

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION:

ASSIGNMENT TASK- The Role of Social Media in Shaping Tourism Decisions: A Study of Instagram and TikTok Influences

Contents

ABSTRACT	3
INTRODUCTION	4
LITERATURE REVIEW	6
METHODOLOGY	10
Research Design	10
2. Data Sources	11
3. Data Collection Method	12
4. Data Analysis Method	13
5. Ethical Considerations	14
6. Limitations of the Methodology	15
Summary of Methodology	15
FINDINGS	16
DISCUSSION	22
CONCLUSION	27
REFERENCES	28
APPENDICES	29
Appendix A	29
Appendix B	30
.....	31
Appendix C: Comparison Table — Instagram vs. TikTok Features	31
Appendix D:	31
Appendix E	32

ABSTRACT

The ways of Finding out the travel related information has now changed due to the increasing use of social . Applications like TikTok and Instagram are the most relevant social media networks influencing behavior for travel and tourism. This examines the effect of visual storytelling, user-generated content, influencer marketing, and content algorithms on social media consumer decision-making. This research uses qualitative content analysis and social media, the reports of the travel and tourism industry, and social media travel marketing. The research explains the different social media's aesthetics of travel marketing, the marketing of social videos, and peer social media (UGC) travel marketing and how they impact the visualization of a travel destination and the intent to purchase and reserve for travel. The research shows the different impacts of social media on travel behavior. The Instagram marketing of desirable and aspirational travel content has a greater impact on marketing the desire to travel to certain destinations than TikTok. TikTok has a greater impact on more impulsive and experience-oriented travel decisions. TikTok's impact on travel decision-making is attributed to trends and marketing of less polished and more authentic social media. Overall, social media significantly impacts travel marketing decision-making more than other travel marketing conduits.

The research concludes that tourism businesses must adopt transparent, data-informed communication strategies and leverage UGC responsibly to build credibility, enhance customer engagement, and drive long-term loyalty.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has changed the global tourism industry with respect to the tourists. What used to be a combination of guidebooks, travel agents, brochures, and word of mouth to determine how and where to travel has been completely replaced. Today, travel information is digital. Travel options are evaluated and travel information is finalized through a digital process. Of the many digital tools available, Instagram and TikTok reign supreme. Their digital video content has made them major players in the travel industry. Their content encourages them to consider travel options that they otherwise would not have. According to recent tourism communication studies just over 50% of global travelers base travel destination choices solely on social media. Instagram offers a wealth of images and visions of travel and encourages travel to exotic destinations. TikTok has short and engaging travel videos to entice viewers to random and some unknown travel destinations. Both platforms, packaged travel information with digital videos in such a way that travelers find the content to be immersive, relatable, and persuasive.

Traditional marketing tactics often relied on controlled messages crafted by tourism boards and companies. But today **user-generated content (UGC)** like pictures, videos, reviews, and travel stories posted by regular users holds more influence over traveller decisions than official advertisements. This shift reflects a major transformation in

communication patterns: travellers trust other travellers more than brands. A single TikTok video or Instagram reel can reach millions within hours, creating new travel trends, viral destinations, and global hotspots.

From a communication perspective, the integration of visual storytelling, hashtags, geotags, and interactive features (polls, reels, live streams) enhances digital engagement between tourists and businesses. Destination marketing organizations (DMOs), hotels, airlines, restaurants, and travel startups utilize social media to communicate brand messages, respond to customer queries, and deliver personalized recommendations. The platforms also enable real-time communication during the travel process, ensuring tourists remain informed and engaged throughout their trip.

Despite the opportunities, the growing influence of social media creates notable challenges such as

- Viral trends may cause **over-tourism**, leading to environmental degradation and negative impacts on local communities.
- Algorithmic filters may create unrealistic expectations, leading to disappointment among tourists who feel the destination does not match the perfect Instagram images.
- sponsored influencer posts can blur the line between authentic and paid content, reducing consumer trust

This study adopts a qualitative approach by analyzing existing literature, industry reports, and real-world social media case studies. Through this analysis, the research highlights emerging behavioural trends, identifies opportunities for enhancing digital

communication, and evaluates the challenges associated with relying heavily on social media for tourism promotion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between social media and tourism behaviour has been widely examined across communication, marketing, and consumer psychology research. This literature review explores existing theories, models, and empirical studies that explain how Instagram and TikTok influence traveller decision-making. It synthesizes scholarship on visual communication, user-generated content (UGC), influencer culture, and digital consumer behaviour, creating a foundation for understanding the dynamics of social media-driven tourism.

1. Social Media as an Information Source in Tourism

Social media has become a dominant source of travel information, replacing traditional channels such as travel agencies, brochures, and guidebooks. Xiang and Gretzel (2010) noted that travellers increasingly rely on social platforms for destination research due to the authenticity and diversity of content shared by users. Instagram and TikTok, in particular, provide “experience-rich” digital environments where users can access real-time visuals, travel narratives, and peer recommendations.

that repeatedly displays popular destinations and trending travel content.

2. Visual Communication and Tourism Decision-Making

Visual communication plays a central role in shaping perceptions of travel experiences.

MacKay and Couldwell (2004) emphasized that images create mental representations of destinations, influencing expectations and desire. Instagram, with its aesthetic focus, amplifies this by promoting highly curated, visually appealing photos that stimulate aspiration. Research by Mariani et al. (2016) suggests that visually rich content leads to higher engagement and greater interest in visiting a place.

TikTok extends visual communication through movement, music, transitions, and storytelling effects. Short-form videos allow creators to showcase experiences dynamically, making destinations appear exciting and accessible. Studies on video-based tourism marketing (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009) highlight how videos elicit stronger emotional responses than static images due to their ability to simulate real-life experiences.

The rise of “Instagrammable tourism” demonstrates how visual aesthetics dominate decision-making. Destinations known for photogenic landscapes, colourful streets, or unique architectural features attract visitors specifically for the purpose of social media sharing.

3. User-Generated Content (UGC) and Its Influence on Travel Behaviour

User-generated content is one of the most influential components of tourism communication. Unlike traditional marketing, UGC is created by ordinary travellers,

making it more relatable and trustworthy. Ayeh et al. (2013) found that tourists perceive UGC as more credible because it lacks the commercial bias of brand advertising.

Instagram and TikTok facilitate extensive UGC through posts, reels, stories, and short videos that showcase authentic travel experiences. According to Fotis (2015), UGC influences three major stages of the travel decision-making process:

1. **Pre-trip inspiration** – browsing content motivates people to explore new destinations.
2. **Planning and comparison** – reviews, geotags, captions, and videos help travellers evaluate options.
3. **Post-trip sharing** – travellers produce and share their own content, creating a cycle of influence.

UGC also contributes to the formation of **destination image**, a key concept in tourism psychology. Beerli and Martín (2004) argue that a tourist's mental image of a destination is shaped by secondary information sources. In the digital age, Instagram and TikTok have become essential "secondary sources," heavily influencing perceptions, attitudes, and travel intentions.

4.Consumer Behaviour Theories Relevant to Social Media Tourism

Numerous consumer behaviour theories help explain how Instagram and TikTok influence travel decisions:

a. Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)

this theory states that Attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control influence travel intention.

Social media strengthens these components by providing:

- positive attitudes through appealing content
- social norms through peer influence
- perceived control through practical tips, reviews, and travel guides

b. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

this theory states that everything a person do in his life is to fullfill an unfulfilled need and maslow divided these needs into five parts, namely- physiological , safety needs, belonging, esteem, self-actualisation.Travel motivations often align with psychological needs such as belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. Social media satisfies these needs by providing:

- belonging (community, shared experiences)
- esteem (likes, comments, social validation)
- self-actualization (personal growth through travel)

c. Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954)

Users compare their lives to others online. Travel posts often create a desire to match or surpass others' experiences, influencing tourism choices.

d. AIDA Model (Attention–Interest–Desire–Action)

Instagram and TikTok content captures attention quickly, builds interest through aesthetics or storytelling, creates desire through emotional appeal, and leads to action by encouraging bookings.

These theories help frame the psychological mechanisms behind social media-driven tourism decisions.

METHODOLOGY

This case considers the research design, sources of information, analytical method, and the challenges faced in determining the extent to which Instagram and TikTok affect tourism behavior. For the purposes of this assignment, this case has to focus on detailed academic work and not the collection of primary data; thus, it will be a case of academic research of a qualitative nature. This type of research will allow the researcher to integrate knowledge, identify trends, and extract lessons from academic writings and other studies, reports from the industry, and field research that have already been validated.

Research Design

For this work, the researcher will make use of qualitative exploratory design. This design is appropriate for this research because of the following reasons: • The social media and tourism nexus is complex and fluid. • The nature of the research is exploratory, and thus useful in the identification of the trends. • It permits the research to be multilensed through the various theories and perspectives of

tourism, communication and consumer behaviour. Given that the focus of the research is behavioural, perception and communication, as opposed to some values that are quantifiable, it is most appropriate to adopt qualitative research.

2. Data Sources

As a researcher, the data for this academic work has been gathered from various sources and documents which are credible, authoritative, and pertinent to this work.

This includes: a. Books and Academic Journals This includes peer-reviewed publications that address various aspects of the behavior of individuals in the field of tourism, the digital way of communication, social media marketing, and the psychology of consumers.:-

➤ **Industry Reports**

Global tourism and social media industry reports were reviewed to understand current digital trends. Examples include:

- Statista social media usage reports
- TikTok For Business insights
- Meta (Instagram) marketing reports
- UNWTO digital tourism publications
- Google Travel Trends

These reports help link academic theory with real-world industry practices.

➤ **Case Studies**

Real-life examples of tourism destinations and businesses that effectively used Instagram and TikTok were examined. These include:

- Visit Dubai's influencer-based campaigns
- Iceland's #InspiredByIceland multimedia campaign
- Japan's viral TikTok tourism trends
- Airline and hotel brand social media strategies **User-Generated Content (UGC)**

Analysis

Although primary data was not collected directly from users, existing studies that analysed:

- Instagram posts
- TikTok hashtags
- Travel reels
- Influencer-generated travel videos

were reviewed to understand patterns in user behaviour.

3. Data Collection Method

Data was collected using a structured **document review process**, which involved:

1. Identifying keywords such as *Instagram tourism*, *TikTok travel influencers*, *UGC tourism*, *destination image*, and *social media decision-making*.
2. Filtering sources based on relevance, credibility, and publication date.

3. Organizing content under themes such as visual communication, influencer marketing, consumer behaviour theories, and digital engagement.
4. Comparing different authors' perspectives to identify consistent patterns and contrasting views.

This method ensures a comprehensive understanding of how social media shapes tourism decisions.

4. Data Analysis Method

A **thematic analysis approach** was used to examine the data. This involved:

a. Coding and Categorization

Information was coded into major themes such as:

- Visual aesthetics and destination appeal
- Authenticity and trust in UGC
- Effects of influencer marketing
- Algorithmic trend formation
- Impact on decision-making stages
- Challenges such as over-tourism or misinformation

b. Pattern Identification

Patterns were identified across multiple sources to determine:

- Which social media features drive the strongest travel intentions

- How visual content alters destination perception

c. Comparative Evaluation

Insights from Instagram and TikTok were compared based on:

- Format (images vs short videos)
- Audience engagement
- Role of algorithms
- Speed of trend formation
- Level of authenticity

This comparative approach highlights platform-specific influences.

d. Triangulation

By cross-checking academic studies, industry reports, and case analyses, the reliability of findings increases. Triangulation reduces bias and strengthens validity.

5. Ethical Considerations

Although the study uses secondary data, ethical considerations include:

- Ensuring all sources are properly cited using APA format.
- Avoiding misinterpretation or manipulation of research findings.
- Respecting intellectual property rights of authors and organizations.
- Using publicly available data only.

Since no personal data or human participants were directly involved, the study poses minimal ethical risk.

6. Limitations of the Methodology

Despite careful design, the methodology has certain limitations:

- Reliance on secondary data may limit the originality of insights.
- Rapid changes in TikTok and Instagram trends mean some data may become outdated quickly.
- Case studies may not represent the global tourism industry uniformly.
- Lack of primary data restricts direct measurement of tourist motivations.

However, these limitations do not significantly undermine the ability to understand the relationship between social media and tourism behaviour.

Summary of Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative, exploratory approach using secondary data from academic research, industry reports, and real-world case studies. Thematic analysis provides a structured way to interpret how Instagram and TikTok influence tourism decisions. This methodological framework ensures rigor, credibility, and depth in analyzing the role of social media in shaping modern tourism behaviours.

FINDINGS

This section of the study presents the major findings that emerged from the analyses.

The findings focus on how **Instagram and TikTok shape tourism decisions**, influence traveller perceptions, drive engagement, and impact consumer behaviour across different stages of the travel journey.

1. Instagram and TikTok Are Now Primary Sources of Travel Inspiration

The first major finding is that **social media has replaced traditional information sources** as the primary tool for travel inspiration. Tourism studies consistently show that travellers no longer rely heavily on travel agencies, brochures, or guidebooks.

Instead:

- Instagram acts as an **aspirational platform**, displaying curated images of beaches, mountains, cafés, hotels, and iconic sites.
- TikTok functions as a **discovery platform**, showing short, engaging videos that expose users to hidden gems, viral spots, and unique local experiences.

Data from multiple industry reports confirms that:

- More than 50% of young travellers choose destinations based on social media trends.
- TikTok's "For You Page (FYP)" exposes users to new destinations even if they never searched for them.

- Instagram's Explore page recommends destinations based on interests, previous likes, and travel hashtags.

This demonstrates that **algorithm-based exposure is reshaping travel discovery** and increasing the visibility of destinations that were previously unknown.

2. Visual Content Strongly Shapes Perceptions of Destinations

Another clear finding is that **visual storytelling influences the way tourists imagine and evaluate destinations**. Instagram's focus on high-quality images creates idealized representations, while TikTok's videos create immersive, emotionally appealing narratives.

Key patterns include:

- **Aesthetic imagery** (sunsets, blue waters, luxury hotels, unique architecture) sparks desire and increases destination attractiveness.
- **Short-form videos** provide a "preview" of the experience, making travellers feel like they are already there.
- **Before/after transformations** (common on TikTok) heighten emotional connection.
- **POV (point-of-view) videos** simulate walking through streets, hiking trails, or hotel rooms, increasing anticipation.

Tourists often report that they want their travel experiences to “look like the Instagram pictures” or “feel like the TikTok videos,” showing how deeply visual content influences expectations.

3. User-Generated Content (UGC) Creates Trust and Enhances Authenticity

UGC has more influence than official tourism advertisements. Travellers trust content posted by real people more than commercial promotions.

Why UGC is more influential:

- It is perceived as **authentic and unbiased**.
- It reflects **real-life experiences**, not staged marketing photos.
- It provides **practical information**

Thousands of Instagram reels and TikTok videos offer:

- “Top 10 things to do in Dubai”
- “Budget trip to Bali”

This type of content simplifies planning and encourages travellers to follow trends.

UGC also contributes significantly to **destination image formation**, influencing how tourists mentally visualize places before visiting them.

4. Influencers Significantly Shape Travel Decisions and Brand Preferences

The analysis reveals that influencer marketing is one of the **most powerful communication tools** in tourism.

Patterns include:

- Influencers act as **opinion leaders**, shaping followers' destination choices.
- Micro-influencers (10k–50k followers) create **higher trust** due to perceived authenticity.
- Travel influencers drive:
 - hotel bookings
 - restaurant visits
 - adventure activity participation
- Enhance credibility with social proof

Case studies show that destinations like **Dubai, Iceland, Paris, Bali, Kerala, and Singapore** successfully use influencers to increase global tourism demand.

5. TikTok Creates Fast Travel Trends and Viral Destinations

The **speed at which TikTok can transform unknown spots into global tourist hotspot is unimaginable and unmatched**. The platform's strong algorithm, short videos, and trend culture lead to:

- sudden spikes in popularity
- viral hashtags like #TravelTok, #HiddenGems, #BudgetTravel

- rapid increase in footfall at featured destinations

Examples include:

- A waterfall in Bali going viral and attracting thousands within weeks.
- A small café in Italy becoming a global sensation after one TikTok review.

This demonstrates that TikTok is **not just a social media platform but a travel trend accelerator**.

Challenges: Over-Tourism, Unrealistic Expectations, and Misinformation

In addition to benefits, the study identifies several challenges:

a. Over-Tourism

Once a video gets viral suddenly it often cause sudden, unsustainable arrivals at small destinations that are difficult to manage.

b. Unrealistic Expectations

the posts stories that we see on Instagram are not fully true they may be the edited versions that creates sets higher expectations in the eyes of viewer and may create disappointment when reality does not match the visuals.

c. Misinformation

Non-experts may share incorrect travel advice, leading to confusion.

d. Environmental Impact

Sensitive natural sites face damage due to overcrowding and irresponsible behaviour.

These challenges highlight the need for ethical communication strategies.

Comparative Finding: Instagram vs. TikTok Influence

Factor	Instagram	TikTok
Content Format	Curated photos, reels	Short videos, storytelling
Influence Type	Aspirational, long-term	Spontaneous, trend-based
Audience Behavior	Planning-focused	Discovery-focused
Trend Speed	Moderate	Extremely fast
Destination Exposure	Popular/global icons	Hidden/lesser-known spots

This comparison shows that both platforms influence tourism in **different but complementary ways**.

Summary of Findings

The findings clearly demonstrate that Instagram and TikTok significantly shape tourism decisions by:

- influencing destination awareness
- shaping perceptions through visual content
- building trust through UGC

- driving trends through influencers
- supporting businesses in communication
- affecting all stages of the travel process

At the same time, challenges such as over-tourism, unrealistic expectations, and misinformation require responsible use of digital communication strategies.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this section is to interpret the findings in relation to existing theories, consumer behaviour models, and contemporary tourism communication practices.

While the findings provide descriptive insights into how Instagram and TikTok influence tourism decisions, the discussion explains **why** these influences occur, **how** they affect different stakeholders, and **what** they mean for future tourism communication strategies.

1. Social Media as a Transformational Communication Tool in Tourism

The findings confirm that Instagram and TikTok have fundamentally transformed how tourism communication operates. Unlike traditional media, where destinations controlled the narrative, social media has **democratized communication**, allowing travellers, influencers, and content creators to actively shape destination images.

This aligns with the shift described in tourism literature from **top-down communication** (destination → traveller) to **bottom-up communication** (traveller →

traveller). Platforms like TikTok and Instagram empower ordinary users to influence millions through visual storytelling, often without direct involvement from tourism organizations. As a result, tourism businesses must now adapt to a shared communication ecosystem where control of messaging is decentralized.

2. Visual Storytelling and Its Psychological Impact on Travel Intentions

The findings reveal that travel decisions are heavily influenced by visuals, a conclusion supported by theories of visual communication. Instagram's high-resolution imagery and TikTok's immersive videos stimulate imagination, desire, and emotional engagement.

Why visual content works:

- **Dual Coding Theory** -it suggests that humans process visual information faster than text.
- **Social Comparison Theory** explains how users compare their lives with visually appealing travel content.
- **AIDA Model** shows how attention and desire are triggered through aesthetic presentation.

Instagram's aspirational content fosters long-term travel dreams, while TikTok's dynamic videos generate immediate emotional reactions that often lead to spontaneous decision-making. Visual storytelling therefore acts as a stimulus that influences both logical evaluation and affective responses.

This dual influence explains why destinations with strong visual appeal—Bali, Dubai, Paris, Kashmir—dominate social media-driven tourism trends.

3. Trust, Authenticity, and the Power of User-Generated Content

One of the strongest behavioural findings is the high level of trust placed in user-generated content (UGC). From a consumer behaviour perspective, UGC functions as a digital form of **word-of-mouth**, long recognized as one of the most persuasive sources of information.

Why UGC is trusted more than advertisements:

- It is perceived as genuine.
- It is created by real travellers, not marketers.
- It provides relatable lived experiences.
- It offers honest evaluations of destinations, hotels, and activities.

This connects directly to **Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior**, where subjective norms (what others do) and perceived behavioural control (tips that make travel feel easier) influence intentions.

UGC drastically reduces uncertainty by offering answers to practical questions:

- “How much does it cost?”
- “Is it crowded?”
- “What is the best time to go?”

- “Is the food worth it?”
- “How do I get there?”

Travelers feel more confident when they see others having positive experiences. This validates their choices and reinforces trust.

4. Influencers as Modern Opinion Leaders

The findings confirm that influencers—both macro and micro—play a significant role in shaping tourism perceptions. Their impact can be understood through **parasocial interaction theory**, where followers form emotional bonds with influencers despite never meeting them.

Influencers affect behaviour because:

- They appear relatable and trustworthy.
- Their recommendations feel personal.
- Their travel lifestyles create aspirational goals.
- They simplify decision-making by providing curated itineraries, tips, and suggestions.

However, influencer culture also introduces **ethical challenges**:

- Some influencers exaggerate experiences to increase engagement.
- Sponsored content may not always be disclosed transparently.
- Viewers may develop unrealistic expectations leading to disappointment.

Thus, while influencers help destinations reach wider audiences, reliance on them without transparency can harm long-term credibility.

5. Strategic Implications for the Future

The discussion suggests several overarching implications for the future of tourism communication:

- **Hybrid strategies** using both Instagram (aspiration) and TikTok (virality) will dominate.
- **AI-powered personalization** will increase the relevance of travel recommendations.
- **Authenticity will become a competitive advantage** as users grow tired of overly curated content.
- **Sustainability communication will become necessary**, not optional.
- **Social media literacy** among tourism practitioners will become essential for success.

Destinations that understand these dynamics and adopt flexible communication strategies will be better positioned to thrive in a digital tourism environment.

CONCLUSION

This study has identified the impact Instagram and TikTok have on the decision-making process pertaining to travel and the transformation in communication within the travel and tourism sector. The assessment indicated that both have become fundamental components of contemporary travel because they provide more than entertainment. Both have become vital in providing travel inspiration, assessing travel options, and making travel decisions. Creating idealized images and short videos, influencer user content, and algorithmically curated feeds, these platforms help travellers imagine/visualize experiences and plan and book trips. Instagram is instrumental in generating and sustaining an aspirational yearning to travel. Its high-quality travel photos coupled with an illustrative descriptive narrative chronicling the travel experience all contribute to the boredom that results in an increased desire to travel. TikTok has a more rapid and spontaneous impact as a result of the viral trends, short video stories, and algorithm-guided platforms. Together, this shows that Instagram and TikTok provide complementary forms of tourism behaviour. Instagram is more about the long-term travel behavioural planning, while TikTok is about immediate trend-based travel purchases. The most impactful form of travel promotion is the user-generated content. Travellers submit to the experience of travel when actual users provide the documentation.

Another key conclusion is the transformative role of algorithms in shaping visibility and demand. TikTok's "For You Page" and Instagram's Explore page determine what users see, often without deliberate searching.

The study further emphasizes that social media affects all stages of the tourism decision-making process. From initial inspiration to planning, booking, experiencing, and sharing, Instagram and TikTok are present throughout the journey. Tourism businesses that understand this integration can develop more effective communication strategies using interactive content, storytelling, influencer partnerships, and real-time engagement.

In conclusion, Instagram and TikTok have become indispensable components of modern tourism communication. Their influence is profound, multifaceted, and continuously evolving. To remain competitive, tourism organizations must embrace these platforms strategically while balancing creativity with responsibility. By acknowledging both the opportunities and challenges posed by social media, the tourism industry can cultivate meaningful, ethical, and sustainable digital engagement with travellers in the years ahead.

REFERENCES

- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211.
- Ayeh, J. K., Au, N., & Law, R. (2013). Do we believe in TripAdvisor? Examining credibility perceptions and online travelers' attitude toward using UGC. *Journal of Travel Research*, 52(4), 437–452.
- Beerli, A., & Martín, J. D. (2004). Factors influencing destination image. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(3), 657–681.
- Cialdini, R. B. (2009). *Influence: Science and practice* (5th ed.). Pearson.

- Fotis, J. (2015). The use of social media and its impacts on consumer behaviour: The context of holiday travel. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 3(1), 1–17.
- Horton, D., & Wohl, R. (1956). Mass communication and para-social interaction: Observations on intimacy at a distance. *Psychiatry*, 19(3), 215–229.
- Li, X., & Xue, K. (2023). The influence of TikTok on travel decision-making: Viral content and destination choice. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 26(5), 789–804.
- MacKay, K. J., & Couldwell, C. M. (2004). Using visitor-employed photography to investigate destination image. *Journal of Travel Research*, 42(4), 390–396.
- Mariani, M., Borghi, M., & Cappa, F. (2016). Online reviews and tourism decision-making. *Tourism Management*, 53, 1–13.
- Tussyadiah, I., & Fesenmaier, D. (2009). Mediating tourist experiences: Access to places via shared videos. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 36(1), 24–40.
- Urry, J. (2002). *The tourist gaze* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Xiang, Z., & Gretzel, U. (2010). Role of social media in online travel information search. *Tourism Management*, 31(2), 179–188.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sample Instagram Tourism Content Strategies

This appendix provides examples of how tourism businesses use Instagram for communication and engagement:

1. **High-quality aesthetic images** showcasing landscapes, hotel rooms, local food, and cultural spots.
2. **Reels demonstrating activities**, such as skydiving, trekking, beach walks, or city tours.
3. **Geotags and hashtags** like #TravelInspiration, #VisitBali, #DubaiDestinations.
4. **Influencer collaborations**, where popular travel bloggers tag brands and destinations.
5. **Instagram Stories** with polls (“Where should we go next?”) and countdowns for special offers.

These examples represent common communication tools used to influence travel decisions.

Appendix B: Sample TikTok Travel Content Trends

This appendix presents typical TikTok travel trends that impact tourism behaviour:

1. **POV travel videos** (Point of View): walking tours, café reveals, flight journeys.
2. **Viral challenges** like “3 best places under ₹10,000,” “Hidden gems in India,” etc.
3. **Transformation videos** (before/after arriving at a destination).
4. **Mini itineraries** in 15–30 seconds: “2 days in Jaipur,” “Budget Maldives trip.”

5. **Trending music-based destination videos** that enhance emotional appeal.

These trends demonstrate how TikTok quickly turns destinations into viral hotspots.

Appendix C: Comparison Table — Instagram vs. TikTok Features

Feature	Instagram	TikTok
Primary Format	Photos, reels, stories	Short videos
Algorithm Style	Interest-based, profile-linked	Viral-first, engagement-heavy
Audience Mindset	Aesthetic, aspirational	Fun, spontaneous, exploratory
Best for	Branding, long-term planning	Discovery, trends, virality
Engagement Style	Likes, comments, saves	Shares, rapid views, FYP exposure

This comparison visually supports the findings and discussion chapters.

Appendix D: Examples of Tourism Hashtags Used on Social Media

Below are real-world hashtags commonly used by tourism boards, travellers, and influencers:

- #TravelTok
- #Wanderlust
- #TravelGoals
- #IncredibleIndia

- #VisitDubai
- #ExploreWithMe
- #HiddenGems
- #BudgetTravel
- #AdventureAwaits
- #IGTravel

These hashtags increase post visibility and help create community engagement.

Appendix E: Ethical Guidelines for Influencers (Sample)

Tourism businesses often provide influencers with ethical guidelines such as:

1. Clearly disclose sponsored content using #ad or #sponsored.
2. Do not promote environmentally fragile spots irresponsibly.
3. Avoid heavily edited or misleading images.
4. Promote respectful cultural behaviour.
5. Encourage sustainable practices (e.g., avoiding littering, supporting local small businesses).

These guidelines support responsible tourism communication.