

The Impact of Instagram Travel Influencers' Credibility on Destination Choice among Young Travelers in Kalutara District, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of Instagram travel influencers' credibility on the destination choice of young travelers in the Kalutara District of Sri Lanka. Grounded in Source Credibility Theory, four dimensions of influencer credibility were examined as independent variables: influencer trustworthiness, visual appeal of content, perceived authenticity, and social proof. The dependent variable was the destination choice of young travelers. A quantitative, descriptive research design was employed using a structured questionnaire distributed to a convenience sample of 200 young Instagram users aged 18–30 in the Kalutara District. Data were analyzed using reliability analysis and multiple regression analysis via SPSS 25.0. The reliability analysis confirmed strong internal consistency for all scales. Multiple regression analysis revealed that the four credibility dimensions collectively explained 83.8% of the variance in destination choice. Perceived authenticity emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by influencer trustworthiness, social proof, and visual appeal of content. All five hypotheses were supported, confirming that Instagram travel influencer credibility has a significant positive impact on destination choice. The findings offer practical implications for tourism marketers, policymakers, and local businesses in less promoted destinations such as the Kalutara District, highlighting the need to prioritize authentic and trustworthy influencer partnerships in digital marketing strategies.

Keywords: *Instagram Travel Influencers' Credibility, Destination Choice, Young Travelers, Social Media Marketing, Perceived Authenticity, Trustworthiness, Social Proof.*