

## **Social Media as a Catalyst for the Development of Tourism Business: A Study of Tourism Industry of Pakistan**

**Khushboo Rafiq**

*Lecturer, Department of Media and Communication Studies  
Sindh Madressatul Islam University, Karachi  
[khushboo@smiu.edu.pk](mailto:khushboo@smiu.edu.pk)*

**Muhammad Kamil Lakho**

*Lecturer, Department of Social and Development Studies  
Sindh Madressatul Islam University, Karachi  
[mkamil@smiu.edu.pk](mailto:mkamil@smiu.edu.pk)*

**Kumail Abbas Jaffiry**

*Department of Media and Communication Studies  
Sindh Madressatul Islam University, Karachi  
[kaak817@gmail.com](mailto:kaak817@gmail.com)*

### **Abstract**

*The accelerating trend of social media usage has allowed users to gain knowledge about the tourism experiences of other people through reactive and proactive interactions. The primary aim of this study is to identify whether social media is playing a constructive role in increasing the development and productivity of the tourism business. The research also evaluates the effects and advantages of earned media marketing tools over social media advertisements shared by tourism companies in the process of deciding about tourism packages. This research consists of a quantitative approach. A random sampling method has been adopted by researchers to disseminate closed-ended questionnaires and a total of 206 responses were collected. After applying the reliability test through SPSS, data were examined through ANOVA and Tukey's HSD testing. Results determined that people are more eager towards seeing and gaining public opinion than the promotions and advertisements shared on social media by tourism companies. They especially consider the experiences and viewpoints of their close relations like relatives, friends, and colleagues as well as Vloggers and social media influencers while deciding to visit a tourist spot. Because of the findings, it can be recommended that tourism companies should focus more on earned media marketing tools than traditional advertising techniques while designing their marketing strategies.*

**Keywords:** *Online Business; Tourism Industry; Social Media Advertising; Earned Media Marketing; Development*

### **Introduction**

Tourism is an industry that allows consumers to express their gratification and provides recommendations for future tourists and markets as well. Social media or Web 2.0 permits consumers and tourists to share their opinion with massive audiences which enables them to see

and acquire their footsteps for such traveling (Lewis et al., 2010). There are diverse areas where we can explicitly explore social media to promote tourism more productively (Nusair, 2020). Before the emergence of social media, people used to travel for long trips twice a year which would be enough to spend 30 to 45 days a year traveling and exploring the lands. After the emergence of social media & User Generated Content (UGC), the desire of the people is getting more due to the presence of pictures, videos, and comments of the people. Furthermore, those sites also allow the users to get in touch with the traveling agency in which frequent options of commenting, chatting, or checking the prices/rates are available. Nevertheless, in previous times people were bound to go and visit the office and inquire about such things after spending at least a day there (Tran et al., 2020).

The paradigm shifts of information sharing on social media have significantly changed the traditional way of gathering information. Social media allow users to share, comment, or even upload pictures or videos on such medium as well which ultimately lets the user make it the medium like Mass Communication that indeed gathers and shares such content to its massive audiences in a single blink of an eye (Gebreel & Shuayb, 2022). Those who intend to make plans for traveling, prefer to get recommendations from such online stuff available on social media. For instance, a rating scale of 5 stars is a much more productive and active instead result by which a person can easily judge a particular thing. Thus, social media plays a vital role in developing and shaping the perception of a user.

On the business side, advertising has also become so convenient and easy that allows advertising digitally which is indeed state of the art and productive as compared with traditional billboards or poster advertising. Those businesses may also hire travel bloggers to create such blogging on travel by the traveling industry. The involvement of consumers on social media platforms to develop a direct understanding of the tourism business has become a trend (Li & Chen, 2020), which ultimately allows users to gain knowledge about the tourism experiences of other people through reactive and proactive communications.

### **Problem Statement**

There are different ways for tourism agencies and social media users to connect productively with each other. Nonetheless, there is a need to identify the opportunities and obstacles of this paradigm shift to understand the customers' viewpoint on the changing dimensions of the tourism business. Though there is ample literature on the effects of social media usage on the tourism industry, several prevailing studies are not much focused on the shifting paradigms of tourism companies from traditional advertisements to utilizing earned media marketing tools. They also lack a conceptual foundation (Lin et al., 2020). Moreover, there is a need to discover the core aspects of social media engagements from customers' points of view in the local context. Thus, the present study is an attempt to fill up the research gap by highlighting the dynamics of the tourism business in Pakistan from customers' perspectives.

### **Objectives**

Keeping these trends in view, the study is designed to fulfill the following objectives:  
To explore the effects of online reviews shared on social media about the tourism industry.

Moreover, it compares the role of earned media marketing and social media advertisements in the process of selecting a tourism destination. Further, to estimate the trust and credibility level of closed ones' opinions about any destination place experience.

### **Research questions**

- What is the impact of online reviews about tourism on social media consumers?
- How do customers perceive social media advertisements and earned media marketing tools while making decisions about visiting sightseeing locations?
- How do consumers identify which tourism industry is credible based on the feedback shared by closed relations?

### **Literature review**

Sharing opportunities for tourism experiences on social media provides a chance to reach out to more consumers which ultimately encourages them to visit these places (Wong et al., 2020). Highlighting the significance of social media usage, Sahin and Sengün (2015) mentioned that tourism companies use social media to interact and communicate more with their audiences since the internet has provided an opportunity to interact, comment, & like the post. This paradigm shift has also enabled industries to utilize such a medium of communication, which has affected people's decisions. It helps select the choice more or better than the previous days of technology. According to them, this effect or choice may be subject to the number of comments or likes on a particular post. Similarly, Ráthonyi (2013) studied that tourism industries are becoming a part of internet communication with the passage of time and technology. The same tourism has become an 'Information-based & Information-intensive industry' which requires information or communication for such marketing or business. Social media or Web 2.0 has changed the way of searching or communicating allowing individuals to select and make decisions for traveling by their means. The study examined two important factors which are demand and supply.

Alghizzawi et al. (2018) critically examined that the use of the internet and social media is increasing, due to which many of the related industries have acquired such tools for promoting their business and reach. This fascinating speed has allowed other related companies to challenge and compete about such packages, discount offers, and extra features provided for traveling. The authors also found studies that tend to inform about the negative effect of using social media or the internet in the tourism industry. Likewise, Živković (2014) analyzed that the tourism industry mainly depends on the decisions of the customers who usually get inspired by sales, promotional activities, and management relationships. This process can easily and progressively be accomplished with the help of communication and information which can easily be done with the help of the new technology which is Web 2.0 which is ultimately about eWOM (Online word of mouth) social media. People tend to search and get ideas before going for such traveling or tourism, they tend to get more and more so they can easily facilitate themselves for such travel. Consequently, the study builds the following hypothesis:

#### **First hypothesis**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Social media users get affected by the online reviews shared on social media platforms about the tourism business.

Kiráľová and Pavlíčka (2015) managed to identify that social media is a crucial part of the tourism industry since it reacts to the comments of the customers, communicates, and looks after the requirements of the customer. Social media could also change the behavior of the customer which can ultimately affect destination marketing. Munar et al. (2014) also highlighted that social media is the utmost tool that can easily affect the business of the tourism industry. He further investigates that people get more attached and share their traveling on social media which allows the customers to engage more and more with the tourism industry ultimately becoming fruitful for the business. The visual content plays a fascinating role in creating the emotions of the customers. Due to such reliability, the customers get attached more even after having less information about such travel agencies.

Nusair (2020) mentioned that many new trends evolved from 2013 to 2018 including “e-tourism,” and “smart tourism.” Gohil (2015) studied that according to the 'World Travel Market', 1 billion arriving have been witnessed by 2012. This fascinating emerging speed of such a traveling industry proves the source and effect of such modern technology that can easily influence people due to a vast number of reaches. According to the stats, 30% of the market has seen a fascinating boost in the tourism industry after the emergence of social media. Manap and Adzharudin (2013) analyzed that social media has allowed audiences to interact, disseminate and gain information from other means that has indeed allowed them to get in touch with traveling industries more productively than ever in past. Social media is the platform that allows the creation of 'User Generated Content' by which the tourism industry along with the audiences gets enough support. This help to gain more information and searches which ultimately supports the customer to make better choices. Hence, social media could not only be the source of the well and accurate information instead User Generated Content on social media is the more valid source of the channel.

Thus this paper tends to test the following hypothesis:

### **Second hypothesis**

**H<sub>2</sub>:** People get more influenced by earned media marketing such as Vlogs and YouTube Videos than social media advertisements.

Munar and Jacobsen (2013) investigated and examined the holidaymaker's tourism-based information shared on social media and its influences on the audiences along with the massive change of the paradigm after the emergence of the internet and the availability of the information to the masses. The authors further clarify that there are ample research gaps that can be done for future research as well. Furthermore, the authors managed to find that the Electronic Word of Mouth plays a vital role in developing decisions and acceptance when selecting a tourist site. Dwivedi et al. (2011) managed to identify the penetration of social media use and its applications in various countries. Such observation is based on the traveling websites based on the 'National Tourism Organization (NTO)'. Hence, throughout the investigation and researches the authors could identify that one hundred and ninety-five countries do not have NTOs-based websites instead they manage and highly depend on social media sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and so many more.

Rathore et al. (2017) managed to find out the importance of social media in the tourism industry. Social media is considered an important and fascinating tool that enables us to communicate and share content with others. Social media could even be used as a productive tool that could help the tourism-based industry to revolutionize better than the previous. For the sake of using such a medium, there must be a proper scale or formulated guidelines before using the same tool for business purposes. The proper guideline could help the industry to restrain such illegal issues which could savior damage the reputation of the business and may ultimately affect the business. Similarly, Nezakati (2015) mentioned that social media have revolutionized the tourism industry due to the advanced information sharing and intersecting with each other. Communication is the utmost important gate that allows industries to revolutionize. Since the experiences of the audience get more dominant. The credit goes to the internet and the button of sharing on social media that ultimately increase the number of reaches. This knowledge sharing could help to know the potential of the audiences.

Subsequently, this study aims to assess the following hypothesis:

### Third hypothesis

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Previous experiences shared by closed relations are considered a more authentic source of getting tourism information about any destiny.

### Conceptual framework



**Figure 1:** Conceptual model of the role of social media in the development of the tourism business

### Interpretation of Model

The above-mentioned figure represents the conceptual framework of this study. This conceptual research model has been designed after analyzing the hierarchical model of social media power in hospitality and tourism by Mehraliyev et al. (2021) in their study about the theoretical fundamentals of social media. The study primarily aims to identify how social media plays a catalytic role in the development of the tourism business in Pakistan. In this context, three hypotheses were developed to know the role of social media. Through first hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>, it is aimed to know if online reviews have an impact on the development of tourism. In the second hypothesis H<sub>2</sub>, it is hypothesized that vlogs and YouTube videos do play a greater part in the

development of tourism. As people, the perspective of tourism is likely more affected by vlogs and YouTube videos uploaded by social media influencers than the traditional advertisements shared by tourism agencies. In the last hypothesis H<sub>3</sub>, it is presumed that while selecting any tourism options, people consider the opinion of their close ones such as family, friends, and colleagues more reliable than any other source. However, social media in this regard plays its role in the sense that people get aware of the prior experiences of their companions and relatives through statuses, photographs and videos shared on their social media accounts.

### Methodology

This research study is based on the quantitative approach to explore and examine the effects of social media on the tourism industry. Online users had been selected through a random sampling method. Data were gathered within one and a half months. The link to the google form was disseminated among the participants through Facebook and the option of Broadcasting messages, an advanced tool in WhatsApp that allows the circulation of the form to massive people with just a single message. The questionnaire was based on demographic and closed-ended multiple-choice questions which were formed on 5 items Likert Scale.

### Participants

A total of 206 responses had been gathered through an online questionnaire. 158 males and 48 females participated in the study. Participants belonged to different age groups. The majority of the users were from the youth category and belonged to the age group of 19 to 24 years. Seventy percent of participants were single. The majority of the respondents were from a joint family system.

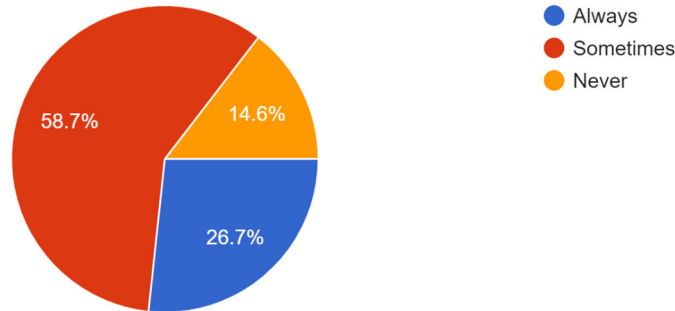
### Procedure

After data collection, SPSS software was used to interpret the results. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested through Cronbach Alpha. Other tests such as Frequency Distribution, Cross Tabulation, ANOVA, and Tukey's HSD testing had also been performed by researchers for data analysis. These measurements allowed us to decipher the findings along with the reliability of the Questionnaire. Hypotheses were then assessed based on the results.

### Results

**Table 1:** Statistics of respondents influenced by social media to plan to travel.

Scale	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
<b>Respondents in Numbers</b>	55	121	30	<b>206</b>
<b>Respondents in Percentage</b>	26.7%	58.7%	14.6%	<b>100%</b>

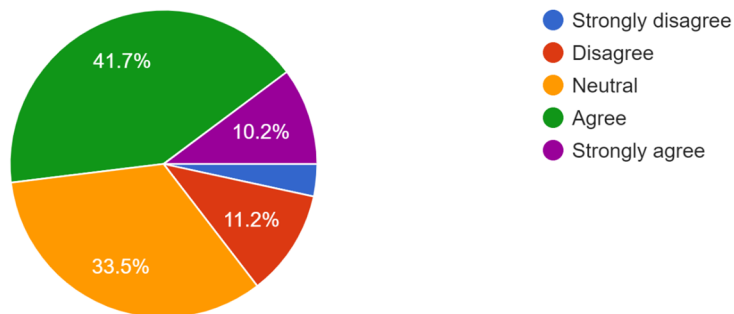


**Figure 2:** Statistics of respondents influenced by social media to plan to travel.

Above mentioned Table 1 and Figure 2 show that closer to 6/10 of the participants are stuck on Sometimes. Whereas bit more than ¼ of the population are with Always. On the contrary, only 3/20<sup>th</sup> of the respondents were negative, never.

**Table 2:** Statistics of the respondents who prefer to select tour agents from social media.

Scale	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
<b>Respondents in Numbers</b>	7	23	69	86	21	<b>206</b>
<b>Respondents in Percentage</b>	3.4%	11.2%	33.5%	41.7%	10.2%	<b>100%</b>



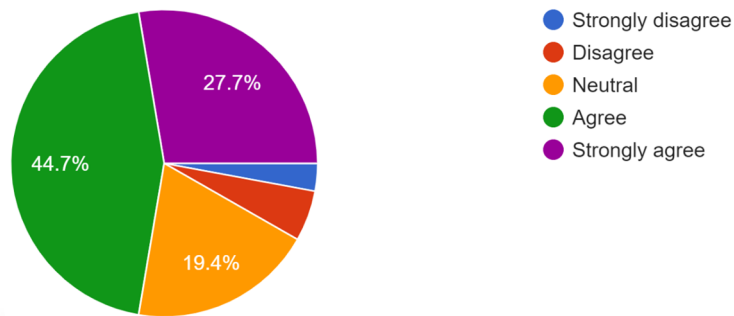
**Figure 3:** Statistics of the respondents who prefer to select tour agents from social media.

As mentioned, Table 2 and Figure 3 demonstrate that a bit more than 4/10<sup>th</sup> of the participants prefer to select their tour agents from social media. Nevertheless, there is a bit more than 3/10<sup>th</sup> of the population who like to become neutral in this case. Contrary, a bit more likely that 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the respondents disagreed on such an issue. A bit more than 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the population was also

with an agreed statement. The Rest minute of the respondents prefers to stay in Strongly disagree.

**Table 3:** Statistics of respondents who prefer to watch videos/images on social media before deciding their tour destination.

Scale	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
<b>Respondents in Numbers</b>	6	11	40	92	57	<b>206</b>
<b>Respondents in Percentage</b>	2.9%	5.3%	19.4%	44.7%	27.7%	<b>100%</b>



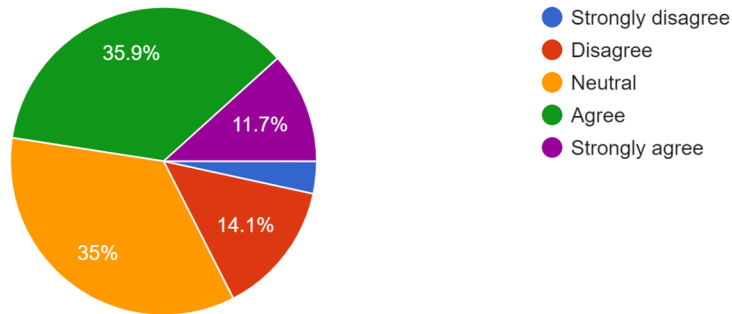
**Figure 4:** Statistics of respondents who prefer to watch videos/images on social media before deciding their tour destination.

The above-shown Table 3 and Figure 4 illustrate that more than 7/10<sup>th</sup> of respondents agree that they prefer to watch videos and images on social media while selecting their tour destinations. Nevertheless, almost 2/10<sup>th</sup> of the respondents were neutral. The rest of the remaining prefer to stay in disagreement.

**Table 4:** Statistics of respondents agreeing that social media provide the best travel agents.

Scale	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
<b>Respondents in Numbers</b>	7	29	72	74	24	<b>206</b>
<b>Respondents in Percentage</b>	3.4%	14.1%	35%	35.9%	11.7%	<b>100%</b>



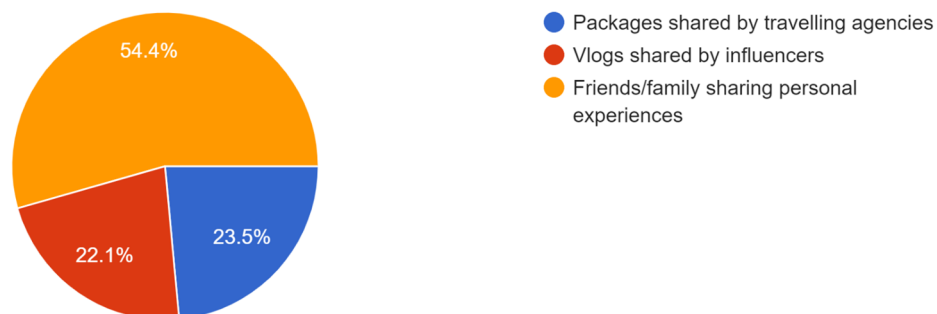


**Figure 5:** Statistics of respondents agreeing that social media provide the best travel agents.

Table 4 and Figure 5 illustrate that ½ of the participants agree that social media is the best platform to select tour agents. Contrary closer to 2/10<sup>th</sup> of the population disagrees about such a statement. The rest of the respondents prefer to stay neutral.

**Table 5:** Statistics of the most preferred option by respondents to decide about traveling.

Scale	Packages by agencies	Vlog influencers	Family/friends' preferences	Total
<b>Respondents in Numbers</b>	49	45	112	<b>206</b>
<b>Respondents in Percentage</b>	23.5%	22.1%	54.4%	<b>100%</b>



**Figure 6:** Statistics of the most preferred option by respondents to decide about traveling.

The above-mentioned Table 5 and Figure 6 demonstrate that more than ½ of the respondents prefer to plan and travel along with their family and friends shared experiences. Contrary, ¼ of

the respondents are with the Packages shared by the traveling agencies. Rest inspired by the Vlogs shared by the influencers.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
0.763	7

Reliability statistics determines that the collected data are reliable and accurate. Since the value of Cronbach's Alpha stays between 0.5 to 0.9, hence, the data seem to be reliable. There were 7 numbers items selected for analyzing the items and their reliability.

### ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q8: social media enables one to find the best travel agents as compared to virtually visiting the office.	Between Groups	.507	2	.253	.262	.770
	Within Groups	196.425	203	.968		
	Total	196.932	205			
Q7: Attractive videos/images help to grab attention on social media.	Between Groups	4.592	2	2.296	2.498	.085
	Within Groups	186.611	203	.919		
	Total	191.204	205			
Q6: social media helps to encourage the audiences to select tour agents.	Between Groups	2.419	2	1.210	1.390	.251
	Within Groups	176.596	203	.870		
	Total	179.015	205			
Q4: I share my positive experiences with travel agents on social media.	Between Groups	3.556	2	1.778	1.876	.156
	Within Groups	192.424	203	.948		
	Total	195.981	205			
Q5: I want to go to the same place whenever I	Between Groups	4.925	2	2.463	6.426	.002
	Within Groups					

see traveling pictures and Vlogs on social media.	Within Groups	77.793	203	.383		
	Total	82.718	205			
Q3: I share my positive experiences about holiday destinations on social media.	Between Groups	2.143	2	1.071	1.093	.337
	Within Groups	198.911	203	.980		
	Total	201.053	205			
Q2: I get influenced by the positive reviews of holiday destinations on social media.	Between Groups	1.554	2	.777	.809	.447
	Within Groups	194.970	203	.960		
	Total	196.524	205			

**Multiple Comparisons**

**Tukey HSD**

Dependent Variable	(I) Q10: What do you prefer the most to decide about visiting a holiday destination?	(J) Q10: What do you prefer the most to decide about visiting a holiday destination?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Q8: Social media enables one to find the best travel agents as compared to virtually visiting the office.	Packages shared by traveling agencies	Vlogs shared by influencers	-.14069	.20083	.763	-.6149	.3335
	Vlogs shared by influencers	Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	-.09388	.16895	.844	-.4928	.3050
		Packages shared by traveling agencies	.14069	.20083	.763	-.3335	.6149
		Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	.04681	.17142	.960	-.3579	.4515
Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	Packages shared by traveling agencies	.09388	.16895	.844	-.3050	.4928	
	Vlogs shared by influencers	-.04681	.17142	.960	-.4515	.3579	

Q7: Attractive videos/images help to grab attention on social media.	Packages shared by traveling agencies	Vlogs shared by influencers	-.11376	.19575	.830	-.5759	.3484
		Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	-.34471	.16467	.094	-.7335	.0441
	Vlogs shared by influencers	Packages shared by traveling agencies	.11376	.19575	.830	-.3484	.5759
		Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	-.23095	.16708	.352	-.6254	.1635
	Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	Packages shared by traveling agencies	.34471	.16467	.094	-.0441	.7335
		Vlogs shared by influencers	.23095	.16708	.352	-.1635	.6254
Q6: social media helps to encourage the audiences to select tour agents.	Packages shared by traveling agencies	Vlogs shared by influencers	.31524	.19043	.225	-.1344	.7648
		Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	.12820	.16019	.703	-.2500	.5064
	Vlogs shared by influencers	Packages shared by traveling agencies	-.31524	.19043	.225	-.7648	.1344
		Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	-.18704	.16253	.484	-.5708	.1967
	Friends/family sharing personal experiences	Packages shared by traveling agencies	-.12820	.16019	.703	-.5064	.2500
		Vlogs shared by influencers	.18704	.16253	.484	-.1967	.5708
Q4: I share my positive experiences with travel agents on social media.	Packages shared by traveling agencies	Vlogs shared by influencers	.30873	.19878	.269	-.1606	.7781
		Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	.30853	.16722	.158	-.0863	.7033
	Vlogs shared by influencers	Packages shared by traveling agencies	-.30873	.19878	.269	-.7781	.1606
		Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	-.00019	.16966	1.000	-.4008	.4004

	Friends/family sharing personal experiences	Packages shared by traveling agencies	-.30853	.16722	.158	-.7033	.0863
		Vlogs shared by influencers	.00019	.16966	1.000	-.4004	.4008
Q5: I want to go to the same place whenever I see traveling pictures and Vlogs on social media.	Packages shared by traveling agencies	Vlogs shared by influencers	.01216	.12639	.995	-.2863	.3106
		Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	-.30390*	.10632	.013	-.5549	-.0529
	Vlogs shared by influencers	Packages shared by traveling agencies	-.01216	.12639	.995	-.3106	.2863
		Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	-.31605*	.10788	.011	-.5708	-.0614
	Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	Packages shared by traveling agencies	.30390*	.10632	.013	.0529	.5549
		Vlogs shared by influencers	.31605*	.10788	.011	.0614	.5708
Q3: I share my positive experiences about holiday destinations on social media.	Packages shared by traveling agencies	Vlogs shared by influencers	-.29874	.20210	.304	-.7759	.1784
		Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	-.15232	.17001	.644	-.5537	.2491
	Vlogs shared by influencers	Packages shared by traveling agencies	.29874	.20210	.304	-.1784	.7759
		Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	.14642	.17250	.673	-.2609	.5537
	Friends/family sharing personal experiences	Packages shared by traveling agencies	.15232	.17001	.644	-.2491	.5537
		Vlogs shared by influencers	-.14642	.17250	.673	-.5537	.2609
Q2: I get influenced by the positive reviews of holiday destinations on social media.	Packages shared by traveling agencies	Vlogs shared by influencers	-.24012	.20009	.454	-.7125	.2323
		Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	-.17532	.16832	.552	-.5727	.2221
	Vlogs shared by influencers	Packages shared by traveling agencies	.24012	.20009	.454	-.2323	.7125

	Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	.06480	.17078	.924	-.3384	.4680
Friends/family sharing firsthand experiences	Packages shared by traveling agencies	.17532	.16832	.552	-.2221	.5727
	Vlogs shared by influencers	-.06480	.17078	.924	-.4680	.3384

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Based on the inferred data, we can estimate that tourism on social media is vastly affected by the reviews.” According to this hypothesis, the tour agents or the business of tourism rely on the reviews and feedback that audiences provide on their websites or any sort of social media account. Reviews and feedback play a vital and most important role when selecting any tour agent or travel agency for planning a trip. People usually prefer to select those based on prior experience with their nearest kin or relatives/friends.

It can also be estimated by the findings that earned media marketing is playing a vital role in shaping people’s opinions about Vlogs are usually uploaded on social media by a third person who intends to share his/her experiences after using a product or service. This is also a common type of providing reviews but in video form which enables the audiences to perceive more productively. These videos or Vlogs may be created by any sort of social media influencer or a YouTuber as well. In this fast-moving internet era, any individual can easily share or forward the Vlog with High-Definition quality to massive audiences with just a click. Vlogs are a modern and advanced medium of communication that stays and transfers the message until the same is available on the internet. Hence, it can be assumed that people get influenced by earned media marketing tools than the advertisement shared by companies. Reviews, comments, or feedback decide what tourism site or agency is better for traveling. This is of the utmost importance and a vital source of gathering information from the customer's sites. This is the foremost way by which they discern the intention and plan their trip. Online users give higher priority to the word of mouth and select their tourism destiny based on other people's prior tourism experiences who are closer to them.

### Discussion

This study has demonstrated that most of the public gets influenced by the reviews provided on social media because it has become easier for them to interpret the messages. People rely mostly on the comments and reviews shared by influencers or the public. Social media has also introduced ways to share feelings or reviews with the help of Videos or Vlogs which proved to have a significant role in today’s tech society. The collected data show an inclination of online users to prefer Vlogs and personal images shared by social media influencers more than traditional advertisements. The results show that such Vlogs and images have ultimately become the source of information and they are widely accepted. Overall, the audiences prefer to select those travel agents whose reviews, comments, and discussion sections on social media, or the internet are provided. Those sections help the consumers to get more information about the

tourism industry except those written or shown words that are mentioned by the company itself. The public wants to hear the public that makes consent.

Tourism nowadays is largely based on the participants' experiences, not physically but on the shared ideas and common interest of traveling to a particular area. They want to know about the environment and travel site culture, which are considered important factors for any traveler who loves to explore the locations. Common interests or sharing ideas are more frequent and understood by the tourists and visitors productively. A tourist who is sharing his/her views on social media would be perceived better and perfectly by his/her nearest kin, relatives, friends, office mates, etc. This sort of expression and entertainment allows the viewers to get more trust and credibility. This credibility depends upon the shared ideas or behavior. A paradigm shift from traditional marketing to online marketing has allowed entrepreneurs to indulge in such marketing strategies where advanced and modern technologies play a vital role in sharing and disseminating information to massive audiences in a blink of an eye. The tourism industry in our country can be seen in such an unfortunate condition where there is no proper infrastructure of communication due to which there is a lack of information and knowledge about such business among the audiences. Social media is the platform that allows sharing and disseminating the message to massive audiences instantly with minimum cost. Whereas traditional media could be seen as costly, it also takes time for circulation.

Online users have become more keen observers and intend to decide on a traveling site before selecting any traveling industry. The technological era has allowed them to get in touch with industries more and better than the previous times. Since social media allow users to get more information about the consumer or the company with the help of comment sections or feedback as well. Further, the users can interact with tourist agencies directly through the feature of messaging as well.

Social media provide better features for marketers as they have a vast number of users. Now, digital marketers can easily spread their campaigns far and wide. This significant speed and reach become easier when feedback is provided. It also depends upon the experience that how was the trip and what specialty they would like to share with other social media users. The Internet has allowed the tourism industry to get in touch with recent trends or technology which can benefit the industry as well. This trend makes it much easier for the industry as well as the users to get much pure and better information more easily and quicker. For instance, social media allows other websites to be interlinked with the same as well. This becomes beneficial for the industry to prove and maintain a good relationship with customers by showcasing their webpage. Furthermore, the customer can get an advantage of online booking and pay through such mediums as well.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study concludes that social media have become the foremost patronage to develop and endorse tourism business in Pakistan. The tourism industry nowadays is expanding its business through social media. However, online users prefer to decide about a tourism destination majorly by the reviews, comments, shared Vlogs, images, and videos, instead of the traditional advertisements disseminated by traveling agencies. This content is created by people who travel

and intend to share their feelings on social media through video content due to the power of social media and massive users. Thus, earned media marketing has become a vital source of promoting the tourism business. But the negative feedback and reviews become such a huge disaster for the industry that ultimately damages the reputation of all future coming clients or consumers who might acquire such travel agencies for planning their future trips. People rely more on the feedback and experiences shared by their close friends and relatives than anything else. Nonetheless, the power of social media cannot be repudiated.

This research will enable to help in generating new policies in the tourism business. The findings of the study are beneficial for tourism companies which suggest that they should focus more on the feedback given on social media through comments on posts, blogs, and videos. Further, it can also be useful for those who seek information and intend to increase their tourism businesses on social media. It is recommended that marketing agencies should plan their advertisement strategies by focusing more on the public reactions to the tourism industry and by including common people's experiences in their social media advertisements. Government authorities may also utilize the findings to create and impose government jurisdiction and regulations for tourists and new businesses in related fields. Due to time restrictions, there is ample room for future researchers keen to observe the dynamics of social media marketing and its role in creating public opinion about the tourism industry. As this study is quantitative, a more detailed analysis can be done in the same area by conducting in-depth interviews with regular consumers.

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