

The influence of short videos on social media on tourism decision-making: a marketing engineering approach among young university students in Mexico

La influencia de los videos cortos en las redes sociales en la toma de decisiones turísticas: un enfoque de ingeniería de marketing entre jóvenes universitarios en México

A influência dos vídeos curtos nas redes sociais na tomada de decisões turísticas: uma abordagem de engenharia de marketing entre jovens universitários no México

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Abstract

Short videos, ranging in length from 15 seconds to 3 minutes, have become an effective tool for promoting goods and services, especially in the tourism sector. Their impact lies in their visual appeal and rapid consumption, allowing users to obtain immediate information about destinations, culture, and attractions.

Introduction: This article results from research on how short videos have become a key source for travel decision-making, especially when shared by influencers and frequent travelers on social platforms. The study was conducted at the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo in Morelia, Mexico, in 2024.

Methodology: The study employed a mixed-methods approach with an exploratory and descriptive scope and a cross-sectional design. A literature review was conducted, and a 28-item instrument was developed to assess four dimensions: use, trust, impact, and influencers.

Conclusions: The results reveal that young audiences turn to short videos to explore options before traveling, being primarily influenced by content creators on TikTok and Instagram.

Originality and Limitations: This research contributes to understanding the role of short videos in tourism, highlighting their impact on travel decisions and preferences. However, it focuses on a specific context and time frame, so future studies could consider other contexts and longitudinal analyses.

Keywords: Short videos, decision-making, tourism, social media, marketing engineering.

Resumen

Los videos cortos, cuya duración varía entre 15 segundos y 3 minutos, se han consolidado como una herramienta eficaz para promocionar bienes y servicios, especialmente en el sector turístico. Su impacto radica en su naturaleza visual y de rápido consumo, permitiendo a los usuarios obtener información inmediata sobre destinos, cultura y atracciones.

Introducción: El artículo es producto de una investigación sobre cómo los videos cortos se han convertido en una fuente clave para la toma de decisiones de viaje, especialmente cuando son compartidos por influencers y viajeros frecuentes en plataformas sociales. La investigación se desarrolló en la Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, en Morelia, México, en el año 2024.

Metodología: El estudio adoptó un enfoque mixto, con alcance exploratorio-descriptivo y diseño transversal. Se realizó una revisión de literatura y se elaboró un instrumento de 28 ítems para evaluar cuatro dimensiones: uso, confianza, impacto e influencers.

Conclusiones: Los resultados revelan que las audiencias jóvenes recurren a los videos cortos para explorar opciones antes de viajar, siendo influenciadas principalmente por creadores de contenido en TikTok e Instagram.

Originalidad y limitaciones: La investigación contribuye a la comprensión del papel de los videos cortos en el turismo, destacando su impacto en las decisiones de viaje. No obstante, se centra en un contexto particular y en un único momento, por lo que futuros estudios podrían considerar otros contextos y estudios longitudinales.

Palabras clave: videos cortos, toma de decisiones, turismo, redes sociales, ingeniería en marketing.

Resumo

Os vídeos curtos, cuja duração varia entre 15 segundos e 3 minutos, foram consolidados como uma ferramenta eficaz para promover bens e serviços, especialmente no setor turístico. Seu impacto radical em sua naturalidade visual e de rápido consumo, permitindo aos usuários obter informações imediatas sobre destinos, cultura e atrações.

Introdução: O artigo é produto de uma investigação sobre como os vídeos curtos foram convertidos em uma fonte para a tomada de decisões de viagem, especialmente quando são compartilhados por influenciadores e viajantes frequentes em plataformas sociais. A investigação foi desenvolvida na Universidade Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, em Morelia, México, no ano de 2024.

Metodologia: O estúdio adotou uma abordagem mista, com alcance exploratório-descritivo e design transversal. Foi realizada uma revisão de literatura e foi elaborado um instrumento de 28 itens para avaliar quatro dimensões: uso, confiança, impacto e influenciadores.

Conclusões: Os resultados revelam que o público jovem recorre aos vídeos curtos para explorar opções antes de viajar, sendo influenciado principalmente por criadores de conteúdo no TikTok e Instagram.

Originalidade e limitações: A investigação contribui para a compreensão do papel dos vídeos curtos no turismo, destacando seu impacto nas decisões de viagem. No entanto, ele se centra em um contexto específico e em um único momento, pois futuros estudos poderão considerar outros contextos e estudos longitudinais.

Palavras-chave: vídeos curtos, tomadas de decisão, turismo, redes sociais, engenharia e marketing.

1. INTRODUCTION

The influence of short videos on social media has revolutionized tourism marketing by providing a dynamic platform for promoting destinations and influencing consumer behavior. This study, titled “The influence of short videos on social media on tourism decision-making: A marketing engineering approach among young university students in Mexico,” provides critical insights for marketing engineering by delivering empirical, data-driven evidence on how short-form videos drive travel decisions among young audiences, particularly in the tourism sector. The rise of platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube Shorts has redefined how destinations are marketed, leveraging visually engaging content to capture user attention and influence decision-making processes. Within this context, analyzing the impact of short videos on consumer decision-making provides a valuable contribution to marketing engineering, as it aligns with the discipline’s core objectives of modeling consumer behavior, optimizing promotional strategies, and leveraging data-driven insights for tourism marketing. Tourism marketing has evolved with the rise of short videos, which now range from 15 seconds to 3 minutes and immediately capture the user’s attention. Distributed on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube Shorts, these videos stand out for their ability to showcase destinations, services, and experiences in an attractive and accessible way. Currently, social media has established itself as a primary means for disseminating and promoting tourist destinations. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube Shorts, which feature brief and visually appealing content, actively shape young people’s tourism decision-making processes. According to DataReportal’s *Digital 2025* report, prepared with data from

Meltwater and We Are Social, TikTok has more than 85.4 million users in Mexico, while Instagram has over 48.8 million, and YouTube has 83.6 million users [1]. The Internet MX Association notes that 79% of Mexican internet users' primary online activity involves accessing social media, with Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok among the most frequently used platforms [2]. This shift represents both an opportunity and a challenge for digital tourism marketing. This research addresses a significant gap: understanding how short videos impact the tourism decision-making of young university students in Mexico. It analyzes elements such as usage, trust, impact on travel decisions, and the role of influencers on social platforms, proposing an empirical examination of the digital behavior of young travelers. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of short videos has intensified, consolidating them as a key tool for promoting tourist destinations. This phenomenon has transformed how users explore destinations, access reviews, and make decisions based on experiences shared on social media.

In this context, this research aims to understand the influence of short videos on travel decisions, analyzing their impact on travelers' perceptions, trust, and behavior. It also examines the role of influencers in promoting tourist destinations. This study seeks to investigate the role of short videos in tourism marketing by exploring user motivations and the influence of content creators on decision-making.

1.1 Short videos

Travel behaviors have evolved, posing new challenges for tourism destination marketing and management [3]. With the development of the Internet, social media, and mobile devices, a destination's image increasingly depends on user-generated content shared on platforms like Facebook and Instagram [4]. A few years ago, photographs were the main medium for sharing places of interest; however, since 2017, short videos have been on the rise [5]. In that same year, Instagram was considered the most influential social network for travel [6], particularly among millennials and Generation Z, for whom the "Instagrammability" of destinations had become a criterion for travel. About 70% of photos posted on Instagram were travel-related [7].

The world is becoming increasingly connected through social media. In tourism, the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), along with the Internet, allows and encourages tourists to share their travel experiences in the form of articles, photographs, and videos on social media [8], [9]. ICTs enable users to share opinions about products, services, brands, and tourist destinations quickly and fluidly, mainly through social media, which serve as strategic tools for user interaction

[8]. Communication has become a snowball effect in tourism marketing, as it not only fosters unprecedented online popularity for tourist destinations but also generates real increases in visitor numbers and revenue [10].

Social platforms have significantly boosted tourism promotion and the travel market. Through these platforms, interaction among users has become one of the most effective means of sharing experiences about destinations and accommodations, thus facilitating the dissemination of information and recommendations [11]. Consequently, destination marketers increasingly use digital marketing strategies, such as short promotional videos on YouTube, to ensure that potential future visitors remember to visit the destination [3]. Social media has become the primary source for tourists to obtain travel-related information and support their decision-making [12].

Generations such as Alpha, Centennials, and Millennials—who are accustomed to virtual interactions and primarily use social media as their main means of communication—are driving the growing demand for fast, concise content, largely due to time constraints and the desire for immediacy. The use of social media has been a key factor in the development and popularity of video creation and sharing platforms such as Instagram and TikTok [9]. Furthermore, travelers' preferences have become increasingly aspirational, focusing on experiences that provide attention, recognition, and memorable moments. These factors strongly influence their decisions when choosing a destination [13].

Another factor contributing to the popularity of short videos was the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The pandemic led to an increase in online activity, and TikTok usage intensified during this period, mainly due to the confinement of millions of people worldwide [9], [14].

Short videos have become complementary tools for tourism marketing and now play an increasingly important role in informing tourists' travel intentions and decision-making behavior [10]. Consequently, the influence and intention to travel among users have grown through short videos related to travel and tourism [15].

In general, videos between five seconds and five minutes in length are considered short videos, as they are relatively easy and inexpensive to produce [16]. Other studies define short videos as those lasting one minute or less, which makes them suitable for today's fast-paced lifestyles [17]. Many marketers agree that short-form video content can last up to three minutes [18]. For this research, short videos are defined as those lasting less than three minutes, as described by TikTok.

Short videos are primarily viewed on mobile devices and are suitable for consumption during moments of transit, rest, or waiting, among many other situations. In most cases, mobile apps display short videos in full-screen vertical format, requiring

users only to scroll down to view the next one. This quick and intuitive interaction has led consumers to engage with short video apps during their free time [16].

Among their main features, short videos include user-created effects and sounds that quickly go viral. In this sense, short video platforms generally incorporate background music, and the fundamental difference between short videos and micro-films lies in their duration [17]. Furthermore, content creation combines professional productions with user-generated content, encouraging user participation and increasing their enthusiasm and activity [16], [19].

The popularity of short videos can grow exponentially through the phenomenon of virality: videos become universal due to the high frequency of views, comments, and likes, and through the subsequent adoption of elements such as music, audio, or effects. These elements are often reused to create new videos, forming self-reinforcing cycles of viral content [20].

Short-form video content is estimated to be 2.5 times more engaging than long-form content [18]. Additionally, two-thirds of users agree that short-form video content is the most engaging type of media, surpassing images, live videos, GIFs, and memes.

- 96% of consumers prefer to watch short videos to learn about a product or service.
- Short-form video offers the highest return on investment and is also the most effective format for generating followers and engagement.
- Nearly one-third of all short-form videos are viewed through 81% of their duration.
- 47% of marketing professionals agree that short-form videos are more likely to go viral.
- In 2024, adults in the United States actively used TikTok for an average of 46 minutes per day, with projections indicating an increase to 48 minutes daily by the end of the year [21].

To capitalize on TikTok's growth, social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube have introduced their own short-form video features, including Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts [21]. Facebook, for example, has implemented measures such as showing more recommended content in users' news feeds, making TikTok-style content discovery possible [22].

1.2 Short videos in tourism

Short videos in tourism are an effective tool for showcasing a destination's qualities and conveying emotions, even provoking sensations in viewers. Their impact on travelers is significantly greater than that of photographs in any format, leading to stronger memories of destinations, increased repeat service purchases, and higher recommendation rates for establishments [5]. In this sense, short videos in tourism can be considered three-dimensional representations of tourist destinations. By publishing short videos, destinations actively promote their image through specialized media, positioning these videos as essential communication channels for tourism promotion [23].

Compared to traditional graphic marketing, tourism promotion through short videos has a natural advantage: visualization, which offers a more intuitive perspective. In short tourism videos, travelers can obtain a vivid and comprehensive understanding of a destination's landscape, making them feel more involved than they would through written descriptions or static images. This compensates for the limitations of travel blogs and review websites, which rely on textual descriptions and do not provide an immersive experience for tourists [10]. The level of impact that video content has on a traveler is therefore greater than that of photographs [3]. With the expansion of the Internet, social media, mobile devices, and digital photography, the image of a destination is increasingly shaped not by official marketing but by user-generated content [10].

Centennials and millennials are the groups most likely to create videos, due to their affinity for multimedia content; however, people of all ages enjoy watching them. Thanks to their easy shareability, these videos are quickly distributed across multiple platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram, often through stories and status updates. Technology has made the co-creation of experiences increasingly common, especially in the tourism sector [24]. The food and beverage tourism sub-sector stands out on TikTok, where short videos are widely shared and consumed [25].

1.3 TikTok as a tourism tool

TikTok's popularity continues to attract an increasing number of users, making it one of the fastest-growing mobile applications in terms of both popularity and downloads [11]. It has become the preferred social network for many travelers to share specific aspects of their journeys and lifestyles. Previously, people primarily relied on photography to share their travel experiences [5]. However, short TikTok videos are entertaining, provide a wealth of useful information in a concise amount of time, and help travelers make more informed travel decisions. When watching videos on TikTok,

factors such as its playful features, ease of use, and perceived usefulness influence the flow experience of potential travelers [10].

During the pandemic, the three main reasons users turned to TikTok in their free time were to watch funny videos, pass the time, and get new ideas [26]. However, TikTok users no longer view it solely as an entertainment platform but also as a medium for disseminating information and knowledge. It is important to note that one of the primary interests of tourists during their trips is creating and sharing photo and video content on their personal social media accounts. Sharing experiences in different formats is common practice in this sector, and with the emergence of TikTok, this trend has expanded considerably [5]. Qualitative analyses have confirmed the increasing impact of TikTok short videos on shaping destination images and influencing tourists' behavioral intentions [9].

Many destinations around the world have become trending topics thanks to TikTok, where the use of specific hashtags such as #tourism, #sustainabletourism, and #travel—as well as the names of cities and countries—is the most common way to tag and reference short videos. In the tourism sector, the most popular videos often feature travelers in landscapes that highlight the destination's main attractions. Consequently, TikTok influencers frequently seek out places with distinctive or unusual natural features to showcase in their content [5].

Unlike other social media platforms such as blogs, Instagram, and Facebook, which rely heavily on influencers with large followings to promote products and ideas, TikTok employs a distinct algorithm that popularizes content based on user interactions, video information, devices used, and account settings [27]. Compared with other user-generated video platforms, TikTok stands out for its appeal to a wide range of age groups, thanks to its rich variety of content and intuitive interface [8].

Launched in 2016, TikTok was the first major short-form video platform. It is dedicated exclusively to short-form content, although it has recently incorporated a BeReal-inspired feature called *TikTok Now* [21]. The platform's home interface allows users to toggle between the "For You" tab, which offers personalized algorithmic recommendations, and the "Following" tab, which displays videos posted by accounts the user follows [21]. TikTok also includes a "Discover" section (accessible through the magnifying glass icon), which many users employ as a search engine to find content, learn specific skills, and explore new ideas [21]. TikTok is no longer merely a space where young creators share dances; rather, it is emerging as one of the main platforms that brands use to reach millennials and centennials [28].

1.4 Influencers in tourism

An influencer is a person who can shape others' purchasing decisions because of their authority, expertise, prominent social position, or close relationship with their audience. Generally, influencers have a large following within a specific niche or topic and maintain constant interaction with their followers [28]. Today, social media influencers focus their content on the interests of their online communities and share characteristics such as strong representativeness among specific audiences [29].

Influencers are now present on virtually every social media platform, including TikTok, where they create specialized content that attracts attention and encourages replication [5]. A tourism influencer is a travel enthusiast who, thanks to social media, has become a key figure in promoting a destination's main attractions and values. Their influence lies in their ability to connect with their communities, sharing and recommending positive experiences based on their own visits or consumption. They also have the power to affect others' purchasing decisions and behaviors through the digital content they share [30].

Influencers and celebrities who produce tourism-related content on short-form video platforms stimulate users' travel interests and intentions. As a result, short-form video marketing has a significant impact on destination promotion [15]. For example, short-form videos serve as an effective tool for tourism marketing, and the immersive experience of streaming TV (STV) content can positively influence attitudes toward a destination brand [17].

Moreover, research has confirmed that influencers targeting generations such as millennials can shape travel decision-making, as this generation tends to accept information produced by influencers they admire or identify with [31]. It has also been demonstrated that trust is a crucial factor in followers' acceptance of influence once they consider elements such as an influencer's follower count and the authenticity of their activities.

1.5 Study variables

1.5.1 Use of short videos

Use refers to the behavior consumers exhibit toward social media [32]. A large number of users who employ social media for travel purposes search for information about destinations and accommodations on these platforms; in this sense, they rely heavily on the advice and experiences shared there. Research has shown the influence of habit on actual technology use in tourism [33]. Actual use refers to the frequency with

which travelers consult online reviews and user-generated content (UGC) to plan their trips [33].

1.5.2 Type of videos

The variety of videos available on TikTok can influence travel intentions and destination choices. Therefore, to promote a destination effectively on this platform, it is essential to identify the types of videos that tourists prefer to watch. In this regard, understanding what kind of video content travelers seek and how it influences their decisions is crucial. Likewise, the perceived ease of use of social media—particularly short-form video platforms—represents the resources and support users feel when navigating a platform. Researchers suggest that TikTok’s ease of use actively shapes tourists’ destination choice behavior [32].

1.5.3 Trust

Trustworthiness refers to “consumer trust in a source to provide information objectively and honestly” [34]. In this research, “sources” refer to individuals who post reviews and create content on travel websites, social media platforms, or other online channels. Trustworthiness is a major concern for consumers in online environments due to the lack of identity verification [35]. This is especially important in online travel reviews and user-generated content, as such information can be manipulated or falsified [36]. Studies that include trustworthiness as a predictor of the intention to use online travel reviews consistently find it to be a key determinant of travelers’ willingness to use such reviews or recommendations [37], [38]. Furthermore, trust influences travelers’ willingness to book hotels through online platforms [39], [40].

Social media can provide not only functional experiences but also emotional, social, and personal value, meeting consumer needs on multiple levels and increasing trust in these networks [41]. When there is a relationship of trust between social media and its users, platforms are more likely to influence behavior. Under this premise, when people trust social media, this trust can affect their decision to purchase tourism products or services, as well as their destination choices and travel intentions.

1.5.4 Influencers

The experiences and suggestions of other tourists shared online have a significant influence on destination decisions, with social media serving as a key channel for

users to gather travel information [42]. In this sense, shared experiences and recommendations related to tourism products, as well as negative comments, can lead to changes in travel plans [41]. Young people are particularly susceptible to the influence of friends, family, and peers [43]. Similarly, influencers and celebrities on social media have a considerable impact on their followers [44]. Social media influencers have become an essential factor in determining purchasing predisposition and intent, as they inspire their followers through the content they share [41].

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research used a mixed-method approach, was descriptive in scope, and employed a cross-sectional design. Four hypotheses were proposed for the methodological development. The first section of the instrument contained nominal, polytomous, and closed-ended questions to collect demographic data on the participants (city, age group, sex, and educational background). For the ordinal questions, a five-point Likert scale was used, ranging from *always* to *never*.

Based on the theoretical framework, the following hypotheses were proposed to evaluate the influence of short videos on tourism decision-making:

- H1: Frequent use of short videos on social media is positively related to decision-making in tourism.
- H2: Perceived trust in short videos on social media is positively related to decision-making in tourism.
- H3: Regular consumption of short videos on social media is positively related to travel intention and the choice of tourist destinations.
- H4: The influence of content creators (influencers) in short videos is positively related to decision-making in tourism.

These hypotheses were evaluated using a 28-item instrument, and Spearman's correlation was employed to analyze the relationships between variables, with a significance level of $p < 0.05$. The 28-item questionnaire was developed based on studies addressing the use of social networks and user-generated content in tourism [33], the influence of short videos on travel intention [8], [16], and trust as a key factor in technological adoption and decision-making [34], [35], [37], [38]. The structure of the instrument aligned with the dimensions analyzed in previous research, and its reliability was verified using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.84$).

Initially, the study was aimed solely at millennials and centennials because these age groups are the most active social media users [7]. However, it was later expanded to include older generations, such as baby boomers and Generation X, as well as Generation Alpha (people born after 2010), to measure the impact of short videos on a broader range of age groups. Primary data were collected through a Google Forms survey.

A pilot test was conducted with ten individuals from various age groups to verify that the items were clearly understood, ensuring that anyone could complete the survey.

Sampling

The questionnaire was distributed primarily to high school and university students, as well as teachers, at the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo in Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico. Snowball sampling was carried out between September 25 and October 17, 2024. The survey was distributed using Google Forms and received 1,048 responses.

3. RESULTS

The results reveal that young audiences increasingly turn to short videos to explore travel options, being primarily influenced by content creators on TikTok and Instagram.

Age group

The centennial generation had the highest participation rate in the research, accounting for 80% of the total sample, primarily because the survey was conducted among high school and college students. The second-highest participation came from millennials, representing 9.4%, while the remaining 10% of the sample consisted of participants from Generation X, Generation Alpha, and the baby boomer generation.

Table 1.- Distribution of the sample by age group.

	Frequency	Percentage
Centennial (Born between 1994-2010)	838	80.0
Millennial (Born between 1980-1993)	99	9.4
Generation X (Born between 1969-1979)	50	4.8
Generation Alpha (Born after 2010)	31	3.0
Baby Boomer (Born between 1949 - 1968)	30	2.9
Total	1048	100.0

Source: Own work.

Regarding the participants’ educational level, the majority of respondents had completed high school (65.6%). 13.4% had a bachelor’s degree and 7.3% a postgraduate degree, while the percentages with technical and secondary education were very low.

Table 2.- Distribution of the sample by level of academic training.

	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary	2	0.2
High School	687	65.6
Technical Level	15	1.4
University	127	12.1
Degree	140	13.4
Postgraduate	77	7.3
Total	1048	100.0

Source: Own work.

TikTok was the most used social network for watching short videos, with 77.2% of respondents. Instagram followed with 69.6%. Approximately one-third of participants reported using Facebook, YouTube, or WhatsApp for this purpose. WhatsApp is particularly noteworthy. Despite being an instant messaging app, it currently serves a dual purpose, as many users consider it a suitable space for watching short videos. In this sense, WhatsApp no longer only circulates short content posted by each user’s contacts. The platform (owned by Facebook) has developed “channels” where people can follow brands, influencers, public figures, etc., to share messages, news, and other content in video format.

Table 3.- Social networks used to watch short videos.

	Percentage
TikTok	77.2
Instagram	69.6
Facebook	37.7
YouTube	35.5
WhatsApp	32.7
Snapchat	2.0
None	1.0
Other	0.7

Source: Own work.

Table 4.- Social networks used to upload short videos.

	Percentage
Instagram	46.8
WhatsApp	36.6
TikTok	36.5
None	24.7
Facebook	16.5
YouTube	6.3
Snapchat	1.1
Other	0.4

Source: Own work.

A difference was identified in social media preferences for watching versus uploading short videos. 46.8% of respondents primarily use Instagram to share short videos. In this case, WhatsApp appears as the second most used network for uploading short videos, with 36.6%, above the 35.5% for TikTok (which is the most preferred platform for watching short videos). A quarter of respondents stated they have no preferred social media platform for uploading short videos, suggesting that, although they consume this type of content, they do not generate it to share on their networks. Social networks such as Facebook, YouTube, and Snapchat together accounted for less than 25% of the preference for generating and uploading short video content.

Regarding the average daily time spent watching short videos, the results indicate that 75% of respondents spend between one and more than two hours a day on this activity. By age group, millennials spend the most time watching short videos,

with 83% reporting more than one hour a day, followed by Generation Alpha at 65%. Generation X and millennials displayed similar behaviors, with 54% and 52% respectively. Finally, only one in four baby boomers reported spending more than one hour a day, on average, watching short videos.

Table 5.- Average daily time spent watching short videos.

	Frequency	Percentage
Approximately 1 hour	295	28.1
Between 1 and 2 hours	263	25.1
More than 2 hours	232	22.1
Less than 30 minutes	191	18.2
Nothing	67	6.4
Total	1048	100.0

Source: Own work.

Among the main reasons respondents watch short videos is the diversity of content this format offers (tutorials, news, cultural content, etc.), cited by 46.8%. This is followed by videos intended for entertainment or humor (36.6%). Likewise, 36.5% indicated they watch short videos because their contacts share them, and 24.7% do so to follow what is trending.

Table 6.- Reasons for watching short videos on social networks.

	Percentage
For the content	46.8
They are funny videos	36.6
Because my contacts share it	36.5
Fashion	24.7
None	16.5
Other	0.4

Source: Own work.

Table 7.- Most viewed types of travel content in short videos.

	Percentage
Experiences (Customized trips)	59.5
Natural landscapes	55.8
Food and Restaurants	33.3
Architecture	28.5
Other	5.3

Source: Own work.

Regarding the content of the most viewed short travel videos, 59.5% mentioned personalized travel experiences, followed by natural landscapes (55.8%). Videos about food and restaurants were the third most popular category (33.3%), followed by videos related to architecture (28.5%). This suggests that this type of short travel video is often used by some travel influencers to interact with users, allowing them to evaluate experiences and destinations in the short timeframe of a reel or social media story.

Table 8.- Percentage of respondents who follow travel influencers or channels on social media.

	Frequency	Percentage
Yeah	751	71.7
No	297	28.3
Total	1048	100.0

Source: Own work.

Influencers have become an essential part of social media’s popularity and, in many cases, are responsible for users spending a significant portion of their time interacting with them. 71.7% of respondents (considering all age groups) follow a travel influencer. Younger age groups (centennials and alphas) have the highest percentages of travel influencer following, at 75% and 74% respectively. In contrast, older age groups are the least likely to follow travel influencers: approximately 40% of baby boomers, 46% of Generation Xers, and 56% of millennials reported doing so. This data suggests different levels of trust in influencers depending on age: while it is common for younger people to follow travel influencers to consume their content, older age groups tend to use other traditional means (travel agencies, word of mouth from friends, direct internet searches) to obtain tourist information.

Luisito Comunica was the most well-known travel influencer among respondents across all age groups. This content creator currently has more than 42 million subscribers on YouTube, 33.5 million followers on Instagram, 26 million on Facebook, and 17 million on TikTok, for a total of approximately 118.5 million followers. The second most well-known influencer was “Alan x el mundo,” who has more than 3.6 million subscribers on YouTube, 1.8 million followers on Instagram, 2.1 million on Facebook, and 0.68 million on TikTok (approximately 8.2 million followers in total). These data demonstrate the influencers’ ability to be key players in promoting destination awareness and influencing their followers’ travel decision-making.

Table 9.- Travel influencers most recognized by respondents.

	Percentage
Luisito Comunica	83.8
Alan x el mundo	30.0
Alex Tienda	12.2
None	10.4
Yo soy viajera	8.8
Sin postal	7.5
Mariel de viaje	6.7
Other	2.6

Source: Own work.

Measurement model

As a first step, the reliability and validity of the model were measured. Cronbach’s alpha was used to evaluate the internal consistency of each question or item with the others. Cronbach’s alpha is the average correlation, which allows us to assess the reliability or internal consistency of the instrument, in this case, a Likert scale [45]. To analyze the data obtained, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 22.2) software was used, yielding a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.84 for the total of 28 items evaluated. According to the Cronbach’s alpha reliability classification scale, a value of 0.84 is considered adequate, as it falls within the range of 0.7 to 0.9. Therefore, the consistency of the items in the measuring instrument indicates that the questions consistently measure the same construct. [46].

As a second step, a correlation analysis was performed. For this, Spearman's Rho correlation analysis method was employed, which enables the measurement of the association between pairs of variables by examining the correlation between each of the variables used. Correlations relate percentages obtained by the sample in two or more variables. It is essential to note that correlation does not imply causality; however, it is also important to recognize that the higher the degree of the coefficient, the stronger the relationship between the variables compared [47].

Table 10.- Spearman correlation about the use of short videos

		1	2
1.- How much do you enjoy watching short videos on social media? (WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube)	DC Sig. (Bilateral)	1.00	.365 ** 0.00
2.- Do you use other users' reviews as a reference for your short videos?	DC Sig. (Bilateral)	.365 ** 0.00	1.00

Source: Own work.

Table 10, for example, shows a significant correlation ($\rho = 0.365$, $p < 0.01$) between the enjoyment of watching short videos on social media and the fact that other users' reviews are used as a reference for these videos; thus, this coefficient corresponds to a positive correlation of medium magnitude between both items.

The Spearman correlation matrix is presented in Figure 1 below as a heat map, displaying the correlation coefficients.

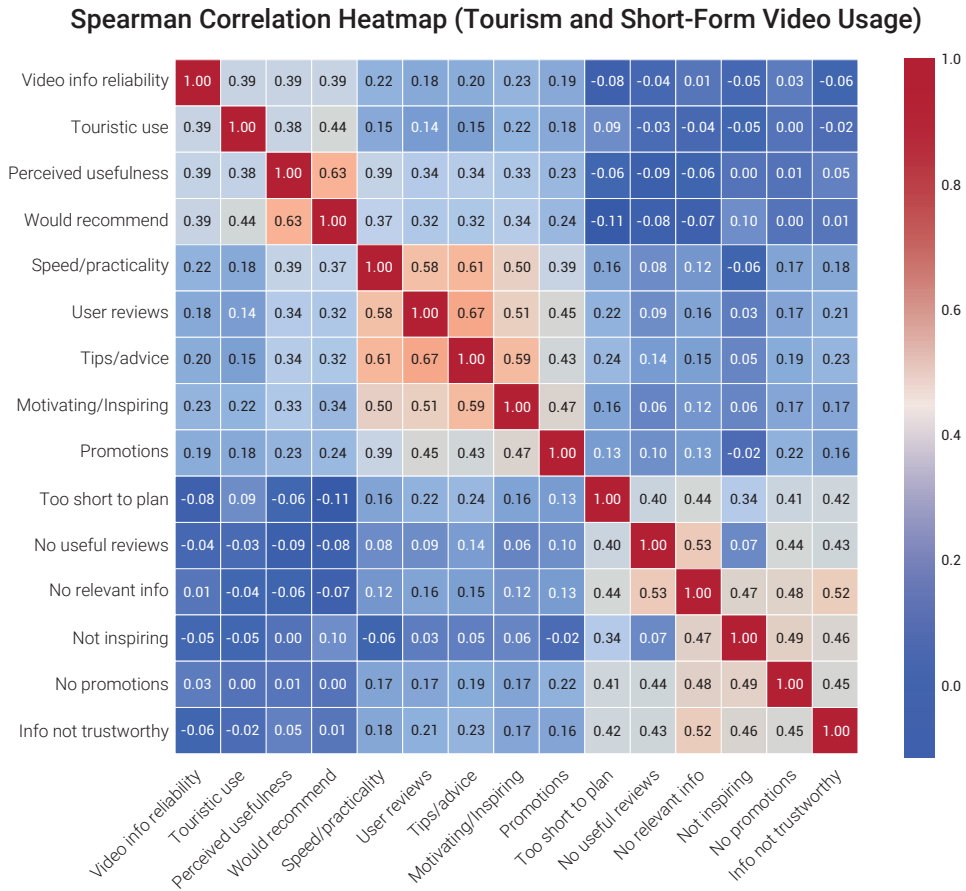


Figure 1.- Spearman correlation matrix: Heat map with correlation coefficients
 Source: Own work.

It was found that the correlation between the items showing the highest value is 0.67, which can be classified as a medium positive correlation between the items. [46] What reasons lead you to obtain tourist information about a destination through short videos? [Reviews from other consumers] VS What reasons lead you to obtain tourist information about a destination through short videos? [Information and/or advice]. Another significant correlation between the items in this dimension is: Do you think short videos help obtain information about travel and tourist destinations? VS Would you recommend watching short videos to family and friends to get information about travel and tourist destinations? With a value of 0.624.

Table 11.- Spearman correlation about decision making in short videos

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.- Have you ever purchased any tourist service using short videos as a reference?	DC Sig. (Bilateral)	1.00						
2.- Have you ever visited a tourist destination after seeing it in a short video?	DC Sig. (Bilateral)	0.660** 0.00	1.00					
3.- After watching a short video, does it motivate me to take a trip to the destination I just saw?	DC Sig. (Bilateral)	0.450** 0.00	0.499** 0.00	1.00				
4.- Would you travel to a destination based on the appeal of short videos? (WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube)	DC Sig. (Bilateral)	-0.024 0.442	0.022 0.484	0.008 0.00	1.00			
5.- Would you use short videos to help you decide which tourist destination to visit?	DC Sig. (Bilateral)	0.406** 0.00	0.474** 0.00	0.563** 0.00	-0.026 -0.407	1.00		
6.- Do short videos related to tourism make you research the destination?	DC Sig. (Bilateral)	0.370** 0.00	0.451** 0.00	0.490* 0.00	0.062* 0.046	0.535**	1.00	
7.- Do you think it is possible to make travel decisions based on the travel information provided by short videos?	DC Sig. (Bilateral)	0.458** 0.00	0.443** 0.00	0.476* 0.00*	-0.035 0.262	0.624** 0.00	0.528** 0.00	1.00

Source: Own work.

Table 11 shows the Spearman correlation matrix for the travel decision-making dimension based on short videos. This matrix highlights, for example, a strong correlation ($\rho = 0.660, p < 0.01$) between purchasing a tourist service based on short videos and visiting a tourist destination after watching a short video. A moderate correlation ($\rho \approx 0.56, p < 0.01$) is also observed between using short videos to decide which destination to visit and the motivation to research a destination further after watching a short video.

Table 12.- Spearman correlation about tourism influencers in short videos.

		1	2	3
1.- Do you trust the information obtained through short videos from influencers?	DC Sig. (Bilateral)	1.00		
2.- Would you like to visit a tourist destination that an influencer recommends or showcases in a short video?	DC Sig. (Bilateral)	0.61 0.00	1.00	
3.- Would you buy tourist products from a destination recommended by an influencer?	DC Sig. (Bilateral)	0.52 0.00	0.55 0.00	1.00

Source: Own work.

Hypothesis evaluation based on Spearman’s correlation

Table 12 corresponds to the influence dimension of influencers in short videos. The highest correlation ($\rho = 0.61, p < 0.01$) is observed between the trust in information obtained through short videos from influencers and the desire to visit a destination that they recommend or show. Likewise, there is a significant correlation ($\rho = 0.55, p < 0.01$) between the desire to see a tourist destination recommended by an influencer and the intention to purchase tourist products from a destination promoted by an influencer.

Spearman’s correlation coefficients (Table 13) were used to determine whether specific hypotheses were supported. The following criteria were used to accept or reject a hypothesis: $\rho \geq 0.50$ indicates a strong relationship; $0.30 \leq \rho < 0.50$ indicates a moderate relationship; and $0.10 \leq \rho < 0.30$ indicates a weak relationship. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ (ideally $p < 0.01$) is required to consider the relationship significant.

Table 13.- Hypothesis test.

Hypothesis	Content	Result
H1	The use of short videos is related to decision-making in tourism	Accepted
H2	Trust in short videos is related to decision-making in tourism	Accepted
H3	The consumption of short videos is related to decision-making in tourism	Accepted
H4	Influencers in short videos are related to decision-making in tourism	Accepted

Source: Own work

H1. The use of short videos in decision-making in tourism is accepted
 “Have you used short videos for tourism purposes?” has significant correlations with:

"Have you ever purchased any tourist service based on short videos?" ($\rho = 0.392, p < 0.01$).

"Would you use short videos to decide which tourist destination to visit?" ($\rho = 0.406, p < 0.01$).

"Do you think it is possible to make travel decisions based on information from short videos?" ($\rho = 0.458, p < 0.01$).

This indicates a moderate relationship between the use of short videos and decision-making in tourism.

H2. trust in short videos is related to decision-making in tourism.

"Do you think the information in short videos is reliable?" correlates with:

"Have you used short videos for tourism purposes?" ($\rho = 0.392, p < 0.01$).

"Would you use short videos to decide which tourist destination to visit?" ($\rho = 0.406, p < 0.01$).

"Do you think it is possible to make travel decisions based on information from short videos?" ($\rho = 0.458, p < 0.01$).

This confirms that trust in short videos has a moderate relationship with travel decision-making.

H3. The consumption of short videos is related to decision-making in tourism, a phenomenon widely accepted.

"Have you used short videos for tourism purposes?" and "Have you ever purchased any tourism services using short videos?" have a strong relationship ($\rho = 0.660, p < 0.01$).

"Does watching a short video motivate me to take a trip?" correlates with taking a trip ($\rho = 0.490, p < 0.01$).

The consumption of short videos shows a significant relationship with decision-making in tourism.

H4. Influencers in short videos are related to decision-making in tourism.

"Do you trust the information obtained through influencers' short videos?" correlates with:

"Would you like to visit a tourist destination recommended by an influencer?" ($\rho = 0.61, p < 0.01$).

"Would you buy tourism products from a destination recommended by an influencer?" ($\rho = 0.52, p < 0.01$).

These strong correlations indicate that short-video influencers do influence travel decision-making.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The contemporary tourism industry is profoundly influenced by the proliferation of short, authentic, and emotionally engaging content, which has transformed the dynamics of tourism promotion and consumption. Short videos, particularly those distributed on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts, have become key tools for capturing user attention and facilitating the discovery of destinations, experiences, and services in a fast-paced and visually engaging way.

This trend has led to an evolution toward more segmented and personalized communication strategies, where content is designed to resonate with specific audiences. Collaboration with influencers and content creators allows destinations and companies in the sector to expand their reach, foster engagement, and build trust with diverse audiences. Data collected in this research reveal that 53% of respondents watch between one and two hours of short videos daily, demonstrating an intensive use pattern that directly impacts decisions related to leisure, travel planning, and destination selection.

The findings confirm that millennials and centennials are the main consumers of this type of content, although their conversion rates differ. While centennials exhibit high consumption levels, their active participation in tourism activities is limited by factors such as age, purchasing power, and student lifestyle. Millennials view short videos as a relevant source of information for organizing itineraries, purchasing tourism products, and enriching travel experiences; however, they are not necessarily the primary drivers of these decisions.

In this digital ecosystem, influencers have emerged as strategic players in tourism marketing. Their ability to generate content perceived as authentic, relatable, and trustworthy positions them as effective intermediaries between tourism brands and potential consumers. Through photographs, videos, reviews, recommendations, and practical guides, influencers construct experiential narratives that stimulate the desire to travel. This connection is reinforced by high levels of interaction (engagement), which favor content virality and transform interest into action. Therefore, governments, companies, and tourism organizations should collaborate with these creators through strategies such as sponsored trips, branded content, and destination ambassadorships.

The findings of this research allow marketing engineers to refine algorithmic targeting, predictive modeling, and personalized campaigns that capitalize on viral content and influential figures such as Luisito Comunica, thereby enhancing consumer engagement and conversion in tourism marketing strategies. From the perspective of marketing engineering, the study provides robust empirical evidence that bridges

theoretical frameworks with practical digital applications, reinforcing the strategic value of short-form video analytics in understanding consumer behavior and decision-making. By demonstrating that variables such as use, trust, and influencer credibility correlate positively with travel intentions, this research validates short videos as a powerful mechanism for tourism promotion. Ultimately, this contribution advances the discipline of marketing engineering by delivering data-driven insights that support the design of innovative, sustainable, and consumer-centered strategies in the global tourism sector.

However, this dynamic also poses ethical challenges. Algorithms that prioritize highly engaging content, without necessarily considering its informative or sustainable value, can create biased portrayals of tourism based on idealized aspirations. This phenomenon particularly affects younger generations, who are vulnerable to social pressure and unrealistic models of tourism consumption. Algorithmic hyper-personalization can limit exposure to diverse experiences and promote decisions driven by popularity rather than cultural, environmental, or economic relevance.

Likewise, artificial intelligence is becoming a central element in shaping the content users consume. Its ability to identify individual preference patterns opens new possibilities for personalized recommendations of destinations, activities, accommodations, and tourism experiences. However, this power must be managed responsibly, following ethical principles of inclusion and transparency.

This research represents the first empirical study examining the impact of short videos on tourism decision-making in the Mexican context, particularly among university students. Its findings provide evidence on how the dimensions of use, trust, content, and creator influence shape new dynamics in digital tourism consumption.

Based on the findings, stakeholders in the tourism sector are encouraged to reassess their digital marketing strategies, incorporating concise, authentic, and user-centered content that balances visual appeal with responsible messaging. Campaigns based on real experiences, the strategic integration of influencers, and the use of AI tools for audience segmentation should align with principles of sustainability, diversity, and accessibility.

Recommendations for future research

Future studies should expand the sample to include different sociodemographic profiles and geographic contexts, conduct longitudinal analyses to observe the evolution of the phenomenon, apply advanced statistical models (EFA, SEM, ANOVA) to validate

causal relationships between key variables, and integrate audiovisual content analysis and narrative elements from videos.

Limitations

The main limitation of the study is its sampling approach, which focuses on university students, limiting the generalizability of results to other populations. The snowball sampling method also reduces participant diversity. Furthermore, as this is a cross-sectional study, it does not allow for the evaluation of behavioral changes over time. These aspects must be considered when interpreting the findings.

Despite these limitations, the study provides novel evidence in an emerging field. Future research should further explore the social, cultural, and technological implications of short videos in tourism, fostering a critical, inclusive, and sustainable approach to digital communication in the tourism sector.

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