

Instagram's influence
on individual's
consumer decision
making process when
choos...



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MARKETING DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Focus of the Dissertation:

The topic of the dissertation is Instagram's influence that it has on individual's consumer decision making process when choosing travel destinations to visit. The focus will be on the individual themselves and what makes them attracted to Instagram as a traveling tool. The two main influential factors I will look at are the opinion leadership of influencers and the imagery created by the posters and how it attracts these consumers. To be able to have the focus on the consumer behavior part, I will analyze the influences on the individual and analyze their interactions with Instagram travel influencers and the influences pictures have on their decision-making process. A main theoretical driver for this dissertation will be the idea of opinion leadership. Opinion leadership refers to an active media user who interprets the meaning of media messages or content for lower-end media users.

I have selected this topic because the idea of social media marketing is something that sticks out to me as an active social media user. I am interested in the consumer decision process behind traveling that involves the influences and the Instagram influencers. I am interested in seeing how many Instagram users interact with these accounts and how many of them use these influencers as the main reason for their next travel destination. I am interested in seeing how much of Instagram plays a part in where to visit.

When looking through all the data I have found so far, I came up with several of research questions I would like to solve while doing this dissertation. The research questions I have asked are the following:

Main Question:

1. In what ways does Instagram have influence on destination choice/travel planning?

Sub Questions:

1. If an Instagram influencer posts a travel destination, how likely are individuals to travel to this destination?
2. What makes Instagram travel accounts and travel influencers unique to the consumers?
3. How big of a role does visual aspects have on the consumers?
4. What kind of content is important in their travel planning/choosing?

These are the specific questions I am trying to answer by carrying out this dissertation research work. I aim to integrate literature I have covered in my Consumer Behavior, Tourism, and Marketing modules to impart to my topic.

What has already been written about the topic?

The following is a miniature literature review on the articles I have already discovered. I will use journals and literature texts from the modules to find the information about previous research on this topic:

Technology is improving very quickly in the world and everything is changing around us. Many individuals are always connected to the internet, either

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through their smart phones or laptops. It is causing businesses and organizations to open their advertising to the online world, because it is easier and faster to reach their customers. One of the main reasons for this is the increase of social media platforms. Some of these social media platforms include Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, and Pinterest. Social media marketing is becoming very effective for businesses and organizations. " Social media is a very easy and cost-effective way to reach out to current and potential customers." One of the social media's we are going to investigate is Instagram . *Instagram Power: Build Your Brand and Reach More Customers with the Power of Pictures* by Jason Miles (2013) is one book that has been written on this topic. In this text, Miles highlights the importance that Instagram is an effective tool to reach the individuals. Today, over five million photos are shared on Instagram daily. Miles (2013) states that nowadays 50% of the top brands use Instagram as a marketing channel (Instagram Power, 2013). Instagram works smoothly on mobile phones, since the application was designed for mobile phone users. " It has an easy to use platform with minimal conversation" (Miles, 2013). Adding to that, images on Instagram have a longer life than on any other social media network. Instagram has incorporated new features such as Instagram stories, story tags, hashtags, and multiple picture uploads. This has allowed for consumers to be very engaged with brands and what they have to offer. All these new features mean that there are more opportunities for organizations and businesses to get their content across to consumers. Social media marketing allows for the engagement with consumers. " Instead of a one-way channel, like traditional media, social media has a two-way flow of communication" (Cuss, 2018). With this two-way communication, " it is easy

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to connect with consumers and build an online community. This community is important for sharing your content, making connections and growing your brand recognition" (Cuss, 2018).

The travel industry is one of the fastest growing sectors worldwide, and has a constant and steady growth every year, with a continued strong demand for international travelers across the whole world. (Statista, 2018). However, this is occurring because of a large chunk of social media users and social media advertisements. One of the social media's that have been investigated further has been Instagram. Instagram has been an active social media for over six years now. Instagram currently has more than 500 million active users, sharing an average of 80 million photos a day. " Clearly we have an appetite for imagery, and it's influencing our travel decisions" (Miller, 2018). " Plenty of Instagram likes are an indication that a destination is simply visually pleasing and desirable" (Arnold, 2018). Images attract these consumers. Imagery plays a big factor in influences because we shop with our eyes. On Instagram, it allows for these pictures to become more attractive with filters and all the other photo editing tools. These visuals allow for the consumers to see all of the positive aspects of these traveling destinations. But the imagery is not the only thing that is making these consumers make travel decisions. When taking a look into several journals, opinion leadership has an effective outcome with consumers when it comes to travel destinations and the purchasing of vacations.

" Opinion leadership are very important sources of advice for other consumers" (Casaló, 2018: pg. 1). Instagram is the most used platform by opinion leaders, and it is expected to continue soon. " Opinion leadership <https://assignbuster.com/instagrams-influence-on-individuals-consumer-decision-making-process-when-choosing-travel-destinations/>

influences consumer behavioral intentions toward both the influencer (intention to interact in the account and recommend it) and the travel industry (intention to follow travel posts and advice). On Instagram, there are many influencers, along with many travel and tourism Instagram accounts. Some of the main accounts are Travel Leisure, Bucket Listers, Travel Escapes, and many more. “ In March 2018, it was reported that 42% of 18- 34 year olds would try a product based on an influencer’s recommendation” (TravelTransfer, 2019). The same level of influence applies to individuals when they are choosing where to go on a vacation. An individual on Instagram, Chris Burkard, an Instagram influence traveler with over 3 million followers, said “ Now you’re less than 10 clicks away from seeing an image on Instagram to purchasing a ticket to go there” (TravelTransfer, 2018). It has been a proven fact that 40% of consumers under the age of 33 prioritize “ Instagrammability” when they are choosing their next travel destination to visit (Arnold, 2018). A current example that proves these statements are, in 2015, the tourism board of the small alpine town of Wanaka, New Zealand, began inviting and hosting “ influencers”— social media trendsetters with large followings—to post about their adventures. The result was the fastest tourism growth in the country: a 14 percent increase (Miller, 2018). This case shows the impact that these travel influencers have on these individuals to travel.

Overall, we can say that Instagram does influence these consumers to make travel destinations based on imagery and the interacts connected with travel influencers and travel accounts. So many people scroll through their Instagram feed and see other people post all these fantastic traveling posts.

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Individuals instantly want to know where it is. These influencers have hashtags and places tagged in the photos for consumers to click on these. That allows for consumers to open millions of travel photos with the same tags, leading to the inspiration of wanting to travel to these places because of the looks and the recommendations based on opinion leaders. To find out all the influences of these consumers, we have to look into the research of Instagram and analyze the interacts of travel, imagery, and travel influencers.

Information Requirements:

For this dissertation, the information I will need will require the consumer behavior process, motivation, and usage of Instagram for travel destinations and travel influencers. I will acquire all of this information through academic databases such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Ebsco, and many others. I will use journals and past research as a guide to help along the research process. There have been several studies done on the topic of Instagram travel influencers and the analysis of Instagram accounts, these will be helpful and will provide evidence of the information required for this dissertation. Below are the citations of the resources I have and will use on the dissertation:

- Arnold, A. (2018). Here's How Much Instagram Likes Influence Millennials' Choice of Travel Destinations. [online] Forbes. com. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewarnold/2018/01/24/heres-how-much-instagram-likes->

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influence-millennials-choice-of-travel-destinations/ [Accessed 2 Jun. 2019].

- Casaló, L., Flavián, C. and Ibáñez-Sánchez, S. (2018). Influencers on Instagram: Antecedents and consequences of opinion leadership. *Journal of Business Research*.
- Cuss, C. (2018). *Why Instagram is Important in Marketing and Communications* . [online] Communication Undergraduate Student Society. Available at: <https://cussconnection.com/2018/02/16/why-instagram-is-important-in-marketing-and-communications/> [Accessed 3 Jun. 2019].
- Miles, J. (2013). *Instagram Power: Build your brand and reach more consumers with the power of pictures*. USA: MCGRAW-HILL EDUCATION.
- Miller, C. (2018). *How Instagram Is Changing Travel* . [online] Nationalgeographic.com. Available at: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/travel-interests/arts-and-culture/how-instagram-is-changing-travel/> [Accessed 2 Jun. 2019].
- Standidge, E. (2018). *The Influence of Instagram On Travel - Absolutely Travel*. [online] Absolutely Travel. Available at: <http://www.blogs2018.buprojects.uk/elliestandidge/influence-of-instagram-on-travel/> [Accessed 2 Jun. 2019].
- Statista (2018). *Global Travel and Tourism Industry*. [online] Available at: <https://www.statista.com/topics/962/global-tourism/> [Accessed 2 Jun. 2019].

- TransferTravel. (2018). How Instagram Influences Travel. [online] Available at: <https://www.transfertravel.com/blog-posts/instagram-influence-on-travel> [Accessed 2 Jun. 2019].

Research Methodology and Assumptions:

There are two major research strategies that can be used when collecting information on a research topic: quantitative and qualitative research. With the focus of the dissertation and research questions, I will do a small online survey asking questions about peoples travel habits, travel planning behavior, Instagram usage, following travel accounts on Instagram, and thoughts on the user-generated contents. I will also do an analysis of Instagram and the travel accounts on Instagram on the following: analyzing travel hashtags, analyze places being tagged by consumers, analyze the number of followers and likes consumers make on Instagram Travel Accounts, and analyze interaction with tourism accounts.

Timeline of Sections:

June 20th

- Dissertation Proposal Due

June 30th

- Introduction, literature review finished

July 3rd

- Research methods ready to be tested

July 12th

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- Deadline for data collection

July 12th- July 28th

- Complete research findings, discussion, and conclusions

July 30th

- Completed abstract, table of contents, and appendix

August 5th

- Dissertation finished
- Give one month to make revisions

September 5th

- Dissertation Due

Description of Proposed Chapters:

My research-based dissertation will consist of five main chapters:

1. Introduction (Approx. 1, 000-1, 500 words)

The first chapter of the dissertation will give a general overview of the research. I will mention the focus of the dissertation and the main objectives of the thesis. Along with this, I will talk about the research questions I have come up with. In the introduction, I think it is important to mention key topic definitions of social media and destination marketing.

1. Literature Review (Approx. 3, 500-4, 000 words)

In this chapter, I will use two separate sections. This research is based on past work that is relevant to the research I am working on. In the first

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section, I will focus on the consumer behavior in tourism. In this section, it will mainly be about the tourism industry and the consumer behavior motivations in the focus of Instagram for travel destinations. I will break down the consumer decision process and give the reasons on why consumers are influenced by Instagram.

The second section will be focused mainly on Instagram and traveling. In this section it will include what Instagram is and how it is used, and how it will connect with travel. Another focus on this section will be the travel destinations on Instagram, the travel accounts, travel influencers, and the hashtags relevant to traveling. It will be a detailed literature review on the influence of opinion leaders and how influential they are when it comes to their posts.

1. Research Methodology (Approx. 1, 500-2, 500 words)

The research methods that were chose will be discussed in this section. Along with this, the data collection processes, data analysis, and interpretation will all be discussed here.

1. Research Findings and Results (Approx. 3, 500-4, 000 words)

In this section, I will break down each of my questions into their own finding's sections. In this section, I will talk about the findings related back to my research questions mentioned in the introduction paragraph.

1. Discussion and Conclusion (Approx. 2, 000-2, 500 words)

In this chapter, I will mention a summary of the results found during my research. Also, I will make recommendations to Instagram travel accounts

and travel businesses on the importance of Instagram in travel making decisions.

1. References

1. Several are mentioned above in the information required section.

2. Appendix

1. Survey Questions

This dissertation proposal has been written by a student and is published as an example. See our guide on [How to Write a Dissertation Proposal on UKDiss.com](#) for guidance on writing your own proposal.