

How the digital backpacker can positively impact tourism

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In many ways, the travel industry has tended to focus on business travelers and richer tourists, ignoring travelers such as backpackers who tend to travel on a tight budget and have little to spend on their journey.

However, there is a subset of backpackers, informed and educated and highly active on social media that the industry would do well to find ways of engaging with. These digital backpackers commonly review and report on the places they visit and the sights they see, often as video bloggers, or vloggers.

Research in the *International Journal of Knowledge Management in Tourism and Hospitality*, has investigated the vlogging backpacker and how some of these people have become so-called "influencers." The influencer effect could have a positive impact on tourism especially if the industry can engage well with those people who might encourage others to visit a particular destination.

Hasliza Hassan of the Multimedia University in Cyberjaya and Abu Bakar Sade of the Universiti Putra Malaysia, both in Selangor, Malaysia and Muhammad Sabbir Rahman of the North South University in Dhaka, Bangladesh, point out that already many vlogging [backpackers](#) have been recruited as ambassadors. For [tourist destinations](#) in many parts of the world that are perhaps not on the usual commercial travel itineraries this could mean a big boom in travel to those places in years to come. This could help reverse much of the decline in tourism caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the team suggests.

The researchers point out that travel vloggers tend to have a [positive outlook](#) on the places they visit, the sights they see, and the food and entertainment they take part in while traveling. Followers of the big influencers expect and anticipate this positivity, the team says. The suggestion from the research is that tourism agencies must keep travel vloggers in mind as digitally savvy allies who might be supported through an offering of accommodation and transport and so have an influence on a particular destination or travel route. This could make the digital backpacker a powerful component of promotion in the travel and [tourism industry](#), the team adds.

More information: Hasliza Hassan et al, Digitalising backpacker to travel vlogger, *International Journal of Knowledge Management in Tourism and Hospitality* (2022). [DOI: 10.1504/IJKMTH.2022.124101](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJKMTH.2022.124101)

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