective term given to marketing strategies that are used within the travel industry. This includes strategies used by hotels and resorts, the airline industry, the restaurant industry, travel agents, and more.” (Barten n.d.) The purpose is to advertise the travel business. For example, hotels market travel to their destination and use that as a lead to advertise accommodation at their hotel. Airlines encourage travel through their airline and market the services they offer. This can tie into destination marketing because DMOs promote travel to their location. Travel marketing can be implemented to digital and social media marketing. For instance, airlines and hotels can have social media pages, as well as special online subscriptions or membership programs to market their products to loyal customers. As for social media influencer marketing, these content creators are the travel marketers themselves, whether partnered with a company or not—they are their own travel company that publishes and promotes travel.

## **6.5 The Travel Journey and the Internet**

The Internet has given people a higher level of social interaction. Users have created online communities and have personalized their content feed, history, and automated suggestions of their liking. With free reign, travelers have gained “more control over their decision-making processes and the amount of media exposure that they want to experience” (Moriuchi 2015, p. 1). Travelers are able to book and plan an entire trip on their own, as well as share their experiences



online. Finding all the information possible through secondary resources before going on the trip is essential for travelers because experiencing is not a “testable” component; these are products and services which are intangible (Sigala & Gretzel 2018, p. 89).

Users are able to find and share a vast amount of travel information and first-hand experiences that help them plan future trips for holidays and vacations. When users scroll through content containing a particular product published by a non-company based profile, the post is considered consumer-generated content (CGC) or user-generated content (UGC) (Moriuchi 2015, p. 2). The content is not issued by those associated with the production of the product, but by those with their own personal experience. Upon research of Valarie Zeithaml, a true and whole evaluation of a travel product only occurs after the entity is consumed or experienced. Purchasing a product for the first time can be risky; therefore, consumers seek for personal resources and information about that product, because they are considerably more credible than advertisements. (cited in Teare, Bowen & Baloglu 2015, p. 314.) A Lodging Interactive study had even found that “79 percent of the respondents considered a social media site trustworthy when it provided personal recommendations” (cited in Teare, Bowen & Baloglu 2015, pp. 314-315). All these factors put together show the online information and content as a catalyst in the travel decision-making process.

There are five different phases of a travel experience: “pre-trip,” when the client proposes the idea of making the trip, finding information, and creating the initial itinerary; “travel to site,” when the traveler uses transportation services to get to their destination; “on-site activities,” when the traveler finds accommodation, activities, and places to eat; “return trip,” when the client makes their way back home; “post-trip,” when the client reflects on their travel experience (Clawson & Knetsch, cited in Uysal, Harrill & Woo 2011, p. 100). Throughout this journey, travelers are likely to contact and look through several different travel companies, such as airlines, DMOs, and local transportation services. The goal for travel companies is to give the right services and add value to every visitor’s trip. They have adapted to this idea and have acknowledged that the Internet serves as an

important factor within a traveler's decision-making process throughout their journey.

However, producers are not in control of content that consumers publish. When adding CGC and consumer opinions to the travel experience, this can result in a drastic change in perspective of the traveler and their decisions. For example, DMOs provide information about the destination, how to get to the destination, and what visitors can do there—the first three phases of the travel experience which clients research. The return trip and post-trip reflection are for the consumer to decide how to proceed with this. In this case, say the consumer posts online about their experiences and submits a review to the hotel they stayed at; other consumers are able to view this post and allow past consumers who have had their own personal experience to influence their decision on their trip. As a result, CGC becomes a part of travel research and a significant component in travel planning, because consumers provide information that travel companies cannot: the aftermath of the trip as the traveler, and conversation about experiences.

## **7 Research Method**

This study is based on both quantitative and qualitative data. The primary data was gathered through a Google form, as well as direct observations of other travel pages. This research also includes secondary data which illustrates several different models to present the relationships between travel content creators, consumers, and travel and tourism marketing.

### **7.1 Primary Research**

With the use of Google forms, two different questionnaires were created: one for Instagram and YouTube travel influencers, and one for YouTube or Instagram travel influencer followers. Both questionnaires had open-ended research-based questions (excluding name, name privacy, and case study interest). Responses have been converted to numbers by inputting them in an Excel worksheet, categorizing common responses, and calculating how many times certain subjects were mentioned in their responses. The data will be used to discover the impact

on the creator and the viewer individually, as well as how the two variables connect.

Messages were to be sent to each person individually to request that they fill out the form. In addition to the questionnaire, observations of the content on travel Instagram pages and YouTube channels will be considered. Creators had the choice to keep their name private, while all followers' names are private.

These questionnaires were conducted within a span of 23 days, and will be analyzed through descriptive and inductive methods.

### **7.1.1 Travel Influencers**

When choosing what creators to message, typing into the Google search engine, "Instagram travel influencers" and "YouTube travel influencers" brought up several results such as, "Best travel influencers of 2020...", "Must-follow travel influencers...", etc. Looking through these lists, nearly all content creators had at least 5,000 followers and have content of themselves traveling to several different places or serving as a travel guide. This can be considered as cluster sampling.

The more followers a content creator has, the more viewers they are likely to get. With more viewers, comes more people to influence. The more people they are able to influence, the more reliable the person is within this research. However, with that also comes the likeliness of them being too busy to actually respond to the research questionnaire. With these circumstances, the main focus was on those between 10,000 and 100,000 followers, though a few with under 10,000, and more with over 100,000 followers were still contacted. Emailing influencers was a more sufficient choice because all were more likely to answer their business emails, as opposed to Instagram direct message or YouTube comment. This resulted the first wave of requests with 64 Instagram influencers and 84 YouTube influencers. The goal was to receive at least 30 responses.

As data was gathered, people responded quicker than expected, and several even had over 100,000 followers. However, number of answers was still short, so an extra 33 YouTube influencers and 67 Instagram influencers were contacted. Refer to [Appendix I](#) for the full list of questions.

### **7.1.2 Travel Influencer Followers**

Choosing who to message in request for questionnaire responses for travel influencer followers was more difficult than expected. A few different methods were used: posting on the researcher's personal Instagram story to ask viewers who were interested in the research and searching through influencer Instagram comments to randomly choose active users. This can be considered as random sampling by convenience, as some accounts were private, and non-followers cannot message them.

On the personal story, there was a brief description of the research, and a "Yes" or "No" poll for viewers to easily answer if they are interested in contributing. If they input "Yes," they were contacted with more details regarding the research and the link to the questionnaire. These respondents were easy to manage because they were likely someone familiar to the researcher, and they were able to trust the researcher acquainted to them. However, receiving any type of response back from strangers was tricky. If there was an email connected to their account, the person was contacted through email, because that is more formal. If there was no email, there was no other choice but to direct message them through Instagram. In the end, 70 influencer followers were contacted. Refer to [Appendix II](#) for the full list of questions.

### **7.1.3 Errors**

There are several aspects of social media that have made this research difficult, resulting in errors and miscalculation. As for Instagram, the process of messaging a stranger was complicated because if one messages another that they do not follow, the message goes into a secondary direct message inbox of less priority. Although the link shows a preview of the Google form within the message, scams and hacks are common on social media to make the user click on a false link. Other limitations were if users made their account private.

The most difficult part of gathering data from strangers is finding those who follow YouTube travel content creators. There is no contact information or messenger to talk to the follower directly on the video website, unless one responds to the comment publicly, which is not ideal for requesting information on a research.

Additionally, there are several viewers that do not even have a YouTube account, giving absolutely no way of gathering information from them directly for this study. This conflict makes the research blurrier.

## 7.2 Secondary Research

Upon research of the marketing methods discussed in the literature review, a number of key aspects tied into the relationship with the content creators, the creator as a marketer, and consumers were mentioned. The observation consists of picked components mentioned within the literature review, as well as other elements collected from secondary data to further this research. The models will assist in illustrating a more defined relationship between the influencer and their marketing role, as well as the entire connection with the follower, creator, and marketing role.

## 8 Primary Research Findings and Analyses

Within 23 days, the travel influencer questionnaire reached 31 responses, and the travel influencer follower questionnaire gained 31 responses. The following section will describe the results of these questionnaires, analyses, and the connections between the influencers and followers that can be observed through the data that was gathered.

### 8.1 Travel Influencer Questionnaire Results

	# of Followers	# of Responses	%
Nano	0-10,000	2	6.5%
Micro	10,000-50,000	5	16.1%
	50,000-100,000	7	22.6%
Macro	100,000-500,000	14	45.2%
	500,000-1,000,000	1	3.2%
Mega	1,000,000-2,000,000	2	6.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 1. Influencer response rate, by number of followers

A total of 248 YouTube and Instagram travel influencers were contacted, while 31 of those questionnaire requests were fulfilled. This leaves the response rate at 25 percent; 13 percent (17) of those whose primary

platform is Instagram, and 12 percent (14) whose primary platform is YouTube. The primary platform is determined by which of the influencer's account had the most of followers. The results are segmented into the number of followers as well.

As shown in Table 1, those with 100,000 to 500,000 followers make up the majority of the responses with 45.2 percent of the results, followed by those with 50,000 to 100,000 followers with 22.6 percent of the results.

Influencers were asked the type of travel content they make. The results illustrate that the leading responses are personal experiences (also counted with blogs/vlogs) at 22 of 31 (71.0 percent) of the respondents and travel journey tips at 13 of 31 (41.9 percent) (Figure 3).

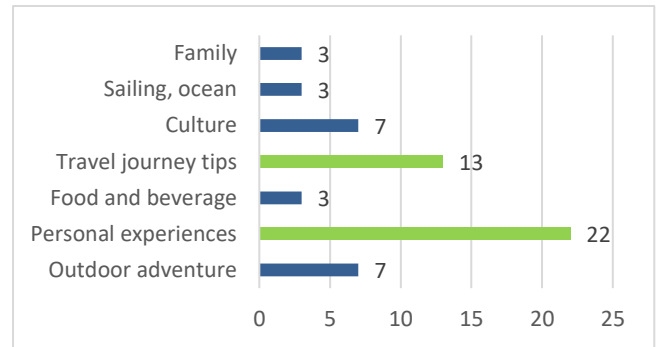


Figure 3. Content created on YouTube/Instagram



Figure 4. Positive effects on travel influencers creating content through YouTube/Instagram

The next question asks about the positive effects on creating content. The top responses include 74.2 percent of the influencers meeting new people, and 45.2 percent connecting with organizations (Figure 4).

The third question asks about the negative effects on creating content. The top responses include 54.8 percent of the respondents feeling obligated to capture their trip on camera

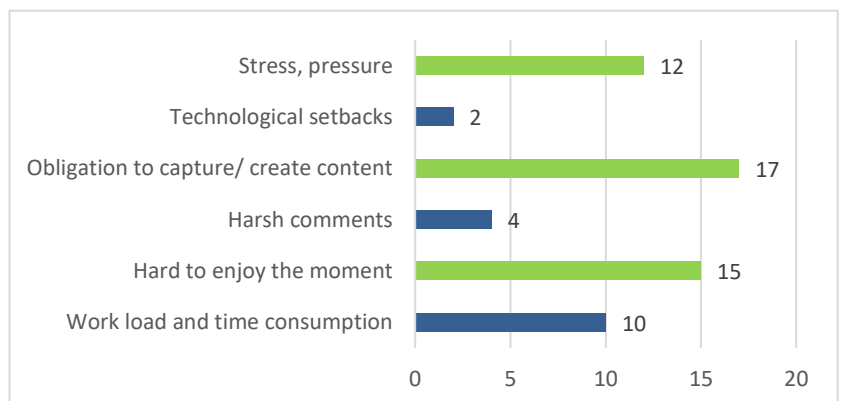
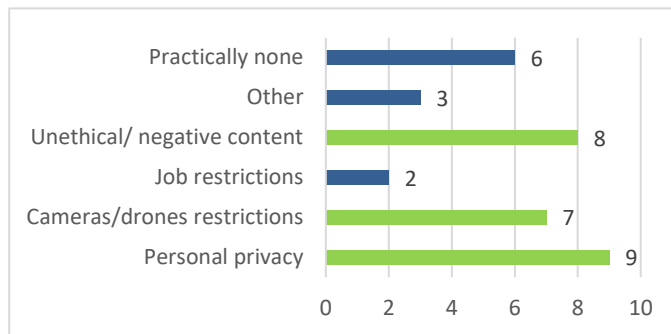


Figure 5. Negative effects on travel influencers creating content through YouTube/Instagram

and creating content, possibly leading to the 48.4 percent that believe there can

be difficulties enjoying the moment, and 38.7 percent of the influencers feeling stress or pressure to constantly create content (Figure 5).



**Figure 6. Travel influencer limitations on postings**

The final question asks about the limitations of the influencer’s postings. As illustrated in Figure 6, the top answers consider the privacy of people on camera (29 percent), whether they are a person in public or an acquaintance, and

avoiding unethical or negative content (25.8 percent). Answers on limitations vary among these respondents. There are more common responses, such as camera or drone restrictions (22.6 percent), and less common answers such as not wanting their kids to be on camera. Answers with only a count of one are categorized in “Other.”

## 8.2 Travel Influencer Analysis

What is important to note is that this questionnaire is open-ended and allowed the participant to give as much input or as little input as they desire. There may be some answers that are clear in observing their content, but they happened to not mention something in their questionnaire answer. They may have given more information, but did not have the time or simply did not want to. There may have been thoughts that one influencer had that another influencer may have felt as well, but did not think of at the time of filling the questionnaire themselves. The only aspects noted within this research are the answers given in the survey, regardless of if there were clearly missing remarks or not.

As a result, no official or concrete resources regarding the lives of travel content creators and their production process were found, excluding blogs/vlogs. Findings about travel influencers are typically about them as a business, rather than them as a creator. The analyses in the following sections are in a descriptive design based on the Influencers’ questionnaire.

### **8.2.1 Personal Experiences and Travel Tips**

According to the Influencer questionnaire, the reign of which content is created results in personal experiences and travel journey tips. Just like any other type of social media of any regular, non-organization-based profile, their content is primarily based on one subject: themselves. People generally have the impulse of documenting their life online whether this is for the benefit of others, but mainly for the benefit of themselves and their own self-esteem (Halina 2019). In this case, travelers document and publish their travel experiences. For Instagrammers, creators want to highlight a particular image that they saw within that destination and share the photo to others in hopes that the audience is able to see the beautiful destination from their perspective. Not only do these pictures show pretty landscapes or colorful cities, but the creator hopes to try to convey the image emotionally to engage the audience's feelings. As for YouTubers, travel influencers film their experiences on-the-go; travel content is not typically a "sit-down and talk in front of a camera" type subject. Because they are documenting their travel experiences through video, the YouTuber is typically a travel vlogger.

As the influencers recognize several viewers of travel content are obviously those interested in travel, they are pleased to share travel tips, knowing that the audience may hope to experience the same journeys as them. Influencers look forward to sharing the background of their journey and what tips and tricks they use to avoid trouble, save money, and have the experiences they are having.

This analysis shows that creating travel content on Instagram and YouTube impacts the influencer directly by being able to document and publish their travels as a lifestyle, while also having an audience to share their travel advices and serve as a global guide and educator.

### **8.2.2 Meeting New People and Connecting with Organizations**

The most positive effects on travel influencers in creating travel content are meeting new people and connecting with organizations. The online community of the travel-tourism industry has grown into an entirely new network of travelers, consumers, viewers, businesses, and organizations. Several of these travel influencers earn money through content creating, which is spent on more traveling and



creating more content; this is an on-going loop. Creating content has given the creator the opportunity to make new interactions with several people of different cultures all around the world—some of those hangouts are only for the moment then never talk to that person again, or connections which have lasted years and sustained through online text. For instance, one travel influencer, who requested to keep their name private, was able to travel around the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone and run into a peculiar man who still lives nearby the area, in the middle of the woods, completely alone. Although the two had no way of keeping in touch through any type of Internet, the interaction was special to the traveler. Other examples of personal connection are how YouTuber Damon Dominique has made friends throughout his travels from clubs, his Shut Up and Go travel business, and even his own subscribers (DamonandJo 2020).

Content creators not only create connections with new people around the globe, but with organizations as well. This can be for the benefit of earning money or receiving product deals through advertising, attending events for free, or being a part of an organization's charity cause. For instance, YouTuber Jo Franco was contacted by Gloria Atanmo to invite her to Sisterhood Circle Retreat in Puerto Rico, an event for female leaders and entrepreneurs. Franco and her mother were flown out to Puerto Rico by Atanmo to attend and speak at the event. (Franco 2020.) Brady Trautman of YouTube channel Sailing SV Delos mentioned his crew's partnership with GoPro. His viewers often ask them about the cameras they use during their cruises. The GoPro company was able to provide Trautman and his crew a special link which the crew gives to their audience as a resource. In return, the Delos crew receives free GoPro gear, as well as compensation if a consumer buys a GoPro through their special link (Trautman 2020). Other examples that influencers have mentioned within the survey was opportunity to work with hotels, meeting other YouTubers, and meeting others through campaigns.

In regard to results with low numbers, "Creating a business" and "Boost of creativity" was on the bottom end of the data. Even though the numbers were short, this does not mean that those who did not give this answer do not feel this way. As said before, this is an open-ended survey in which influencers may have given unique answers that others may not have thought of.

This analysis illustrates that creating travel content on Instagram and YouTube attracts those interested in the traveling industry and creates a whole online community. As stated by Jarryd Salem in the survey, “Being a professional content creator and sharing our experiences on Instagram and YouTube has allowed us to meet thousands of people around the world and gain unique insights into their lives and cultures” (cited in Influencers’ Questionnaire 2020). Creating content builds another branch of the travel-tourism industry through a social media platform, allowing influencers to make a variety of connections, whether they are personal or business-organization-related.

### **8.2.3 Obligations, Setbacks, and Pressure**

Although there is a large number of positive outcomes, the negative setbacks are still absolutely apparent. As a result, the most noted negative effects of content creating is having the obligation to capture what is around them for content. The second most mentioned setback is that enjoying the moment in the location they are at becomes difficult. This is likely to be connected to the impediment of obligation in having their travels captured, and seeing the majority of their experiences through a lens. The third most stated effect was stress and pressure. Again, this likely links to content creating obligations, as those who mentioned stress stated that this was from pressure of creating content and keeping their viewers engaged. Stress was also discussed in regard to working with other brands.

Another common and significant answer on challenges in content creating was the weight of the workload on the influencer, in addition to filming and editing as a huge time consumer. Creators spend a large portion of their time capturing their journey and editing their pictures and videos. Cynthia and Niko of @journalofnomads Instagram even stated in the questionnaire, “It does take a lot of time away from the travel experience itself” (Influencers’ Questionnaire 2020). YouTubers publish videos that can range from eight minutes to half an hour. Loz’s Leisure’s YouTube videos range around ten minutes, while Sailing SV Delos create thirty minute episodes (Loz’s Leisure 2020; Sailing SV Delos 2020b).

This analysis describes the challenging work that is set “behind the scenes” of content creating on Instagram and YouTube. Even though creating one’s own content of themselves and entertaining a large audience is an unbelievable job, there are several obstacles that creators are put through. YouTubers spend around six to eight hours editing each video (Peterson 2016). Add on the time for filming and creating other YouTube elements such as descriptions and tags, add on time taken to read and respond to viewer comments, add time for promoting the video on other social medias, then multiply that by two or three for number of videos per week. In the long run, this becomes a full-time job. Professional YouTubers are self-employed. Although being an Instagram content creator may not have as much tedious work, considering postings are only photos and videos less than one minute—unless an IGTV which is uncommon to have regular IGTV posts—, creators still spend extra time editing their photos and description under the pressure of their audience. Content creating gives the privilege to travel influencers of traveling for a living, and being able to express who they are on a platform of a large audience. However, an occupation like this has the consequence of carrying the weight and pressure of expectation in high quality content of a creator’s journey, on top of the strenuous effort on traveling and planning by themselves.

#### **8.2.4 Post Limitations**

The most noted limitation on postings is personal privacy, as well as avoiding unethical and negative content. These travel influencers want to create genuine and authentic content for their viewers to display the true culture of the country, especially by interactions with locals. However, when filming in public, the consequence of unintentional capture of a stranger’s face is inevitable. According to responses from the questionnaire, creators aim to publish content as transparent as possible, but also want to respect the privacy of others.

In addition to personal privacy, creators often try to avoid immoral and harmful content, including any unethical activities with wildlife, unsustainable practices, social issues, and illegal content. This may be for the reason of the external organizations they represent, the brand of themselves that they represent, and per-

sonal moral. For example, a respondent described how part of their content happened to involve alcoholism and drug-use: “The audience being made up of mostly young men (92 percent) in my case means that showing women in any way quickly makes the comment section a nightmare to deal with women who appear in the videos called [inappropriate sex-shaming names for the women]” (Influencers’ Questionnaire 2020). This creator not only took the consideration of what is in their content and the privacy of the people, but the compulsively negative and unethical responses of the viewers.

This analysis shows that content creators are still conscious (and should be) of the topics they publish. Although influencers strive for authenticity, there is certain content that creators should censor to avoid the promotion of immorality. With censorship of negativity and privacy, with camera and drone restrictions on top, creators must face the fact that they cannot publish *everything*; viewers must as well. Content creating on YouTube and Instagram affects the influencer in a way that they are a large, public brand; regardless of what they post, they are obligated to abide by regulations and moral. Having an “influencer” title makes the scenario more significant if they were to post illegal and immoral content, as opposed to an unknown, random publisher.

### 8.3 Follower Questionnaire Results

A total of 70 YouTube and Instagram travel influencers’ followers were contacted, while 31 of those questionnaire requests were fulfilled. This leaves the response rate at 44.3 percent.

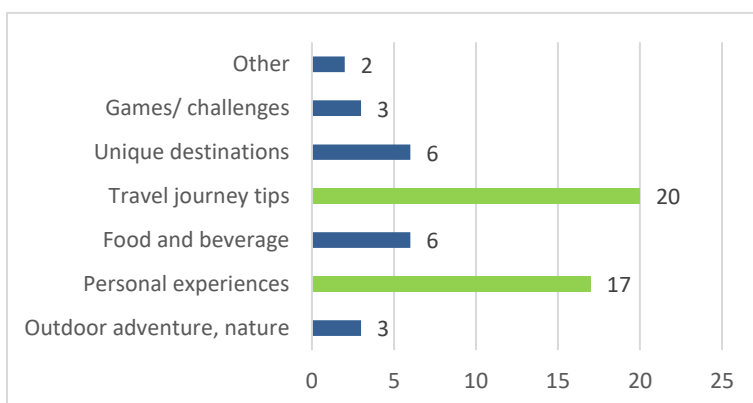


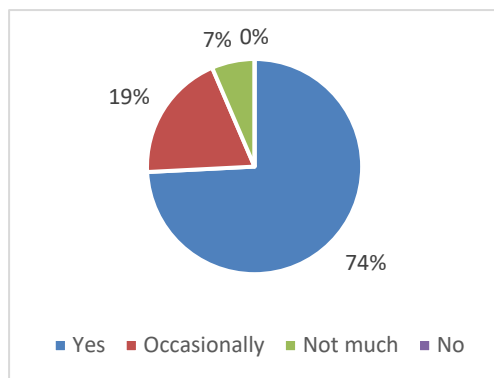
Figure 7. Follower's travel content interest, by type

Followers were asked what type of travel content suited their interest. As shown in Figure 7, the leading responses are travel journey tips with 20 of 31 (64.5 percent) of the respondents, and personal experiences (also counted with

blogs/vlogs) at 17 of 31 (54.8 percent). “Other” refers to uncommon answers that had a count of one answer.

The next three questions are converted to a “Yes,” “Occasionally,” “Not much,” and “No” scale. Examples of “Yes” answers are more definite responses and are determined by words such as, “strongly” and “of course” without any dispute of a negative answer. Examples of “Occasionally” answers are determined by phrases such as “sometimes” and “maybe.” “Not much” is determined by words similar to, “not particularly” and “not really.” “No” answers are definite responses and can use words such as, “never.”

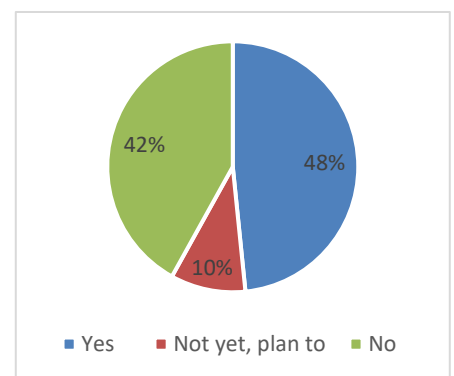
After the follower’s travel content interest, the next question asks about the effect



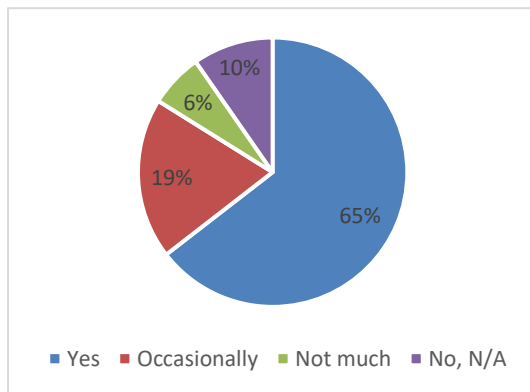
**Figure 8. Does influencer content affect follower's desire to go to those cities?**

of travel content on the follower’s desire to go to those cities. Seventy-four percent of the answers claim that the content affects their desire to go to those cities, 19 percent lean towards that they occasionally affect their desire to go, 7 percent as not much affecting their desire, and none of the answers resulting towards not affecting their desire at all (Figure 8).

The next question surrounds the situation of if the follower has ever traveled to a destination solely because they saw an image or video on YouTube or Instagram. Forty-eight percent say that they have traveled to at least one destination after seeing images or videos on the two social medias, as opposed to 42 percent who say they have not. Ten percent say they have not yet traveled to the destination, but plan to in the future (Figure 9).



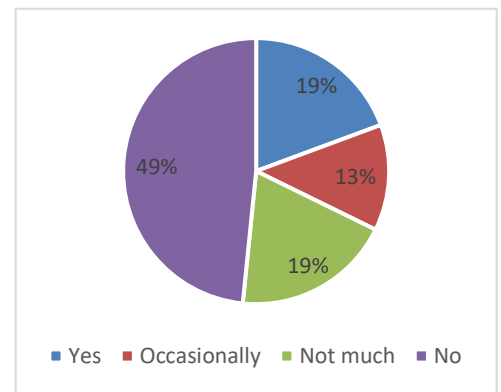
**Figure 9. Has follower ever travelled to a destination solely after seeing it on YouTube/Instagram?**



**Figure 10. Does the follower do research on Instagram/YouTube before traveling to a destination?**

The following question asks if the viewer does research on Instagram or YouTube before traveling to a destination. Sixty-five percent of the respondents say they do their research on YouTube and Instagram, 19 percent say they occasionally research, 6 percent do not do much research, and 10 percent either do not do research at all or claim they do not travel (Figure 10).

The final quantitatively measurable question asks if the travel content can spoil the traveler's experience. As shown in Figure 11, nineteen percent of the respondents mention that the content *can* spoil the experience, 13 percent say that content *can occasionally* spoil the experience, 19 percent state that the content does not really spoil experiences, and 49 percent assert that they do not spoil travel experiences.



**Figure 11. Can travel content spoil the traveler's experience?**

When looking through the answers of the question, "What kind of travel experiences do you have when researching through YouTube/Instagram vs. no research," each participant seemed to understand the question differently than the researcher intended them too. Answers vary from benefits of researching before traveling and what they have researched and found, to comparing their experiences and simply saying, "didn't get the question." Even though this is an inefficient result for the question I had intended, there are still useful comments that will help further the relationship analysis.

Finally, a few of the respondents had given their own input on the impacts of travel content on the tourism industry. To name a few notable answers, one mentions "free marketing of destinations," as well as, "I wish they'd partner more with airlines and hotels/Airbnb's. I'd use those coupon codes way more than any

makeup/skincare/clothing item.” Others mention more positive comments on content creating, but also consider the financial expenses of traveling.

#### **8.4 Follower Analysis**

Similar to the influencer questionnaire, noting that the Followers’ survey is open-ended is important. There may have been thoughts that more participants agreed with, but those ideas may have not come to mind when filling out the form. Again, the only aspects noted within this research is the answer that was given in the survey.

Analyses in the following sections are in a descriptive and inductive design, based on the Followers’ questionnaire and previously mentioned consumer concepts in the literature review.

##### **8.4.1 Follower Travel Content Interest**

According to the Follower questionnaire, the content that catches the viewer’s interest most is travel journey tips and personal experiences. The viewers not only want to see what they can experience themselves in those travel journeys, but *how* to experience traveling, knowing that the influencers are experts and “opinion leaders” in that field (Jarboe 2011, p. 34). Referring back to my prior knowledge and observation, these publications are similar to an extensive version of a “customer review.” While watch time had doubled on review videos on “which product to buy” between 2017 and 2018 (Thoma, cited in Cooper 2019) according to the publisher’s experiences and professional opinions, travel content can include “places to visit” or “things to do” and catch the interest of travelers planning future trips. As said before, consumers and travelers look for those who have had real experiences and genuine reviews on places they visit.

This analysis shows that viewers are most interested in the travel content which displays tips and personal events of experienced explorers that travel regularly. Content creating on YouTube and Instagram has given viewers the opportunity to have a better understanding and look of what the travel lifestyle is about. Travel content gives the opportunity for explorers to virtually travel and dive into their interests without needing to travel themselves.

#### **8.4.2 Destination Desire and Travel Inspiration**

The effect on the follower's desire to go to cities of content they view is most towards the affirmative side. This is not just to say that the followers have mostly positive outcomes and cravings to travel to those destinations, but general influences on the viewer's wishes of wanting to go or not. When travelers are taken through a virtual experience of another traveler, they formulate their own opinion on what activities and content at that location they are interested in. The viewer can either take the content as inspiration of destinations to go and activities to do, or as discouragement and lack of interest in the location. The results show that influencers at least have some kind of effect, whether negative or positive, on the followers' desires to visit destinations.

Additionally, nearly half of the respondents have traveled to a destination solely because they had seen it on YouTube and/or Instagram. While the other half have not, a small fraction of those respondents plans to. Several travel influencers live nomadic lives traveling from destination to destination. As they post regularly on social media, followers notice when they are at a new destination and are curious about what they do there. If this catches the follower's interest, that destination can be added to their travel bucket list—a list of goals before one dies.

There are several factors that can play into this possibility, but are not mentioned within the results of the questionnaire. For instance, those who have said "No" on visiting a destination from inspiration on Instagram/YouTube can have a variety of explanations on why, such as not feeling enough inspiration from the content or just not having the accessibility. Those who have said "Not yet, but plan to" seem to be in a situation that they have particular destinations in mind from the travel content, but currently are not in a position where they are able to travel yet (e.g. being a student, income, etc.). Those who have said "Yes" generally stated the exact destination they were inspired to visit.

This analysis clearly shows that half of these followers have already been to these destinations. If they have not, the data still describes that there are those who have noted and plan to visit the destinations at some point in their life. As the travel content on Instagram and YouTube becomes inspiration, this relates to one



of the five phases of a travel experience; the “pre-trip” includes gaining the idea of a destination trip (Clawson & Knetsch, cited in Uysal, Harrill & Woo 2011, p. 100). If the traveler had noted the destination and added the place to their “wish list,” then that becomes the first stage in the travel experience. If the viewer had already been to the location, they had already completed the whole travel experience. The consumer-generated content (CGC) had become the catalyst in the traveler’s decision-making process.

### **8.4.3 Instagram and YouTube for Travel Research**

Most followers use or occasionally use Instagram and/or YouTube as a resource before traveling to a destination. The small proportion that were on the negative spectrum typically use other resources such as Google; this is just in terms of preference. In connection to the previous analyses, travelers use secondary resources to see what there is to do at those destinations, travel tips, and resources (such as transportation and food) within the destination. Referring back to the relationship between the traveler and the Internet, those within the online travel community use these resources as insight for tourism. Again, finding all information necessary before going on a trip is essential for travelers because experiencing is not a “testable” component, nor are products and services tangible (Sigala & Gretzel 2018, p. 89). Viewing CGC and gaining an understanding of these first-hand experiences help people plan future trips—the “pre-trip” stage. However, this does not only influence the first of the five stages. Social media is easily accessible; therefore, travel research can be done while traveling to the site (stage two) and on-site (stage three). Additionally, travel content can be created during the “return trip” and “post-trip” that other users may view as inspiration.

This analysis illustrates the reliability of travel content on YouTube and Instagram. Although the concept of the travel experience or travel journey has been used for several past years, while the concept of travel influencers are new and currently developing, the new concept still connects significantly to the foundation of the travel journey’s five stages. Travel content affects viewers substantially; they can see pictures, watch videos, and go through another traveler’s experiences as research, influencing their choices throughout stages of the travel experience.

#### **8.4.4 Spoiling Travel Experiences**

Nearly half of the respondents claim that travel content cannot spoil the traveler's experience, while opposing argument is debatable and dependent on several factors. When influencers take the viewers through their experiences virtually, this can beg the question of if they may be sharing too much of the activities at the destination, ruining the traveler's experience. These reasons could be because the traveler would already know what to expect—meaning there would be no pleasant surprises—, the viewers have already formulated an opinion based on the influencer's experience—rather than their own—, and if the content creator overhypes the destination, creating high expectations on the traveler and possibly disappointing them because the experience is not as exciting and glamorous as presented on social media. Other cases can include advertizing destinations that are that already have a large population of tourists, overcrowding the location and deteriorating the meaning of immersing into other cultures.

On the other hand, some claim that travel content can benefit other visitors by serving as a travel guide. Numerous influencer content contains not only tourist destinations, activities, and tips, but ways to “travel like a local” as well. A virtual experience through another traveler is immensely different from experiencing the true journey themselves. Viewers cannot taste the food that they see in photos; viewers do not physically participate in activities shown in videos; viewers are not there in person; the whole experience is through looking at a screen. Every individual in general has their own personal views and perspectives; their views can alter if they visit the destination in person, and most importantly, their views change from the influencer perspective to their own. While these influencers possibly travel for a living, may visit places where they have already been, and are used to seeing new cities, another visitor that travels once in a decade is likely to be more excited to finally have their adventurous vacation and take in the experiences as a non-regular traveler. People experience their travel journeys in their own way.

Overall, this analysis shows that travel content spoiling travel experiences is dependent on the viewer, their perspective, and how/what they want to perceive travel content as. Perception can also change by the type of content one sees,

as well as how much information they find. There is one side where they can view it as already knowing what to expect or being disappointed because of expecting something more exciting, and there is another side of viewing the content as ideas on what to do during a travel journey and integrating the advice from other people's experiences into their own trip. This section illustrates that the effects that travel content has on travelers depend on how the viewer perceives the information, such as either spoiling the experience or acting as a reference guide.

## **8.5 Follower, Travel Influencer Connection**

The idea of content creating makes the connection between the follower and the travel influencer quite clear; the influencer would not be recognized as an influencer without their followers, and followers would not have as much travel inspiration, insight, and entertainment without these influencers. The following section focuses on the connection between the two variables using descriptive and inductive design.

### **8.5.1 Content Creating Alone**

In observation of both questionnaire results regarding the influencer's content and the follower's content interest, the top two answers are the exact same: travel journey tips and personal experiences. While creators enjoy documenting their journeys and presenting to their viewers the tactics and knowledge they used, travelers take in the knowledge that they observe when looking at the content. Their viewers not only want to see what they can experience themselves in those travel journeys, but *how* to experience traveling, knowing that the influencers are experts in that field.

Content creating on Instagram allows influencers to gain publicity through a digital platform and create/be a part of an online travel community. Followers benefit in gaining knowledge, encouragement, and amusement. Instagrammers are able to connect with other travelers and followers who may be associated with travel businesses. Content creators are able to interact with other followers through comments and Instagram stories; stories allow users to create polls and post an ask/response box where others can ask the Instagrammer a question, or respond to a topic that the account-holder had named in the story. Creators may not only

connect with their followers, but other travel creators as well. Overall, each benefit each other in a way of exchange in travel knowledge, personal journey stories, and creating an intimate connection with other people with similar interests.

On YouTube, viewers receive recommended videos based on the type of content they had been watching. Hence, if the viewer had most of their interest towards travel content, travel is what they will see on their feed; this is how influencers gain viewers—the algorithm of YouTube; frequency and analytics of what demographics of people see and on which platforms they engage (mentioned in section [6.4.3](#)). Although YouTubers are able to monetize their travel content after a certain number of subscribers and watch hours, the monetization is primarily dependent on their active viewers of their videos and advertisements. As a result, travel YouTube influencers and viewers have a significant win-win: viewers gain insight, entertainment, and inspiration, while the creators feed off the viewers and earn money to spend on equipment needed and travels for the content themselves. Similar to Instagram, an online travel community is created, and other travelers are able to create intimate connections and learn about other cultures directly, regardless of where one is in the world. The creation of travel content on YouTube and Instagram produces a system in which each variable of an influencer and a followers support each other.

### **8.5.2 The Influence**

The connection between traveler viewers and travel influencers has changed the industry dramatically. As social media has become a more common platform for sharing personal travel images, photos, and other information, the media becomes an important resource for tourism experts and trip planners (Yoo & Gretzel, cited in Christou & Gretzel 2016, p. 191). A study by PhoCusWright found that “80 percent of leisure travel buyers were influenced by various types of user-generated content including videos, reviews and blogs in the context of travel purchase decisions” (cited in Christou & Gretzel 2016, p. 191). Additionally, user-generated content are considerations within the decision-making process for 40 percent of trip planners (JupiterResearch, cited in Christou & Gretzel 2016, p. 191). This comes from consumers of the travel industry, including influencers,

enjoying the use of social media as a channel to share their personal experiences. Viewing content creators' postings of their travel lifestyle could serve as a significant part of the decision-making process. Had not these influencers created professional travel content on a regular basis, their content would not entirely be seen as "expertise" and may not make as much of an impact on a traveler's decisions. Influencers creating this type of content as a profession makes the content useful for travel research, as well as giving travelers another resource to help them in the decision-making process.

### **8.5.3 Differing Perspectives**

Those involved with social media content must remember that these messages are communicated through a digital platform. Referring to the communication process, from sender encoding the content into a channel, to the receiver decoding the content from the channel (Kurvinen 2019), followers may interpret the postings in a way that the publisher may not intend them to, nor in the same way that they see the content. As noted in the Influencers' questionnaire analysis, viewers must recognize that creators must go beyond their own extent to truly post *everything* for all viewers to have the same understanding. This can be to the extent of one's personal background. For example, there may be a particular act that the influencer, as a tourist, does in a foreign country that brings up the uncertainty of whether that can be offensive or disrespectful to the culture of that country, while the creator may have failed to explain the context in their content. People must recognize that messages can be interpreted differently depending on background and beliefs. Just like any other messages, photos, or videos one posts on the Internet, creators must be cautious and mindful of what they published. Without clarity and transparency of the travel content, viewers can gain the wrong impression of a destination or culture, or an awful impression of the creator. This analysis explains that since creating content in travel alters the perspective of the viewer, this can create the risk of miscommunication and misinterpretation. (Kurvinen 2019.)

#### **8.5.4 The Social Media Tourism Experience: It's All a Loop**

With an online community of travelers posting photos, videos, information, and personal experiences, viewers are taken through a social media tourism experience (Sigala & Gretzel 2018, pp. 8-9). Creators can make their content more engaging through methods such as Instagram stories and 360 videos for people to see the entire surrounding of the recorder, putting the viewer in a virtual traveling experience. People must recognize that travel influencers are also content viewers and travel consumers. They are able to take the ideas they find online and through others, combine them with their own ideas, and generate more content. They share the resources they have used, and consumers use this information to personalize their own travel experience, which they possibly may post on their social media as well for other viewers to see. That can inspire those viewers to have their own travel experience, and recreate the social media tourism experience loop. This analysis illustrates the on-going and continuously building connections. Not only do influencers have connections with followers, but influencers have connections with other influencers, as for followers with followers.

### **9 Secondary Research: Perspective of Marketing**

Travel content on Instagram and YouTube have raised concerns upon travel business marketers and have pondered the idea of the postings being the content marketing alone. The following section analyzes travel content in a marketing perspective using inductive and descriptive design, as well as a comparative and content analysis approach.

#### **9.1 The Marketer's Concern**

The marketer's goal is generally to project their message out to attract a client, satisfy the consumer's needs, and aim to sustain the relationship with the customer (Kurvinen 2019). Several businesses allow clients to give feedback through a form, whether directly to the company or on rating and review databases such as Yelp and TripAdvisor. However, as travel influencers, content creators not only document their travels and post their experiences on social media, but they also share their stories to a large audience. Creators may answer questions and give

insight on where to go and what to do, as well as suggestions on what *not* to do/where *not* to go. Viewers consider these recommendations reliable, as they come from experienced travelers. This can alter the reputation of the organization much faster than the audience would even think about being associated with that organization (Teare, Bowen & Baloglu 2015, p. 315.) Influencers can impact the viewer's opinion on a tourism business quite positively or negatively without even consuming the business. As a result, keeping a destination's online reputation high has become vital (Inversini, cited in Wang & Pizam 2011, p. 208), and travel companies and destination marketing organizations feel pressured to keep these content creators most satisfied.

This data shows that influencer travel content is a significant element of the travel industry represented on social media and must be recognized as another catalyst or influence for tourism business consumers. The marketing branch within the company's administrative system is no longer the only responsible marketer of the company, but so is the travel content posted on social media.

## **9.2 The Marketer's Reaction**

Marketers have taken note on how the online travel industry has developed. Influencer marketing has become a significant element in social media marketing. In 2016, sixty percent of marketing professionals used social influencers within their marketing campaigns primarily to aim for audiences that are difficult to reach (Kraniak, cited in Sigala & Gretzel 2018, p. 150). Travel companies strategize their influencer marketing campaigns further by thinking critically about who they choose to market their products to. Some base their findings on how much traffic influencer pages have, how many followers/subscribers one has, analytics of their traffic demographics, authenticity of the influencer, and whether their content aligns with their product. They have even noted that micro-influencers (e.g. @nomadasaurus on Instagram) have higher relevance and engagement rates than mega-influencers (e.g. FunForLouis on YouTube), despite the difference in followers (Sigala & Gretzel 2018, p 149). Travel marketers must utilize their budget efficiently and recognize which content creator is the correct channel to reach, interest, and engage the audience they intend.

Other influencer marketing practices include inviting creators to events at touristic places, such as the Sisterhood Circle Retreat event in Puerto Rico and their invitation of YouTuber Jo Franco mentioned in the Influencer questionnaire analysis. AirBnb had also partnered with TheLifeOfJord on YouTube where the creator promoted a special discount link for an AirBnb stay (TheLifeOfJord 2016).

This data shows that marketers have adapted to the evolution of digital marketing and innovatively use travel content as a marketing platform of other travel businesses. Travel influencers are welcoming their involvement with travel businesses in addition to their followers' participation.

### **9.3 Travel Businesses Cannot Control Everything**

Just like any random consumer, travel businesses cannot control the reaction of travel influencers; hence, they cannot stop content creators from talking about their company, unless illegal actions were taken, or a legal contract was signed. Without contracts and official partnerships, travel influencers can be considered passive bystanders, or “consumers that are not in a dialogue with the advertisements that are created through traditional media” (Moriuchi 2015, p. 13). Sponsorships only make the difference for content creators in receiving commission for the advertisement. Otherwise for consumers, saying “This video is sponsored by...” makes the most difference in the fact that the consumer is notified that the creator is being paid to advertise a service or product—which may even deteriorate the authenticity of presenting the product/service to the viewers. Without paid promotions, creators are voluntarily co-creating (or bashing on) the company in free consumer or influencer marketing. In the end, the idea of the creator advertising a business voluntarily is the same as if the creator were earning commission: getting the word out to their viewers. The only difference is that, since unpaid advertisements are not under a contract of positively marketing a brand to encourage viewers to buy a product, creators could potentially be publicizing the disadvantages and unpleasant aspects of a business.

Referring back to digital and social media marketing (section [6.4.2](#)), clients who have technological resources easily in hand allow businesses to stay in contact with their customers and keep a consistent “dialogue.” Although companies can



keep in contact with their consumers, they cannot control the conversation, nor can they control their reactions. Dave Evans and Susan Bratton (2008, p. 132) infer, "Instead of trying to control the conversation (or worse, the participants), you have to change your product or service experience that drives the conversation. This, along with your behavior on the Social Web, is the only element of a social media campaign over which you have full control." This is when the influencer comes in. Because they have a closer connection to their followers that are interested in their content, keeping a dialogue and engagement is easier for them. When the influencer partners with a travel company, positive advertisement is almost inevitable, considering their revenue depends on engagement of the promotion. If the influencer is not having a paid promotion, again, the creator has free reign of controlling the conversation about the business. The content creator then becomes the leader of the discussion, with a large audience and other potential consumers, regarding a business.

This observation shows the power of the travel influencer as a consumer; consumers and producers are no longer such contrasts. Consumers do not only take in the products and services, but can become co-creators through CGC, subconsciously serving as a content marketer for the company. As Moriuchi (2015, p. 14) says, "The consumer is always involved in the production of value." Whether the company is in favor or not, travel creators have the ability to boost a reputation or diminish a reputation.

#### **9.4 The Content Creator as the Marketer**

Digital marketing is a phenomenon that has given travel organizations the ability to market their company internationally and faster than ever. The marketing 4.0 reaches beyond face-to-face communication and has developed to eWOM. This concept has even reached beyond the companies themselves and towards ideas of consumers as marketers. The previous section reveals that consumers have the potential to have the same marketing influence as the producer. As travelers moving from destination to destination, this begs the curiosity of how different content creators are from destination marketing organizations (DMOs), as well as their contribution to social media content marketing and international travel marketing.

### 9.4.1 Honest Guide and Other YouTube Guides vs. Prague.eu

Janek Rubeš and his cameraman friend Honza Mikulka, also known as Honest Guide (2020) on YouTube, create travel videos primarily surrounding Prague and the Czech culture. Their videos are comparable to the tourist website, Prague.eu (Prague 2020).

As described in section [6.4.1](#), DMO websites all have the commonality of promoting the location's culture, tourist activities, package experiences, and other helpful tourist information. Prague.eu's navigation bar has places to visit and see, events to go to, places for food & drink, accommodation, practical guides (transport, important contact information, basics information to know about Prague, and other tourist information), themed guides, and articles about the city. Places are broken down into several subcategories, including architecture, entertainment, and parks. Events are categorized as well into categories such as theatre, festival, music, and exhibitions. Accommodation recommends different hotels, hostels, campsites, and pension houses. Other features include tours, souvenirs, and maps. Prague.eu has enough information for a tourist to travel around the city.

In observation of the Honest Guide videos, the duo presents places to visit in Prague, themed by cool, secret/hidden, abandoned, tourist attractions, romantic, picnic, and best new places. They also included "Instagram spots" for places to take pictures, personally recommended stores to give recognition to smaller businesses, and even several public restrooms rated from one to ten. Honest Guide includes food and drink guides for local Czech food, street foods, restaurants, vegetarian, bars, cafés, and cheap foods. The two create videos with guides on transportation through bus and train, airport transportation, night transportation, and even map websites and public transit mobile applications for visitors to use.

The subject on events was not common in Mikulka and Rubeš's content, but there are videos such as celebrating 100 years of Czechoslovakia, visiting Prague during Christmas, and exploring the city of Karlovy Vary where they went to an International Film Festival located in the Spa Hotel Thermal. Even though they do not speak much about accommodation, they still include a large variety of guides

on where to hear live music, where to party, frequently asked questions, learning basic Czech phrases, exchanging money, Prague on a budget, and several other topics that one may not have even thought of. These guys go beyond the basic elements of a DMO and create videos that would help tourists immensely; their most popular, and definitely most helpful, videos for tourists are how to avoid scams on streets, stores, ATMs, and currency exchange. Honest Guide even spiced up their content by exposing these scammers on camera.

There are numerous other YouTubers that serve as travel guides, such as Mark Wolters of Wolters World (2020) covering sites to visit in Prague, Czech foods, “Don’ts” of visiting Prague, and other tips. Marko and Alex Ayling of the VagaBrothers (2020) have Prague guides including things to do, street art, and exploring Prague like a local. However, travel guides of content creators commonly surround several other cities and countries all around the world, and are scattered in various informational categories, such as traveling with kids and detailed walkthroughs of particular tourist attractions.

The most notable differences between DMOs and the travel guide content are that DMO funding and partnerships usually rely on government resources and tourism companies to make a business of their own (Pike 2008, p. 66). DMOs have a more systematical structure and are navigational resources that provide the most necessary material, such as contact information for health services, the police, embassies, post offices, lost and found, and emergency calls, whereas content creators can control what they post and be the audience’s most personal, virtual travel guide, walking through the city themselves.

Nevertheless, both DMO websites and the YouTube content have the same general end result: providing travel and tourist information. This comparison represents the similarities of DMOs and YouTube content creators that produce travel guides. The video guides can almost be used for the same purposes as DMO websites. With the most concrete and must-know information, the traveler may search through DMOs. Although if one wants more abstract details on traveling to destinations, they may search through travel video content. Overall, this comparison analysis shows that travel content on YouTube markets the touristic destinations and activities, and can give an equivalent amount (or even more) of

beneficial tourist information for travel planners. The data shows that travel content can serve as an easily accessible and highly reliable resource for travel destination research.

#### **9.4.2 More YouTube Vloggers**

Though there are YouTube travel content creators that do not primarily serve as a travel guide with top things to do or transportation to and from the airport, these vloggers still take the viewer into a walkthrough of their travel experiences. They may not title the video “Top 5 Restaurants in Barcelona,” but these creators document their personal experiences through touristic adventures and destinations that DMOs are likely to promote. For instance, Laurence Britton of Loz’s Leisure (2020) filmed his experience swimming with whale sharks in the Philippines, in addition to seeing beautiful wildlife in Malaysia. Alex Collins and Emma Cox of Travel Beans (2020) published their experiences through Zion National Park and created a “24 Hours in NYC” to show travelers what they can do in the large city of New York in one day. Karl Watson (2020) is a backpacker that has created full-length documentaries of his trips to Egypt and Jordan, New Zealand, India, and several other countries. While the videos are more personal for the creator, the travel information that is embedded within these videos is a perfect resource for travel planners. Rather than saying, “Go to Abu Simbel in Egypt, it’s a great place,” Watson documented exactly how he was able to *arrive* at the destination. The Travel Beans have their Hostel Travel Series where they not only filmed their trip to multiple different cities in the United Kingdom, but they also showed their viewers their means of transportation, places they ate at, and what staying at a hostel is like. Information on hostels is especially useful for new travelers who want to travel on a budget. While “Top 5” and short, direct travel guide videos are beneficial for quick and easy travel research, vlogs can market and give a massive amount of information on destinations, as well as show the viewers what a travel itinerary could look like.

#### **9.4.3 Social Media Content, Travel, and International Marketing**

As Instagram is a minimalistic social media platform, travel influencers do not typically give out as much information as YouTubers to count as a concrete travel

guide. However, the images and the stories that users post still serve as an inspirational aspect and can pander to the audience's interest. Though they are not as comparable to DMOs, Instagram is still a channel for social media content marketing and international travel marketing.

Referring to section [6.4.2](#), social media marketing is the practice of expanding marketing systems on social media platforms, including content within mobile apps, social networking websites, and review and recommendation websites (Chaffey & Smith 2017, pp. 225-227). Content marketing is the act of publishing content that can relate to other consumers and is associated with a brand (Kotler, Kartajaya & Setiawan 2016, p. 84). Content creators on Instagram, as well as YouTube, are able to have the same effect on the brand of traveling. Instagram and YouTube travel content creators can reach hundreds of thousands of consumers and create the viral effect of one consumer sharing their experiences with another, inspiring a consumer to travel to the same destination, and continue the cycle through social media. When influencers post their incredible journeys on Instagram or YouTube, they are making the destinations known to a large audience and consequently influencing their followers' thoughts on traveling to the destination as well. Creators typically post highlights of their trips, such as tourist attractions, food and beverages, and beautiful views. The caption on these photos and videos can range from short and sweet, to a detailed story of their own.

For instance, Daniel Noll and Audrey Scott of Instagram [@uncornered\\_market](#) post a few short paragraph descriptions of their photos about where they are, what the picture may symbolize, and their personal experiences (Uncornered Market 2020). They have posted different foods from Bhutan, breathtaking views of Cordillera Huayhuash of Peru, and local people of different countries. Melissa of [@girleatworld](#) has a simple and sweet theme of presenting food in a colorful and cute way; her photos consist of her holding food, typically a small snack or dessert, amongst an eye-catching background. She usually captions her photos with her story about the destination as well as the foods at the destination. Though the idea is minimalistic, this can capture the viewers' attention to the two most important elements of her page: (1) yummy foods eaten at a (2) beautiful destination. Murad Osmani (Muradosmani 2020) has his [#followmeto](#) theme

where videos and photos are captured in the perspective of his wife grabbing his hand and leading him to beautiful places. This puts the viewer in his point of view where someone is taking them to a gorgeous place, followed by a short description of the destination.

The publication of these profiles and other travel influencer Instagrams are clear and apparent examples of social media and content marketing. Whether partnered with a company or not, these users are producing consumer-generated content on a social media platform (Instagram), presenting the content to a large audience of similar interest: travel. They are making these destinations known and influencing their decisions on whether or not going to the destination is a considerable choice. These reasons apply to YouTube travel content creators as well. Again, both travel company marketers and travel content marketers have the same general end result: providing travel information.

While the content on the two medias are counted as social media content marketing, international and travel marketing are implemented as well. As stated in section [6.4.4](#), international marketing is defined as expanding marketing practices beyond national borders, advertising to more than one country (Charles & Anderson 2016, p. 3), and travel marketing is the numerous marketing strategies used by tourism companies to promote travel. Social media gives users the ability to reach beyond borders for people around the world to see their content. These creators are able to influence a worldwide audience and promote international or domestic travel. Several of these influencers have their own personal blog as well, which can be another factor of impacting their audience. However, this research focuses primarily on Instagram and YouTube. To put all concepts together, YouTube and Instagram influencers are their own company as content creators and are the travel marketers. They advertise internationally through their social media content.

This data shows that travel content is used as another form of marketing the travel and tourism brand. These influencer's content creates a huge impact within the industry by serving as another marketing channel. While travel company marketers are strictly based on their own business and typically promote the optimistic views of travel and their company, content creators market their own experiences

within destinations and are expected to promote the true reality of a traveler. The content not only promotes travel, but real-life, empathetic knowledge and the nomadic lifestyle as well.

## **10 Quick Research Analysis Summary**

The primary and secondary research were able to give a massive amount of information. In review, the research data is summarized as follows. Primary research data analyses conclude that, for content creators, creating travel content on Instagram and YouTube:

- Impacts the influencer directly by being able to document and publish their travels as a lifestyle, while also having an audience to share their travel advice and serve as a global guide and educator.
- Attracts those interested in the traveling industry and creates a whole online community. Creating content builds another branch of the travel-tourism industry through a social media platform, allowing influencers to make a variety of connections, whether they are personal or business-organization-related.
- As a full-time occupation has the consequence of carrying the weight of time-consumption and pressure of expectation in high quality content of a creator's journey, on top of the strenuous effort on traveling and planning by themselves.
- Affects the influencer in a way that they are a large, public brand; regardless of how authentic they wish to be, they are obligated to abide by regulations and moral of what they post.

For followers:

- Content creating on YouTube and Instagram has given viewers the opportunity to have a better understanding and look of what the travel lifestyle is about. Travel content gives the opportunity for explorers to virtually travel and dive into their interests without needing to travel themselves.

- As followers note destinations they see on YouTube and Instagram, the CGC inspiration becomes the first of the five phases of a travel experience, the “pre-trip,” and becomes the catalyst in a traveler’s decision-making process.
- The content’s reliability and connection to the foundation of the travel journey’s five stages affects viewers substantially; they can see pictures, watch videos, and go through another traveler’s experiences as research, influencing their choices throughout stages of the travel experience.
- The effects that YouTube and Instagram travel content has on a traveler’s experience depend on how the viewer perceives the information, such as either spoiling the experience or acting as a reference guide.

The primary data was able to illustrate the connection between the follower and the influencer, and results in the following:

- The creation of travel content on Instagram and YouTube produces a system which each variable of an influencer and a follower support each other, from gaining travel insight and inspiration, to earning money and creating a massive online community.
- Since creating content in travel alters the perspective of the viewer, this can create the risk of miscommunication and misinterpretation from the publisher.
- Travel content creates on-going and continuously building connections; not only do influencers have connections with followers, but influencers have connections with other influencers, as do followers with followers.

The secondary data assisted in finding the relationship between the influencer and marketers. These analyses conclude that:

- As influencer travel content is a significant element of the travel industry represented on a digital platform, the marketing branch of company is no longer the only responsible marketer of the business, but so is the travel content posted on social media.



- Marketers have adapted to the evolution of digital marketing and innovatively use travel content as a marketing platform of other travel businesses. Travel influencers welcome their involvement with travel businesses in addition to their followers' participation.
- With the power of the travel influencer as a consumer, consumers and producers are no longer such contrasts. These consumers become co-creating content marketers through CGC, having the natural ability to boost a reputation or diminish a reputation.

The secondary data also supports the idea of the travel content creator as the marketer. As a result:

- Because both DMO websites and YouTube content have the same general end result—providing travel and tourist information—while marketing the touristic destinations and activities, the YouTube travel content can give an equivalent amount (or even more) of beneficial tourist information for travel planners.
- The influencer's travel content creates a huge impact within the industry by serving as another marketing channel. They market their own experiences within destinations and are expected to promote the true reality of a traveler.

A sole connection between the marketing perspective and the follower is not made because this study is surrounded by travel content of influencers; therefore, the influencer cannot entirely be excluded from the marketing and follower relationship. Using the analyses that were taken from the research, a final connection between all three variables can be established.

## **11 Overall Connection – Assorted Analysis**

The following sections implement the relationship between the viewer, the content creator, and the marketing perspective into three different models: the purchase funnel, the social feedback cycle, and newly formulated model of influencer travel content applied within the social feedback cycle. This analysis is an inductive and narrative design.

## 11.1 The Purchase Funnel

The purchase funnel is a model that illustrates the most basic purchase process of a consumer: awareness of the product, to the consideration of whether they will benefit from the product, to the point-of-purchase (Figure 12) (Evans & Bratton 2012, p. 40).

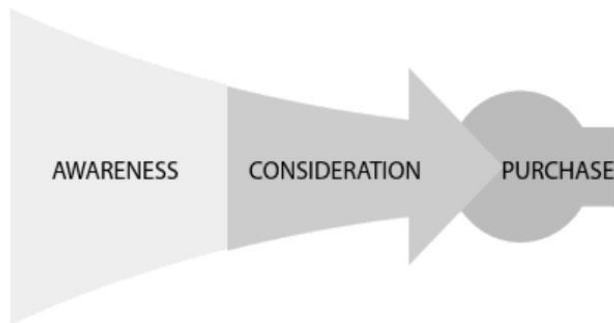


Figure 12. The Purchase Funnel (Evans & Bratton 2012, p. 40)

For instance in the travel industry, a destination is marketed to the public. The first stage of the funnel, awareness, is how the consumer hears about the destination—the discovery of the destination’s existence. This can be whether the person saw the

place on the Internet, heard about the region from someone they know, or had other secondary resources. When the destination catches the consumer’s interest, they move on to the next stage of consideration. This stage may include researching more about what there is at the destination, looking through reviews and feedback on the destination, looking at prices on accommodation and transportation, and contemplating whether the cost of the trip is worth the benefit (Kurvinen 2019). Finally, the consumer makes their final purchasing decision.

The most significant stage is the awareness and the consideration. Looking at the previous examples listed, there are two key items: awareness from Internet resources, and consideration from reviews and feedback. As established before, consumer reviews and feedback from online and social media resources are an impactful element when consumers make their purchasing decisions. Referring back to section [6.5](#), purchasing a product for the first time can be risky. Consumers seek for personal resources and information about that product because they are considerably more credible than advertisements; a true and whole evaluation of a travel product only occurs after consumed or experienced (Zeithaml, cited in Teare, Bowen & Baloglu 2015, p. 314). When travel content on social media, such as Instagram and YouTube, is applied, this influences the decision immensely. As stated in the Lodging Interactive study, “79 percent of the respond-

ents considered a social media site trustworthy when it provided personal recommendations” (cited in Teare, Bowen & Baloglu 2015, pp 314-315). Similar to the implementation of social media within the five stages of the travel experiences, travel content can be used as another reliable resource and act as a catalyst within the process of purchasing.

However, this may raise the question of what role the marketer plays in this purchase funnel. There are multiple different scenarios of where they can be inserted. The first stage of awareness can appear in a variety of ways from social media; the consumer may have discovered the destination through travel content—a source from the influencer or other CGC—, general destination marketing—a source from the company—, or influencer marketing—a collaboration of the company’s marketing campaign through the influencer. As for the consideration phase, the consumer could have used a mixture of these resources as well. However, if the first two stages were not related to any type of business marketing campaign and solely on influencer travel content, the consumers would still ultimately be in contact with a travel company associated of what was marketed. In other words, the creator was “doing the work for them” in travel marketing.

Thinking further about the purchase funnel, the process does not stop. There must be a form of post-purchase and a possible circulation for the situation of the purchaser recommending the product to others. This advances the process into the social feedback cycle.

## **11.2 The Social Feedback Cycle**

The social feedback cycle is the extended version of the purchase funnel that includes post-purchase opinions based on the expected performance and actual outcome of the product or service. This potentially puts word-of-mouth (WOM) into play, bringing a consumer back into the consideration stage of the purchase

funnel (Figure 13) (Evans & Bratton 2012, p. 45). Following the purchase stage is the phase of use, forming an opinion, and the consumer’s talk about the product

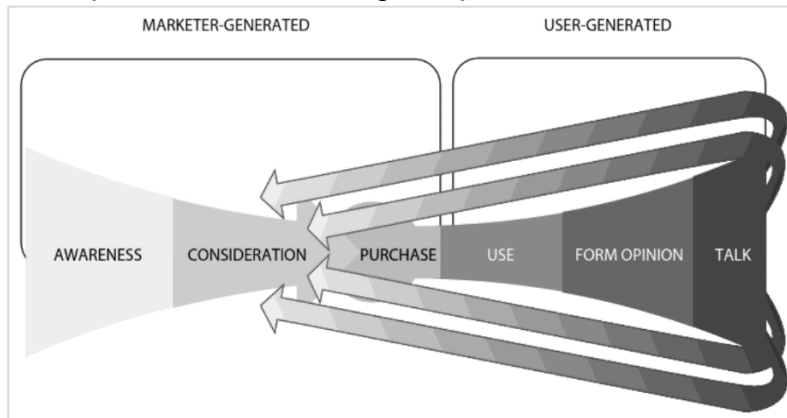


Figure 13. The Social Feedback Cycle (Evans & Bratton 2012, p. 45)

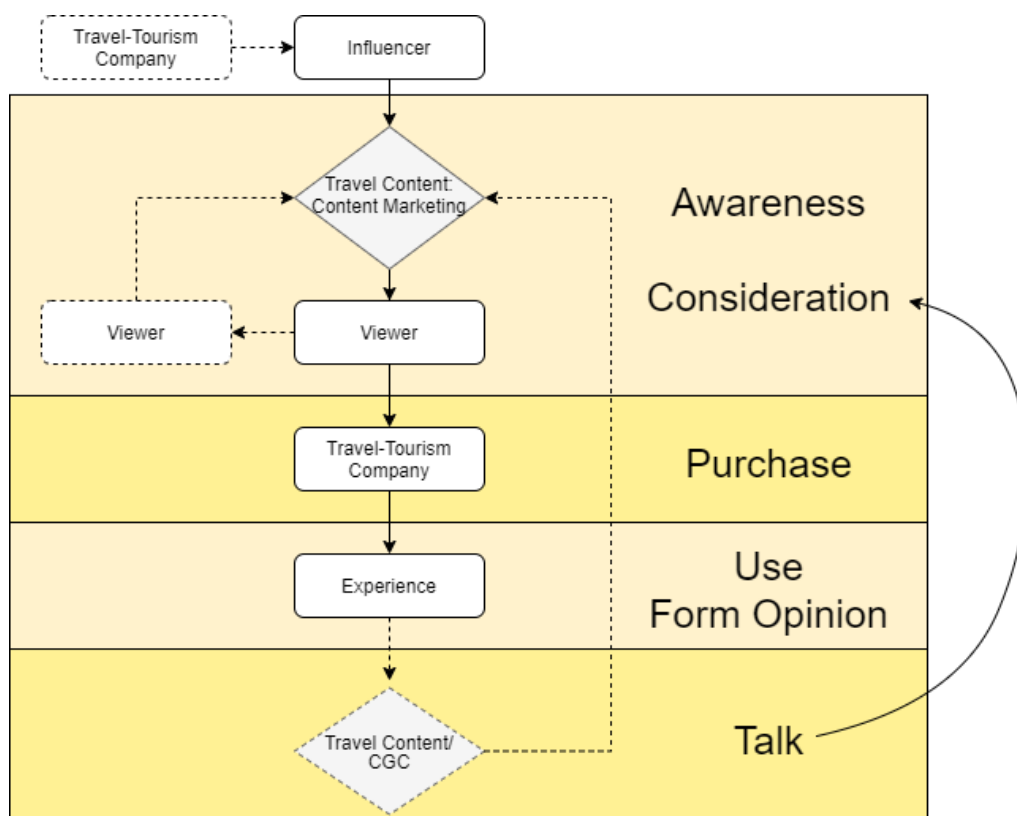
or service—destination in this case. Of course, when the discussion surrounds a negative experience, other people’s consideration of purchase will likely decrease.

When social media is

involved, the travel content on Instagram and YouTube is where “talk” is done, as Evans and Bratton (2012, p. 45) explain where “customer-driven social media” appears through the most trusted source of eWOM. Mentioned in the Influencer questionnaire analysis (section [8.2.1](#)), travelers enjoy documenting their trips on social media. Therefore, influencer travel content on the two media platforms are likely to be inserted within the phases of “talk” and “consideration.” When creators publish descriptive content, they may be asked “Would you recommend this destination as a place to visit?” As influencers with travel expertise reputation, their answers have the capability of powering or demoting the destination (Evans & Bratton 2012, p. 138). This is how their dialogue with the consumer engages upon the business. Travel content on Instagram and YouTube is a large influence within the purchase funnel and the post-purchase phases of the consumer; then, again, the client ultimately makes a purchase from the travel business. The content creator is participating in travel and content marketing as a part of the production process of the business.

### 11.3 New Model: The Social Feedback Cycle of Influencer Travel Content

To understand the relation between the social feedback cycle and the influencer travel content, a new model is created by the author of this research. Figure 14 illustrates a side-to-side view of the process. The right side shows the steps of the social feedback cycle, while the left side shows the travel content influence of



**Figure 14. The Social Feedback Cycle of Influencer Travel Content**

the cycle. Starting at the top is the influencer; “Travel-Tourism Company” indicates the potential of partnership between the two. The content creator then produces and publishes travel content, thus whether partnered with a company or not, they are content marketing the travel-tourism industry. Soon enough, the content gains a viewer; this viewer could either be in the awareness stage, meaning they had just discovered the destination through the content, or the consideration phase, meaning they already know about the destination and are curious about learning more. The second viewer box is the potential of the content being shared to their peers and them becoming another viewer. With the popularity and credibility of travel content on social media, the content increases the likeliness of bringing the consumer to the marketer.

Following the viewer is their decision on making the purchase. These viewers recognize the influence that the content creator had on their choice of travel. Additionally, those in the Followers’ questionnaire even noted the content as “free marketing of destinations,” and wish for influencers to partner more with travel businesses—rather than random products—to obtain discounts or benefits (Followers’ Questionnaire 2020). If the consumer rejects the purchase, the cycle for

that person either stops, or they continue research until they change their opinion. When the buying decision is positive, the consumer moves on to the “Travel-Tourism Company” sector where they complete their purchase with a travel business. Next, they go through their travel experience, or “use,” and formulate their opinions.

After the consumer’s trip, the traveler reflects on their experiences and have the potential of posting about their journey on social media, creating consumer-generated content. With travel influencers, creating content on Instagram and YouTube is much more likely. This, then, becomes the new travel marketed content within the cycle.

## **12 Case Study: Brady Trautman of SV Delos**

Sailing SV Delos is a YouTube channel, turned to a YouTube show, about a crew of four people who dropped what they had at home to sail across the ocean to several destinations. The past seven years, they have sailed to New Zealand, Australia, the Philippines, and multiple other islands (The Delos Project 2020). Their trips are 100 percent funded by their viewers and contributors on Patreon, a website where people are able to donate money to support others for a possible exchange in benefits. Part of their project includes inviting viewers and having lottery drawings to sail with them, as well as participate in activities with the crew such as diving. With the concept of the travel content not only being about the creators’ journey, but bringing other viewers to participate with them as well, Sailing SV Delos is a suitable and unique case study. These creators have direct and in-person relationships with their patrons.

A semi-structured interview with Brady Trautman, one of the founding brothers of the SV Delos project, was conducted on March 20, 2020. The questions brought up the topic of the countries other winning crew members were from, demographics about his viewers, partnerships, experiences, and feedback from his viewers and crew member winners ([Appendix III](#)). The questions were subject-specific but allowed additional input for the study. Trautman was also generous to provide contact information of three other past winners to the interviewer for an open-ended, semi-structured email interview about their experiences on Delos

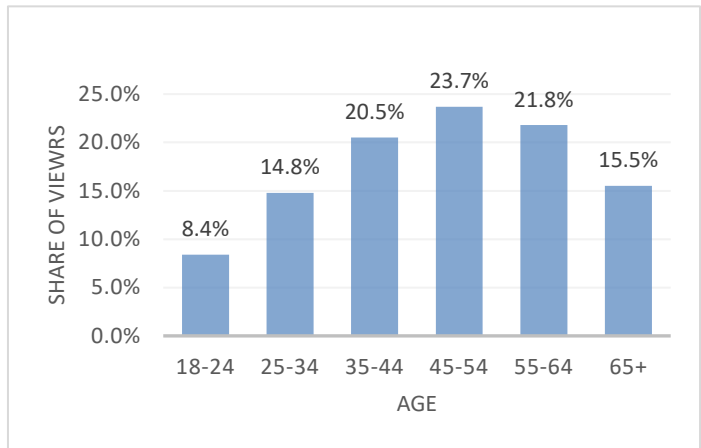
([Appendix IV](#)). Respondents happened to offer additional resources, such as their own blogs, about their experiences. This data provides a detailed example of how travel content creating has impacted the creators, their traveler viewers, and a bit of the marketing perspective.

### **12.1 Trautman's Interview**

Before creating videos, the Delos crew began as a travel blog on Blogspot to keep connection and updates for their friends and families (The Delos Project 2020). For years, they had no clue what large community was going to build from SV Delos. Later, they began creating travel videos of their sails. On January 2014, the Delos crew was in Thailand, preparing to cross the Indian Ocean. They had just started their Patreon account, which now has five different levels of payment set up per video they post (Sailing SV Delos 2020a). The more the patron is willing to donate per video, the more benefits they receive. During their first week with Patreon, the crew had already received about \$800 per video. In that moment, they knew that their project had more potential than they thought. The crew knew that if they put in the hard work and stay consistent with their series, they would gain more supporters and grow their community.

Now, about 55 people total have been on Delos, all from various countries such as South Africa, Canada, Philippines, and more, all adding up to about eight countries. The Sailing SV Delos series is most popular in the United States, followed by Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, and New Zealand. According to their YouTube analytics, 90 percent of their viewers are males. However, the data may be skewed, due to that their series is often watched through Smart Television. Smart Television allows users to broadcast videos, shows, and movies on a larger screen, commonly for viewers as a family. As for age range, 8.4 percent of the viewers are years 18 to 24, 14.8 percent of them are ages 25 to 34, 20.5

percent of them are 35 to 44, 23.7 percent of them are 45 to 54, 21.8 percent are 55 to 64, and 15.5 percent are over the age of 65 (Figure 15).



**Figure 15. Sailing SV Delos viewers, by age**

In 2015, the crew brought their first patron from the Philippines on Delos. Before meeting their guests in person, they typically video call them to have an idea of what personality they have.

The crew makes sure that ex-

pectations are known prior to setting sail; this includes cleaning, cooking, fishing, and camera work. If the guest agrees, that alone already speaks plenty of their personality and adventurous desire to be on a boat with people they only know through YouTube videos, and put in the same work they do.

From several years of bringing guests on Delos, they have created one of their own customary way of getting to know them: going out for a few drinks—that is, of course, if the guest does not mind alcohol. Going out prior to departure in any way is an effective approach to breaking down the guest’s barriers and understanding who they are as a person. This can set the excitement and motivation for the sailors to start their journey.

Because room on the boat is limited, the Delos crew can only have up to two guests at a time. To have more people participating in their project, they created the opportunity for guests to join them in diving activities in the Caribbean for a week trip. In the end, 18 patrons came to take part. After booking hotel rooms and exploring the Caribbean Sea, all travelers made friends and a special bond amongst each other.

Several crew members, including their guest crews, are trying to live on a boat full-time. By taking trips on Delos, they are able to learn and move forward in deciding if the nomadic sailing life is truly for them.



### **12.1.1 Feedback from Their Viewers**

Although Sailing SV Delos occasionally receives negative side-comments on their series, negative feedback in general is not common for them. One occasion, the crew had an introduction song in a video, then changed the song or took the introduction out in the following videos. In response, their followers were upset; “They are so passionate about it that, if you change a little thing about *their* show, they’re like ‘This isn’t the same, it’s totally different,’ and although the comments may come across as negative, I wouldn’t consider those negative at all” (Trautman 2020). The followers’ responses were more of constructive feedback, as opposed to negative feedback. Constructive feedback helps the creators know what works efficiently for them and what does not. In this case, a small gesture of putting an introduction song helped set the Delos mood. Their feedback signified their passion towards the Delos series.

Most of the responses the crew receives are quite positive. Some have told them that they have inspired them to “change their life for the better,” create more productive habits, and do activities that they are passionate about. People have expressed their gratitude towards the Delos crew showing the world that doing the “impossible” is possible.

### **12.1.2 Sponsors and Partnerships**

Although the Delos project is completely crowd-funded and do not create advertisement for compensation, they do have sponsorships with companies such as GoPro. Also mentioned in section [8.2.2](#), the GoPro company was able to provide Trautman and his crew a special link which the crew gives to their audience as a resource, considering his viewers often ask about the cameras they use during their cruises. In return, the Delos crew receives free GoPro gear, as well as some convenient compensation if a consumer buys a GoPro through their special link. The most significant benefit they receive from the sponsorship is the supply of the GoPro gear. Although they have received offers, the Delos crew do not directly advertise solely for money because they want to keep the show’s authenticity.

In terms of destination marketing, Trautman acknowledged the impact of their Caribbean diving trip on the Grenada island: “Because we promoted it so well and we kind of made it a competition, it got a lot of publicity and it put Grenada in the sailing world” (Trautman 2020). People recognized that the island is a fantastic place to dive; several of those who joined their trip have even returned to Grenada. Additionally, the Delos crew have partnered with a dive shop in southern Brazil and agreed to film the dive shop and their experiences there to transform their adventures into an episode. In exchange, the crew was able to dive for free, and the diving company gained publicity to hundreds of thousands of viewers.

## **12.2 Email Interview with Past Winning Crew Members**

Feedback from their past winning crew members have been quite positive. As long as the guests meet the expectations of the work onboard, the Delos crew covers all living costs, excluding flights to departing and arriving ports (Trautman 2020). The three members were asked about the description of their trip, if they went to locations they have never been before, experience description and how the sail impacted them, and if they would go on Delos again.

### **12.2.1 Lisa Hopf**

Lisa Hopf boarded Delos in Cape Town on March 2017. She and the crew traveled to Namibia, Saint Helena Island, Ascension Island, and around Brazil. After arriving at Ilhabela, Brazil, they sailed upwards to Recife, and even stopped at several islands including Flamengo Bay and Ilha Grande on the way. On December 2017, Hopf hopped offboard in Recife. She was happy to visit all new locations and countries she had never been to.

As a licensed sailor, Hopf knew the general idea of what to expect when setting sail. However, living in a small space for almost a year and sailing long distance with multiple people was a new and enjoyable experience. “I became much more conscious about necessary and unnecessary things in life,” she expresses. After sailing, her responsibilities and contribution to the world is clearer. With limited resources on the boat, such as warm showers, food, internet, first aid, and even people surrounding her, she knows not to take anything for granted.

Hopf was able to feel more in touch with the world and her religion, as she is a believer in Jesus Christ. Seeing His breathtaking and incredible creations of land with her own eyes has inclined her to protect the Earth more. She is more conscious of how she spends her money and “started to see [her] ‘richness’ in experiences, adventures, and people [she] knows, etc. instead of money” (Hopf 2020). Hopf has even learned new skills in editing videos/cinematography, boat repairing, and how to maintain the boat’s durability. While she is still helping Delos with their episodes, she has improved her skills in making faster decisions and taking risks. Hopf stated she would definitely sail on Delos again, and actually planned to. She expressed, “This boat and the main crew has become part of my life and it’s like home to me” (Hopf 2020). After her trip, she has stayed connected with the main Delos crew.

Not only has Hopf gained new perspective on the outside world, but internally as well. Reading a blog post that she had provided, she discusses vulnerability. On Delos, there are cameras *everywhere* that film *everything*. Remember, Trautman mentioned they want to keep their authenticity. Therefore, anything can be put on an episode—even embarrassing moments—because they want to show the reality of being on the ship for an extended period. As he explained, each crew member must have the responsibility of holding the camera and filming, including themselves. Hopf explains that she was never fond of watching herself on camera; she felt awkward, embarrassed, and did not feel like the videos ever reflected the image she had of herself. Although she became more comfortable in front of a camera after months of filming, she still had an uneasy feeling that a significant amount of her life was broadcasted online all at once. She states, “The image other people might have had of me before Delos was a different one than after they have followed me on this journey... and I am scared of this new image of myself. In general, it scares me to show me being human. Being natural. Being me... everybody can watch, judge and criticize me/us because of what they see on social media” (Hopf 2017). Vulnerability is a scary part of life. Although insecurities are one of the most difficult struggles in being human, Lisa Hopf gained a new perspective. “I wanna use this power of vulnerability to show that I am imperfect and to become confident in it. Because as Onora O’Neill said: ‘If you make yourself vulnerable to the other party, then that is very good evidence that

you're trustworthy and have confidence in what you are saying.” (Hopf 2017). Hopf was able to take the advice and wisdom she had received and use the power of vulnerability as a way of trust, understanding, and faith.

### **12.2.2 Dave Levine**

Dave Levine sailed on Delos from March 17 to 21 of 2019. He and the crew departed from Saint Maarten and traveled to Saba Island, Virgin Gorda of the British Virgin Islands, and ended in Tortola—all of which he had never been to. Overall, his experience was delightful. Since he had watched their series multiple times, he already had the idea of who each person was, and was happy to see that their online presence is just as they are in person. The Delos crew welcomed him in for a new adventure.

Levine has been a long-time patron of the SV Delos project. After binge watching the series for over a year, he had felt a “deep, unmet need for adventure, change, and new experiences” (Levine 2020). Though purchasing a boat and setting sail around the world was a large step, he decided to take on scuba diving and became certified. Soon enough, he received word that he won the crew contest.

Since his trips on Delos, he participated in more diving, went to a sailing school in Grenada, and dove more in Tulum, Mexico down in the caves and cenotes of the Yucatán Peninsula. If Levine had the chance to sail with the Delos crew again, he would “drop everything” and get on the boat. As a man of 60 years old, his “exposure to Sailing SV Delos came at just the right time in [his] life, and has been a huge influence in steering [him] towards adventure and travel” (Levine 2020). Levine cares deeply about the crew, and will continue to follow and support them throughout their journey.

### **12.2.3 Paul Carroll**

Paul Carroll hopped on Delos in the Tenerife, Canary Islands on November 12, 2019 for an 18-day trip. He and the crew sailed on a 2800-mile (~4500km) passage to Antigua—also the longest passage Delos has ever made. Never having been in the Canary Islands, the crew was able to tour around, drive up to the

volcano, and dive in the Canaries. Even though he has been to Antigua, that was 45 years ago when he was a child.

Initially, Carroll was concerned about the age between him, the main crew, and the past winners, as he is in his 50s. Shortly after boarding Delos, the worry about “fitting in” ceased, and he soon was at ease and reassured by the crew. They had described him and another crew member, Jayde, as the “chilliest crew.” As experienced sailors, they knew that the key in sailing was to get along with others and to have a good attitude. They knew that not only should sailors prepare for exciting adventures, but the feeling of being trapped and isolated in an ocean as well. Although Carroll had sailed throughout his life along coastlines and short trips, he was still able to knock something off his bucket list: sailing across the ocean. In the end, he is “calmer, more focused, and more reflective than [he] used to be” (Carroll 2020). Even though he already knew the handiness skills of a sailboat, he was still able to learn more about himself and the person he is.

To document his journey and keep his wife updated at home, Carroll created a travel log of daily letters to his wife. In his passage of Day 9, he explained how he progressed being used to living on Delos, from the rocking of the boat, to the limited activities to do (Carroll 2019). Eventually, he was able to make use of his surroundings and did not notice the rocking of the boat as much. Carroll was counting the days and sadly enough, his trip came to an end. Delos has a kind and knowledgeable crew that keeps their boat well-equipped and cared for. Carroll expresses, “I would island hop or cross an ocean with any of them again” (2020).

### **12.3 Case Study Analysis**

The Sailing SV Delos project exemplifies the connection between the three variables of creators, viewers, and their marketing position. The following sections analyze the relationship through a descriptive design.

#### **12.3.1 Impact on the Crew**

Brady Trautman and his crew receive a substantial amount of support for Delos. Although the crew initially had no intention to create a show out of their journeys,

their travel videos still conveniently resulted in a growing audience. Documenting their journeys no longer became only a personal portfolio, but a vlogging lifestyle for the world to see. The Delos crew happened to gain supporters who were willing to donate their money and allow them to continue their journey. Consequently, the crew created a large, passionate community of travelers, sailors, and adventurers.

Creating the Delos project, the crew is able to take other patrons along with them throughout their journey. With the sailing vessel carrying over 50 people total, the crew was able to build multiple new connections with diverse people from around the world. Trautman (2020) even stated in the Influencer questionnaire, "We are brought together by the YouTube episodes we create." The power of the Internet aided the crew from having virtual trips for viewers to in-person adventures. Delos has helped all crew members, including patron guests, to know what living on a boat is like.

As Sailing SV Delos is a YouTube show, the crew must spend several hours editing their lengthy videos. Although the time-consumption can be a burden to several content creators, the Delos crew manages to assign specific roles and responsibilities to work their time frame efficiently. As Trautman and another crew member (private) stated in the questionnaire, they avoid publishing content that can cause issues, such as political debate and mental health. In the end, the time is worth the work because they are not only sailing for themselves, but to inspire others as well.

This analysis demonstrates the connection among the Influencer questionnaire analysis, and the justification of how travel content creating impacts the creator. In section [8.2](#), there are four main explained categories: personal experiences, meeting new people, setbacks and obligations, and post limitations. Exemplifying each conclusion, the Sailing SV Delos content allows the crew to publish their documentaries to share their travels to an audience; their content created a large community branching from the travel industry through sailing; creating content as a living, they have time managed and organized their everyday schedule towards filming and editing; and the crew has kept caution of the unethical content posted.

One of the most unique and rewarding aspects of creating content is that their returns help all crew members make a life-changing decision of whether they want to live on a boat full-time or not.

### **12.3.2 Impacts on their Viewers**

In connection to the Followers' questionnaire analysis, there are four explained categories: travel content interest, destination desire and travel inspiration, travel research, and spoiling travel experiences. Travel content interest emphasizes the most common answers of personal experiences; the Sailing SV Delos series surrounds the crew's experiences. Not only has the content allowed their viewers to see what traveling by boat is like, but allowed some to tag along to have a real experience. Inspired by the travel content, the concept of viewers voluntarily signing up to travel with the Delos crew is a real example of this being a "pre-trip" phase and influencing the traveler's decision-making; registering for a trip with the crew to sail to specific locations is already a closed and done decision. As a crew member winner, the Delos crew is with the patron every step of the five travel experience stages; the amount of trust on travel and sailing knowledge must be substantial for a viewer to live on a boat and travel with people they only know through the travel video content. As for spoiling travel experiences, there is no data proving that any experiences were spoiled by watching the travel content, but rather inspiration in doing activities along the lines of what the Delos crew do on a regular basis.

Although, the Followers' questionnaire cannot reflect well of the impacts upon the viewers who were able to travel *with* the creators. After Trautman's interview, the message is quite clear that the Delos crew receive a majority of positive comments and appreciation in their inspiring show. Their audience have expressed gratefulness towards their encouragement and motivations to change their habits to create a better life for themselves. As for the patrons who sailed with the crew, even though they were obligated to do various types of work as a sailor and as a YouTuber, some guests may not have ever done a particular job and ended up obtaining new skills. However, no one can explain the patrons' thoughts and feelings of their Delos journey but the patrons themselves.

Lisa Hopf learned incredibly valuable lessons about her external environment and her inner self throughout the nine months at sail. She is more conscious of what is truly necessary in life, sees the world differently through the lens of her religion and spirituality, has new skills, and learned to look at a personal struggle in a strengthening perspective.

60 year-old Dave Levine's four-day trip welcomed him to places he had never been to and to meet people he had always looked up to—the same people who motivated him to take on the adventure of a scuba diver certification. After his Delos journey, he was inspired to keep his momentum going in diving and sailing in several different locations.

Paul Carroll, 51, was put on an 18-day trip which he was able to experience the Delos crew's longest passage to a location he had not been to since a child. Despite his initial worry about the generation gap between him, the main crew, and past winning members, he created new bonds and learned more about the person he is. Carroll adapted to the sailing lifestyle and made the best of what little was surrounding him.

This analysis shows that the effects of Sailing SV Delos goes beyond the impacts on viewers as travel influencers and connects with their viewers by heart. Regardless of how old one is or their length of journey, the Delos crew is able to give their viewers an experience they could not have imagined. Sailing SV Delos is not just a show to watch; the content is filled with people who want to give back to their supporters and allow them to experience the adventures that they go through.

### **12.3.3 Impacts as a Marketer**

There are three examples discussed in Trautman's interview: GoPro, Grenada, and a dive shop in Brazil. Although the Delos crew's partnership with GroPro is clearly a benefit for the supply of the crew and the marketing of GoPro, this company is not travel-related. However, their negotiation with the diving company in Brazil is a clear example of their use in content marketing on social media (YouTube). This gives travelers ideas of where to go for scuba diving as an outdoor tourist activity. The audience has the ability to see how the diving company



operates and what opportunities they provide to their customers. Additionally, the idea can be seen as a win-win-win situation; the Delos crew receives free dives, the company gains publicity, and the viewer receives recommendations. Throughout this episode, the Delos crew is using eWOM to communicate with their viewers, while the diving company is dependent on the crew's co-creation in digital marketing; again, the consumer and producer are no longer such contrasts.

These circumstances are the same for the Caribbean diving trip at the Grenada island. Not only did promoting the diving trip help gain publicity as a tourist activity, but the island was advertised as a whole. People visited and returned. Dave Levine even mentioned going to Grenada for a sailing school.

Moreover, Sailing SV Delos exemplifies the similarities to destination marketing organizations. The crew provides information to their viewers on where they are able to do different water/outdoor activities, what doing these activities at certain locations is like, and real views on what one can see below the surface. They travel market their experience internationally to their viewers. Not only is the Delos crew marketing the lifestyle of traveling, but country/island hopping by boat, a unique way of living.

### **13 Conclusion and Future Research**

Overall, this study answers the three research questions by covering:

- Instagram and YouTube travel content impact on each the creator, the follower, and the marketing perspective.
- The relationship on travel content with the creator and the follower.
- The relationship on travel content with the creator and the marketing role.
- The overall relationship on travel content with the creator, the follower, and the marketing perspective.
- An example of these analyses with case study Sailing SV Delos.

Travel content on these two platforms has transformed the lives of the creator by allowing them to make a hobby into a way of living. Although being a full-time

content creator is time-consuming and stressful, the benefits they receive of the audience's support, as well as possible compensation, allowing them to continue their travel journeys makes the work worthwhile. The content also assists the viewers and followers by providing entertainment, travel education, tips from experts, and inspiration from travel role models. As for their marketing role, the content can either be beneficial in promoting the destination or company, or a disadvantage in demoting. However, influencers are likely to promote destinations, products, and services that they recommend and enjoy. While creators want to include authentic information on the cons and difficulties of travel, they also aim to have optimism and market the positive and life-changing aspects of traveling. In conclusion, all variables are able to connect through the social feedback cycle, rendering the sequence from the influencer and possible marketing partnership, to creating content and travel marketing to the viewer, to the viewer possibly contacting the travel businesses for their own travels.

For the sake of future research, there is a number of aspects that could be considered to improve this study. The first is finding better ways of communicating directly to the YouTube viewers. As stated in section [7.1.3](#), gathering data from the YouTube followers was an obstacle and created unclarity in the research. Ultimately, numerous followers contacted through Instagram were assumed to also watch YouTube videos, considering several of these influencers also have a YouTube channel. However, this aspect is still quite blurry in the research. Other factors that can be improved are the data collected from the influencers; questions such as "How many hours do you spend a day/week creating content?" would be useful, as well as more information regarding destination marketing. For current events surrounding the Coronavirus (COVID-19), use of social media has increased immensely and could definitely be examined further on how the epidemic affected all three variables of the creator, viewer, and marketer. Questions such as the following can be pondered: What are travel influencers posting now? [How] Has the number of viewers on the travel content changed? Is there any content advertising charity/support for struggling travel businesses?

The concept of travel content on social media influencing people's lives, opinions, and companies would not have been thought of ten years ago. Communication

and social networking on digital platforms are developing rapidly. Globalization throughout the past 20 years has grown substantially and has surpassed the idea of face-to-face consultations. With the human drive and innovation, one cannot imagine how much more advanced the world can become and can change. Just like the marketing 4.0, where companies became digital, the human race must have the responsibility to develop with and adapt to the technology and other forms of inventions that surround them. This can be as revolutionary as the marketing 4.0 concept, or as simple as the various uses of content creating on social media.

## Tables and Figures

Table 1. Influencer response rate, by number of followers .....	29
Figure 1. Percentage of U.S. internet users who use YouTube as of 3rd quarter 2019, by age group (Clement 2019c).....	13
Figure 2. Distribution of Instagram users in the United States as of February 2020, by age group (Clement 2020b) .....	16
Figure 3. Content created on YouTube/Instagram .....	30
Figure 4. Positive effects on travel influencers creating content through YouTube/Instagram .....	30
Figure 5. Negative effects on travel influencers creating content through YouTube/Instagram .....	30
Figure 6. Travel influencer limitations on postings .....	31
Figure 7. Follower's travel content interest, by type .....	36
Figure 8. Does influencer content affect follower's desire to go to those cities?	37
Figure 9. Has follower ever travelled to a destination solely after seeing it on YouTube/Instagram? .....	37
Figure 10. Does the follower do research on Instagram/YouTube before traveling to a destination?.....	38
Figure 11. Can travel content spoil the traveler's experience?.....	38
Figure 12. The Purchase Funnel (Evans & Bratton 2012, p. 40) .....	58
Figure 13. The Social Feedback Cycle (Evans & Bratton 2012, p. 45) .....	60
Figure 14. The Social Feedback Cycle of Influencer Travel Content .....	61
Figure 15. Sailing SV Delos viewers, by age .....	64

## References

- Ahmad, I. 2014. Timeline of Instagram from 2010 to Present - #infographics. Digital Information World. <https://www.digitalinformationworld.com/2014/01/the-history-of-instagram-infographic.html>. Accessed on 14 April 2020.
- Aslam, S. 2020. Instagram by the Numbers: Stats, Demographics & Fun Facts. Omnicore. <https://www.omnicoreagency.com/instagram-statistics/>. Accessed on 14 April 2020.
- Barten, M. n.d. The Latest Travel Marketing Tips to Optimise Your Results. <https://www.revfine.com/travel-marketing/>. Accessed on 15 April 2020.
- Blystone, D. 2019. The Story of Instagram: The Rise of the #1 Photo-Sharing App (FB). Investopedia. <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/102615/story-instagram-rise-1-photo0sharing-app.asp>. Accessed on 14 April 2020.
- Bregman, B. 2018. Brand Partnership with Travel Influencers. Hollywood Branded. <https://blog.hollywoodbranded.com/brand-partnership-with-travel-influencers>. Accessed on 14 April 2020.
- Carroll, P. 2019. S/V Delos Tenerife to Antigua. [https://www.dropbox.com/s/b19d2rqdamwd8v9/Tenerife-Antigua-2019\\_percent28Letters\\_to\\_my\\_Wife\\_percent29.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/b19d2rqdamwd8v9/Tenerife-Antigua-2019_percent28Letters_to_my_Wife_percent29.pdf?dl=0). Accessed on 20 May 2020.
- Carroll, P. 2020. Sailing SV Delos – past crew member winner. Email interview 24 March 2020. [Answers \(.pdf\)](#).
- Chaffey, D. & Smith, P.R. 2017. Digital Marketing Excellence: Planning, Optimizing and Integrating Online Marketing. Taylor & Francis Group, Florence. ProQuest Ebook Central. Accessed on 25 April 2020.
- Charles, G. & Anderson, W. 2016. International Marketing: Theory and Practice from Developing Countries. Cambridge Scholars Publisher, Newcastle upon Tyne. ProQuest Ebook Central. Accessed on 25 April 2020.
- Christou, E. & Gretzel, U. 2016. Social Media in Travel, Tourism and Hospitality: Theory, Practice and Cases. Routledge, London. ProQuest Ebook Central. Accessed on 14 February 2020.
- Clement, J. 2018. Global number of YouTube viewers 2016-2021. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/805656/number-youtube-viewers-worldwide/>. Accessed on 14 April 2020.
- Clement, J. 2019a. Hours of video uploaded to YouTube every minute 2007-2019. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/259477/hours-of-video-uploaded-to-youtube-every-minute/>. Accessed on 14 April 2020.

Clement, J. 2019b. Number of monthly active Instagram users 2013-2018. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/253577/number-of-monthly-active-instagram-users/>. Accessed on 14 April 2020.

Clement, J. 2019c. YouTube usage penetration in the United States 2019, by age group. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/296227/us-youtube-reach-age-gender/>. Accessed on 14 April 2020.

Clement, J. 2020a. Countries with the most Instagram users 2020. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/578364/countries-with-most-instagram-users/>. Accessed on 14 April 2020.

Clement, J. 2020b. Distribution of Instagram users in the United States as of February 2020, by age group. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/398166/us-instagram-user-age-distribution/>. Accessed on 14 April 2020.

Cooper, P. 2019. 23 YouTube Statistics that Matter to Marketers in 2020. Hootsuite. <https://blog.hootsuite.com/youtube-stats-marketers/>. Accessed on 14 April 2020.

DamonandJo 2019. YouTube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/user/DamonAndJo/>. Accessed on 1 May 2020.

The Delos Project 2020. Sailing around the world on a sailboat. <https://svdelos.com/sailing-travel-blog/>. Accessed on 20 May 2020.

Evans, D. & Bratton, S. 2008. Social Media Marketing: An Hour a Day. 1st ed. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, Indianapolis. ProQuest Ebook Central. Accessed on 14 February 2020.

Evans, D. & Bratton, S. 2012. Social Media Marketing: An Hour a Day. 2nd ed. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, Indianapolis. ProQuest Ebook Central. Accessed on 17 May 2020.

Facebook 2020. Facebook home page. <https://www.facebook.com/>. Accessed on 20 March 2020.

Followers' Questionnaire 2020. Travel Influencer Followers' Questionnaires Results. Conducted through Google Forms. Questionnaire 8 March 2020 to 31 March 2020. [Answers \(.xlsx\)](#).

Franco, J. 2020. Took my mom to Puerto Rico after all the sacrifice. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXzqEL6bTHc>. Accessed on 1 May 2020.

Fuciu, M. & Dumitrescu, L. 2018. From Marketing 1.0 To Marketing 4.0 – The Evolution of the Marketing Concept in the Context of the 21ST Century. International conference KNOWLEDGE-BASED ORGANIZATION. 24. 10.1515/kbo-2018-0064.

Girleatworld 2020. Mel's Food & Travel Log. Instagram profile. <https://www.instagram.com/girleatworld/>. Accessed on 1 May 2020.

Google 2020. YouTube Partner Program overview & eligibility. <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/72851?hl=en>. Accessed on 15 April 2020.

Halina, V. 2019. The Psychology of Social Media — Why We Feel the Need to Share. Noteworthy – The Journal Blog. Medium. <https://blog.usejournal.com/the-psychology-of-social-media-why-we-feel-the-need-to-share-18c7d2d1236>. Accessed on 1 May 2020.

Honest Guide 2020. YouTube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCt7oj318jVQi7vRbc1bNjJA>. Accessed on 1 May 2020.

Hopf, L. 2017. Thought 3 – by Lisa. The Delos Project. <https://svdelos.com/travel-blogs/south-atlantic/thought-3-lisa/>. Accessed on 20 May 2020.

Hopf, L. 2020. Sailing SV Delos – past crew member winner. Email interview 30 March 2020. [Answers \(.pdf\)](#).

Influencer Marketing Hub 2020. What is an Influencer?. Influencer Marketing Hub. <https://influencermarketinghub.com/what-is-an-influencer/>. Accessed on 15 April 2020.

Influencers' Questionnaire 2020. Travel Influencers' Questionnaires Results. Conducted through Google Forms. Questionnaire 8 March 2020 to 31 March 2020. [Answers \(.xlsx\)](#).

Instagram 2020a. About Instagram Promotions. <https://help.instagram.com/526914357496585?helpref=related>. Accessed on 20 March 2020.

Instagram 2020b. About Instagram Shopping. <https://help.instagram.com/191462054687226>. Accessed on 20 March 2020.

Instagram 2020c. Instagram. Mobile application. Accessed 20 March 2020.

Instagram 2020d. View Insights on Instagram. <https://help.instagram.com/1533933820244654>. Accessed on 20 March 2020.

Jarboe, G. 2011. YouTube and Video Marketing: An Hour a Day. 2nd ed. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, Hoboken. ProQuest Ebook Central. Accessed on 14 February 2020.

Kiderra, I. 2019. 23 Pictures Move People More than Words. Hootsuite. [https://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/pressrelease/pictures\\_move\\_people\\_more\\_than\\_words](https://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/pressrelease/pictures_move_people_more_than_words). Accessed on 14 April 2020.

Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. 2016, Marketing 4.0: Moving from Traditional to Digital. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, New York. Available from: ProQuest Ebook Central. Accessed on 25 April 2020.

Kurvinen, A. 2019. Marketing communications. LAB University of Applied Sciences. Marketing Communications and Sales. Lecture notes

- Levine, D. 2020. Sailing SV Delos – past crew member winner. Email interview 25 March 2020. [Answers \(.pdf\)](#).
- Lostwithpurpose 2020. Alex Reynolds. Instagram profile. <https://www.instagram.com/lostwithpurpose/>. Accessed on 1 May 2020.
- Lost with Purpose Travel Blog 2019. Why travel media is dangerous for Pakistan's tourism. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iudspL1wM\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iudspL1wM_Q). Accessed on 15 April 2020.
- Loz's Leisure 2020. YouTube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwZq7eGqRMwY2gf7k9DcnXA>. Accessed on 1 May 2020.
- Moriuchi, E. 2015. Social Media Marketing: Strategies in Utilizing Consumer-Generated Content. Business Expert Press, New York. ProQuest Ebook Central. Accessed on 25 April 2020.
- Muradosmann 2020. Murad Osmani. Instagram profile. <https://www.instagram.com/muradosmann/>. Accessed on 1 May 2020.
- Oetting, J. 2020. YouTube Ads for Beginners: How to Launch & Optimize a YouTube Video Advertising Campaign. Hubspot. <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/youtube-video-advertising-guide>. Accessed on 15 April 2020.
- Peterson, T. 2016. What it takes to become a YouTube star: time. Marketing Land. <https://marketingland.com/what-it-takes-to-become-a-youtube-star-time-168258>. Accessed on 25 April 2020.
- Pike, S. & Page, S. 2014. Destination Marketing Organizations and destination marketing: A narrative analysis of the literature. *Tourism Management*. 41:1-26
- Pike, S. 2008. *Destination Marketing: An Integrated Marketing Communication Approach*. Routledge, London.
- Prague 2020. <https://www.prague.eu/en>. Accessed 1 May 2020.
- Sailing SV Delos 2020a. Patreon. <https://www.patreon.com/svdelos>. Accessed on 20 May 2020.
- Sailing SV Delos 2020b. YouTube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/user/bri-antrautman/>. Accessed on 1 May 2020.
- Sigala, M. & Gretzel, U. 2018. *Advances in social media for travel, tourism and hospitality: New perspectives, practice and cases*. London, New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Soteriades, M. 2012. Tourism destination marketing: approaches improving effectiveness and efficiency. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology* 3 (2), 107-120. DOI 10.1108/17579881211248781. Accessed on 1 May 2020.



Teare, R., Bowen, J., & Baloglu, S. 2015. What is the current and future impact of social media on hospitality and tourism?. Emerald Publishing Limited, Bingley. ProQuest Ebook Central. Accessed on 14 February 2020.

TheLifeOfJord 2016. We Built a Playground in Rural Cambodia - Pt. 2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dh1M2Lj0chQ>. Accessed on 1 May 2020.

Trautman, B. 2020. Sailing SV Delos. Skype Interview 20 March 2020.

Travel Beans 2020. YouTube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-Rx9HRmDoc5YmtcPOopmrA>. Accessed on 1 May 2020.

Twitter 2020. Twitter home page. <https://twitter.com/>. Accessed on 20 March 2020.

Uncornered Market 2020. Daniel Noll & Audrey Scott. Instagram profile. [https://www.instagram.com/uncornered\\_market/](https://www.instagram.com/uncornered_market/). Accessed on 1 May 2020.

Uysal, M., Harrill, R. & Woo, E. 2011. Destination marketing research: Issues and challenges. Destination Marketing and Management: Theories and Applications, pp. 99-112. DOI 10.1079/9781845937621.0099. Accessed on 1 May 2020.

VagaBrothers 2020. YouTube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/user/vagabrothers>. Accessed on 1 May 2020.

Visit Britain 2020. [visitbritain.com](http://visitbritain.com). Accessed on 25 April 2020.

Visit Finland 2020. [visitfinland.com](http://visitfinland.com). Accessed on 25 April 2020.

Wang, Y. & Pizam, A. 2011. Destination Marketing and Management: Theories and Applications. CABI, Wallingford. ProQuest Ebook Central. Accessed on 14 February 2020.

Watson, K. 2020. Travel Documentaries. YouTube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/user/karlwatson18/>. Accessed on 1 May 2020.

Wolters World 2020. YouTube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/user/woltersworld>. Accessed 1 May 2020.

YouTube 2020a. YouTube home page. <https://www.youtube.com/>. Accessed on 20 March 2020.

YouTube 2020b. YouTube Studio. <https://studio.youtube.com/>. Accessed on 20 March 2020.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix I: Questionnaire – Travel Influencer**

1. Name(s)
2. What kind of content do you create on YouTube and/or Instagram?
3. How has creating content through YouTube and/or Instagram positively affected you as a traveler?
4. Has creating content through YouTube and/or Instagram negatively affected you as a traveler at all?
5. What are some limitations on what you publish?
6. Would you like to keep your name private in this research?
7. Would you be interested in participating in a case study for this research?

## **Appendix II: Questionnaire – Travel Influencer Follower**

1. Name
2. What kind of travel content suits your interest?
3. Specific influencers you follow on Instagram or YouTube? What kind of content do they post?
4. Does travel influencer content effect your desire to go to those cities? How or how not?
5. Do you do research on Instagram and/or YouTube before traveling to a destination? If yes, is it helpful?
6. Do you ever think the travel content spoil (or can spoil) your experience as a traveler?
7. What kind of travel experiences do you have when researching through YouTube/Instagram vs. no research?
8. Have you ever travelled to a destination solely because you saw it on YouTube/Instagram?
9. Any more input on impacts of travel content creators in social media in the tourism industry?

### **Appendix III: Case Study Interview Questions**

1. How many people have now been on Delos? How many people from different countries?
2. Part of this research includes having insight on the type of people that follow you. What are the top 5 regions/countries that your followers are from? Male/Female percentage?
3. Do you do any of your own travel-related projects aside from SV Delos?
4. When did you (and your team) have that “aha” moment that you all knew, “This is going to be something big”?
5. If you have, what companies or organizations in the travel industry have you partnered with?
6. How was your experience the first time you brought a stranger out sailing? Did you learn anything?
7. I have seen other offers for activities (e.g. diving) for your followers. What other activities do you offer to encourage follower participation?
8. What kind of feedback do you get from your followers (positive and negative)?
9. What kind of feedback do you get from your past winning crews (positive and negative)?
10. The purpose of this research is to study the effects of travel influencer social media content on the travel industry, including viewers (or viewers who travel), companies, and influencers themselves. What kind of impacts has creating the SV Delos series had on your crew, your viewers, and destinations which you have visited?

#### **Appendix IV: Email Interview – Past Winners**

1. Brief description of Delos trip (when, duration, locations)?
2. Did you go to locations you have never been before? How many?
3. How would you describe your experience with the Delos crew?
4. How did the Delos trip impact you? Did you learn anything?
5. Would you sail on Delos again?