Developing Trust through Social Media Influencers and Halal Tourism to Impact the Travel Decision of Travelers

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Abstract

Marketers are trying their best to find tactics and means of communication to gain the trust of consumers by attracting them and keeping their needs and interests in view, like halal tourism in the domain of the hospitability industry. The main purpose of this study is to analyze and explain whether the trust is developed by Social Media influencers and Halal Tourism and hence impacts the travel decision of travelers or not, in the context of Pakistan. In this regard, the data is collected from university students of the University of Punjab Gujranwala Campus and GIFT University. After collection different tests of normality, correlation, regression, and mediations were run on the data for analysis by using statistical software SPSS 20. After analysis, it was found that all hypotheses are accepted and interpreted that Social Media Influencers and Halal Tourism significantly impact the decisions of travelers. The study also revealed that trust mediates the relationship between Social Media influencers and Travel decisions; as well as the relation between Halal Tourism and Travel decisions. Organizations and managers must use these findings and knowledge to attract consumers and enhance their profits. These findings contribute to theory as it is the first study of its type and paves way for future research.

Keywords: *Social Media Influencer, Halal Tourism, Trust, Decisions, Travelers*

Introduction

Marketers are trying their best to attract consumers through different mediums of communication. Social media helps in shaping the perceptions and feelings of consumers.[1] Marketers didn't waste their time in taking benefits from the efficacy of social media. Marketers use different social media platforms for promotions. Nowadays, from YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, etc.; Instagram is the platform that is widely used by marketers to promote their products with the help of influencers. According to Matthew[2] the users of social media sometimes got frustrated from the social media advertisements which lead to the increasing use of ad blockers at an alarming rate. According to,[3] ad-blocking is increasing by 40% per year. For this purpose, marketers use influencers for influencing the attitudes and intentions of consumers usually known as influencer marketing. A few years back, many people become famous because of their profiles that attract the people[4] These influencers highly impact the attitudes, behaviors, and decisions of consumers from pre-purchase to post-purchase. This is the reason that advertisers come up to the influencers again and again to endorse their brands and products, a strategy referred to as influencer marketing.[5] Influencers make collaborations with brands and give reviews about the product or service and are then paid by the companies.[6] Like other disciplines, influencers impact the behaviors of customers even in the tourism sector. Influencers influence the travel decisions of travelers and shape their perceptions about places. Influencers share their experience through vlogs and post attractive pictures on their profiles that act as a stimulus to create the desire to travel to that place.

However, influencers can be useful for companies for trust-building. Trust is an important factor that plays a vital role in influencer marketing and as well as in tourism marketing and it is also helpful in building long-term relationships with consumers.[7] When consumer follows an influencer, then they are highly influenced by their lifestyles, and their other daily activities and consider them trustworthy, and take decisions based on their opinions and reviews. The reason for the development of trust is that the consumers consider these influencers as 'normal people' unlike celebrities; they find relevance with them and feel that there is congruence between them and social media influencers

The tourism industry is one of the industries that is expanding rapidly and provides economic benefits to the country. The worldwide importance of the tourism industry indicates that it is very crucial to understand the interests and preferences of travelers.[8] In past years, it is witnessed that there are increasing trends in 'halal tourism' and there is high growth in the number of international movements relating to halal tourism.[9] Halal tourism is an emerging product in Muslim as well as non-Muslim countries. The population of Muslims is growing rapidly and creates the need for halal aspects in every

field. There were1.8 billion Muslims in the world in 2017 and expected to reach 2.2 billion by 2030.[10] In the past decades, Muslims usually travel to their holly places like mecca and Madinah. But now Muslims desire to travel to every destination and the number of Muslim travelers is increasing day by day. This creates the need to focus on halal tourism practically and even in research.

Marketers use halal tourism to attract consumers or travelers who are conscious of religion. Halal tourism is a subcategory of Islamic tourism that Muslims undertake and includes all the aspects that are permissible by Islam. Companies take guidelines from Sharia and Hadith to implement halal tourism. The attitude of Muslims is positively or negatively influenced by the perception of high or low-quality of halal service of the destination and highly impacts the traveler's choice and decision.[11] Halal tourism practices are very helpful in gaining the trust of consumers eventually affecting the intentions of travelers that they should travel to that destination or not and whether the destination attracts non-Muslims who want a good and healthy environment. Marketers and companies have to develop strategies to take benefit from the opportunity of developing halal products[12] and capture the Muslim market.

Similarly, in recent years, non-Muslim countries like Singapore and Thailand successfully attract Muslim travelers by developing halal characteristics in their tourism sectors.[13] Dinar standard conducted a survey and come to know that 50% of the Muslim tourists are highly considering Muslim-friendly experiences and halal food is the major issue that is cited by 66% of Muslim tourists.[14] Turkey is the 5th on the list of European top destinations for halal tourism and attracting Muslims to the middle east. Muslim travel index Europe of 2014 indicates that because of turkey's Islamic heritage 58% of tourists desired to travel to turkey.[15]

These trends in the tourism sector indicate that there is a need for research in the academic and managerial context. People get information from social media and are believing that the reviews provided by influencers are trustworthy and companies that provide halal tourism services are also trustworthy. These trends are significantly impacting the tourism sectors of the whole world and every country is catering to these trends.

Literature Review

There is limited research in this domain, and it is the first study of its type conducted in Pakistan and based on the tourism industry. There is a lack of a theoretical definition of the word influencer.[16] Influencer marketing is a developing strategy and tactic of marketing. Influencer marketers endorse a person who has got fame on social media and because of this, they impact others and are sometimes referred to as brand ambassadors.[17] Moreover, this marketing is non-intrusive and has more engaging power than traditional

marketing.[18] Similarly, people pay more attention to these types of people as they see their reflection in those influencers. Companies try to make a strong bond with influencers and the same desire is of influencers so that these strong relations result in better and positive word of mouth.

Marketing literature lacks studies related to influencer marketing in the tourism context. This study is focused on the tourism industry and influencer marketing. There are a lot of influencers and bloggers who shape the decisions and help in the planning of any tour. Furthermore,[19] reveals that influencer marketing helps in boosting the popularity of any destination. Social media influencers are used to promote tourism and spread positive word of mouth which leads to over-tourism, similarly, it can negatively affect the traveler's decision-making.[20] This shows that negative content highly influences the intentions of positive content. However, negative comments about destinations and services can ruin the reputation of a traveling agency.[21] Moreover, this can decrease the desire to travel to that destination.[22]

Countries pay attention to tourism as it contributes to funds and provides countries with profitable economies. Progressing in the tourism sector some new trends become the opportunities that should be availed by the countries. One of these trends is halal tourism as the population of Muslims is 30% of the world's population and is expected to increase in the passing years. Halal tourism is a subcategory of religious tourism. Halbase[23] defines halal tourism as tour packages that are according to the considerations of Muslims and cater to Muslim needs. Many people think that halal tourism is all about food but it goes beyond food and covers many other facets.[24] Countries take knowledge about halal tourism from Shariah and it has two main sources including the Al-Quran and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (Peace be Upon Him). Whereas, the secondary sources include the Ijma (consensus), Ijtihad (personal reasoning), Qiyas (analogical deduction), and Maslaha (public interest).[25] All these sources help in defining what is allowed to Muslims and what is not allowed to them and what the teachings of Islam regard traveling.

Various studies expose that Indonesia received the most attention in the context of halal tourism and Malaysia is on second number.[26] Most people think that halal tourism is for non-Muslim countries as Muslim countries already have Islamic values that are implemented but the research and increasing trends of halal tourism in Indonesia and Malaysia indicate that the Islamic countries are mostly implementing halal tourism. Similarly, Indonesia has taken significant steps in the development of halal tourism and introduced this internationally with the help of campaigns and spread the word through social media.[27] Therefore, it is important for Islamic countries as well to promote and implement halal tourism to attract Muslims from other countries and non-Muslims of the world.

Trust is an important factor for companies and still become a topic of

research and has been studied by many previous researchers as well in the context of different disciplines. Several researchers from the hospitality industry started to study trust in the late 1990s. With the passing years, many researchers become familiar with the importance of trust in marketing.[28] Trust has been researched in various fields of tourism like travel agencies,[29] and airlines destination. Consumer trust is the element that helps gain the loyalty of the consumer. Also, trust is the main factor in building long-term relations.[30] Moreover, trust has many benefits as a marketing tool to gain sustainable relations with consumers. Furthermore, in the context of destination, place reputation has been found as the key element in developing trust.[31] Similarly, a better environment favors the tourism industry in adopting trust to have successful long-term relations.[32] Correspondingly, other factors are also helpful in building trust if any consumer is served well during the whole tour they will be satisfied and start trusting them. The intangibility of services and absence of transparency of services provided by the tourism sector leads to unavailability of information and unprincipled behavior.[33] This shows why there is a need of studying and researching on the trust in hospitality and tourism industry.[34]

Many previous studies are there that research the decision-making in various fields as well as in the tourism industry.[35] Stated that consumers make decisions daily related to their purchasing and marketers must confirm what the variables that affect the decision of consumers are. Travel decision is a process that includes pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase. Here purchase refers to the tour packages and products that a traveler buys for his tour and relates to the destination whether he should travel to that destination or not.

The decision process has been a concern for many researchers since 1960 in the field of marketing like[36] and these studies assist the companies that how they must manage the whole process from which a customer goes, and this process is referred to as the 'consumer decision journey' or 'consumer purchase journey'.[37] This journey of decision usually has four stages or pathways starting from consideration of offers i.e., awareness then evaluation of that offer, after this the purchase comes and in the end, post-purchase experience comes experience.[38] In the stage of pre-purchase, a desire to travel is generated in the traveler when he sees the stimulus. After this, he starts searching to get information and this leads to the evaluation of alternatives.[39] After this, the traveler makes the decision to travel to that place or not and what packages he should avail i.e., he makes the purchase decision. The last step in this journey is the post-purchase where a traveler shares his experience.[40]

Relational Literature Review

Relation between Social Media Influencers and Travel Decision

Many scholars found that Influencer generated content that they shared

on social media affects the decision-making process of consumers or the decision journey of travelers.[41]

Social media sites play a critical role in problem recognition, as well as in information searching.[42] Despite many channels for information searching and problem recognition, influencers play an important role in the previous few years and this influencer marketing technique is more effective in influencing travelers' decisions.

Furthermore, the information that consumers acquired in the pre-purchase stage shapes their perception and expectations which in turn affect the purchase decision[43] and in the traveling context the decision to travel. Besides, travel influencers are determined to stimulate their followers[44] and lead them to make their final decision. Hence, in the post-purchase stage, consumers post their personal experiences on social media[45] and that can be negative or positive. A positive review can urge other travelers and opposite this, negative reviews badly affect the decision to travel.[46]

Undertaking the influential role played by opinion leaders using social media[47] greatly affects the decision-making of travelers.[48] Highlighted digital influencers as spokesperson of a destination. Hence, Magno[49] suggests that marketers must take benefit from this influencer endorsement as they are the channel of targeting larger as well as smaller viewers and help influence their behaviors at different stages of the decision journey.

H1: Social Media Influencers have a significant impact on Travel decisions.

Relation between Halal Tourism and Travel Decision

Literature has indicated the influence of religion on buying decisions.[50] Similarly in the context of the travel industry, Delener[51] stated that Muslims constitute a major part of the international market and religion is an important factor that they essentially consider when making any decision and the decisions regarding travel destinations.[52] Believed that codes defined by Sharia impact the traveling choice of travelers. Most of the time and in various studies, it is revealed that Muslims usually travel to a place that seems to be appropriate and according to Islamic teachings. The availability of halal food highly impacts the traveler's decision to visit that place. Furthermore, it is to be observed that Muslim travelers perceive many factors like quality and environment; that intensely impact their buying decision process and satisfaction.[53] Similarly, Salem Harahsheh[54] also revealed the significant role of Muslim travelers' potential intentions to buy halal-friendly products or services on their decision-making journey.

Muslim traveler vlogs are useful to get halal tourism information these Muslim travelers' vlogs are the preferred option for pre-purchase knowledge, and it also impacts the Muslim traveler's decision-making process. This information can provide knowledge about the places that are according to

Islamic values and about hotels that provides halal services and products.

Opposing the above study, a study[55] considered that every Muslim is not abiding by all the rules of Islam and may not consider the principles of halal tourism while making their travel decisions.

H2: Halal Tourism has a significant impact on Travel decisions.

Relation between Trust and Travel Decision

Scholars believe that there is a significant relationship between trust and travel decisions. Also, Deepak[56] claimed that trust has a notable influence on decision making and as well as on consumer behavior. Similarly, Wen[57] stated that consumer trust has a positive relationship with the intention to purchase tour packages online. Whereas, according to Yusniza[58], there are no positive impacts between these two variables.

While trust affects the whole decision journey that consumer trust in virtual information is positively impacting online searching for information. Correspondingly, virtual reviews and collaborating platforms have a positive impact on buying intentions of consumers.[59] Trust has an impact on pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase. Traveler trust leads him to search from the trusted platform. Then this searched information leads to the final decision of travel. Afterward, it also affects the information-sharing behavior.[60] Also, the hospitality literature emphasized the strong relationship between trust and satisfaction which is part of post-purchase behavior.

H3: Trust has a significant impact on Travel decisions.

Relation between Social Media Influencers and Trust

Previous studies show that there is a link between social media influencers and trust. Lou Chen[61] found that the trust of the followers in influencer posts has a positive effect and it leads to the follower's willingness to buy a product or service.

Furthermore, past researchers found that the followers find more relevance in digital influencers and consumers consider them more trustworthy than celebrity endorsers and there is a consideration that influencers strongly and positively affect the purchase decision of consumers. Moreover, stronger trust is developed when consumers have previous positive experiences with the specific digital influence.[62]

In 2015, trust analysis in marketing revealed that reviews on social media were the 3rd reliable and influential source of marketing. Besides,[63] revealed that the influencer's credibility affects the follower or traveler's trust. Similarly, the same study shows that influencer-generated content, its informativeness, and entertainment will influence the trust of followers.

However, studies also determined that the trust of followers or travelers may be lost by sponsored posts by the influencers.[64] Similarly, Hudders[65] revealed that posts that are sponsored could reduce trust.

H4: Trust mediates the relationship between Social Media influencers and Travel decisions.

**Relation between Halal Tourism and Trust**

Scholars in the context of halal tourism emphasized trust and state that trust will predict the halal service quality during the tour.[66] The companies that offer halal services to the traveler gain trust and trust, in turn, ensure the satisfaction of the consumer.[67]

Moreover, many things of halal tourism are supportive in gaining the trust of travelers. As Al-Ansi[68] proclaimed that the staff of the hotel must be well trained and have guidance by informing them about Islamic principles to handle Muslim travelers. To retain the trust of consumers, it is important to hire Muslim staff on the frontline and this will enhance the interaction with non-Muslim staff, and they provide guidance about the market needs of Muslims and aware them of the values of Muslims. Similarly, Schouten[69] stated that a visually appealing menu having the halal certification is useful in enhancing the trust of travelers. Therefore, trust is highly influenced by halal service quality, halal environment, and halal facilities.[70]

H5: Trust mediates the relationship between Halal Tourism and Travel decisions.

Theoretical Framework

This framework shows the diagrammatical representation of the study where arrows show the relations and names of the variables mentioned.
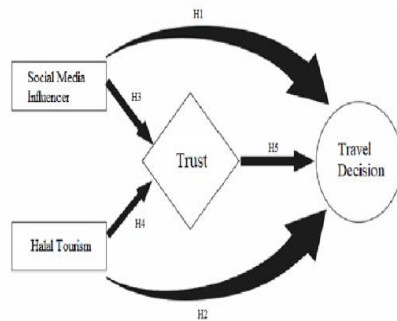
Figure 1 Framework

Research Methodology

Researchers use three philosophies in their research. In positivism, the nature of the res____ is objective while in post-positivism, the nature of research is subjective a_ _.__ereas in pragmatism both are combined. In this study, the researcher adopts the positivism phil_____hy as the whole method is quantitative and the theory is tested and n_____ veloped. In this research, the population is selected on the base of social media users and including university students as almost all of them are aware of social media and use it. The researcher decides to collect data from students of GIFT University Gujranwala and ____ udents of the University of Punjab Gujranwala Campus (PUGC). ____ize of the sample is 250 students and

questionnaires were delivered to 250 respondents from the selected universities. Researchers use closed-ended questions to gather responses from the sample.

In this study, four variables are involved and are measured using 5-point Likert scale i.e. Strongly Disagree = 5, Disagree = 4, Neutral = 3, Agree = 2 and Strongly Agree = 1. The scales of variables are adopted from different authors. The scale of the first independent variable (Social Media Influencer) is adopted from and the scale of the other independent variable (Halal Tourism) is adopted from and both have 5 items ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Furthermore, the scale of mediating variable (Trust) is adopted from and has 5 items and is measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Moreover, the scale of dependent variable i.e., Travel Decision is adopted from and has 4 items and is also measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Data is analyzed by using statistical software SPSS 20 by running different tests of normality, reliability, descriptive statistics, correlation, regression, and mediation.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Demographic Analysis

Demographic analysis includes all the information that the researcher collected relating to respondents' demographics including their gender, age, qualification, and income levels.

The frequency test run by using SPSS is given below in the table and depicted that there were 131 males and 119 females out of 250 respondents i.e., 52.4% men and 47.6% women. The age feature of demographic is divided into 5 groups i.e., below 20, 20-25, 25-30, 30-35, and above 35. It has been from the table that from 250 respondents 78 respondents belong to the below 20 age group, 108 respondents belong to the 20-25 age group, 45 respondents fall under the 25-30 age group 11 students are included under 30-35 age group and only 8 respondents are above 35 and have percentages of 31.2%, 43.2%, 18%,4.4% and 3.2 respectively... As data is collected from university students so it can be seen that 74.4% of responses are from the first two age groups i.e., below 20 and 20-25.

The third question on demographics is about the education of respondents. The table shows that the education of respondents is divided into 4 categories as these programs are available in those universities and these categories are Bachelors, Masters, M.Phil., and Ph.D. 129 respondents are doing bachelors, 53 are doing masters, 55 are doing M.Phil. and only 13 falls under the category of Ph.D. and hence have percentages of 51.6, 21.2, 22, and 5.2 respectively.

Table 1: Demographic Analysis

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid %	Cumulative %
Gender	**Male**	131	52.4	52.4	52.4
	Female	119	47.6	47.6	100.0
Age	**Below 20**	78	31.2	31.2	31.2
	20-25	108	43.2	43.2	74.4
	25-30	45	18.0	18.0	92.4
	30-35	11	4.4	4.4	96.8
	Above 35	8	3.2	3.2	100.0
Education	**Bachelors**	129	51.6	51.6	51.6
	Masters	53	21.2	21.2	72.8
	M.Phil./MS	55	22.0	22.0	94.8
	Ph.D.	13	5.2	5.2	100.0
Income	**Less than 15,000**	75	30.0	30.0	30.0
	15,000-30,000	90	36.0	36.0	66.0
	30,000-45000	49	19.6	19.6	85.6
	45,000-60,000	21	8.4	8.4	94.0
	More than 60,000	15	6.0	6.0	100.0

Finally, the last question is about their incomes and has ranges; below 15000, 15000-30000, 30000-45000, 45000-60000, and more than 60000. 70 of the respondents have income less than 15000 which has a percentage of 30. Whereas 90 respondents are under the category of 15,000-30,000 and makeup 36%. Furthermore, the 30,000-45,000 range has 49 respondents and makes up 19.6%. However, 21 respondents are there in the category of 45,000-60,000 and have 8.4%. the minimum number of respondents is under the range of more than 60,000 and has only 6%. As the respondents are students so their income levels are not too much.

Reliability Analysis

In reliability analysis, the value of Cronbach's Alpha is used to check whether the data is reliable or not.[71] Depicted that if the value of Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.7 i.e., 7% then the instruments for the collection of data are reliable.

The table given below, clearly shows that Social Media Influencer (IV) has 5 items, Halal Tourism (IV) has 5 items, Trust (MV) has 4 items, and Travel Decision (DV) has 4 items and has Cronbach's alpha values 0.879, 0.825, 0.724, 0.745 respectively which are greater than 0.7 so they are reliable.[72]

Table 2: Inner Item Consistency-Cronbach Alpha

Variable Names	No. of Items	Cronbach's alpha
Social Media Influencer	5	0.879
Halal Tourism	5	0.825
Trust	4	0.724
Travel Decision	4	0.745

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are used to check the normality of data. Minimum and maximum show the correctness of collected data. As the 5-point Likert scale ranges from 1 to 5 so all the collected data must be between the range of 1 and 5. Moreover, the mean of all variables must be greater than 3 and the table indicates that all the means are under the agreement area. Furthermore, the values of standard deviation also lie in the acceptable range which also indicates that the data is normal. However, the acceptable range of skewness is -3 to +3,[73] the table here represents that the whole data is normal as values are between -3 and +3.

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness Std
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic Error
SMI	250	1.00	5.00	4.4128	.60211	.812 .204
HT	250	1.00	5.00	3.7645	.67816	.611 .204
TRU	250	1.00	5.00	3.6245	.55117	.324 .204
TD	250	1.00	5.00	4.5128	.46158	.968 .204

Correlation Matrix

The correlation matrix is used to check the relation between the variables and whether the relations between variables are significant or insignificant. It also measures the strength of the relationship between variables. Correlation shows that any variables changes that will change the related variable with a specific percentage.

The table has the values that show the significance of the relationship between independent variables (social media influencers, halal tourism), mediating variable (trust), and dependent variable (traveling decision).

Table 4: Correlation Matrix

Correlations				
	SMI	**HT**	**TRU**	**TD**
SMI	1 250			
HT	.315**	1		
	.000 250	250		
TRU	.543**	.346**	1	
	.000 250	.000 250	250	
TD	.479**	.432**	.465**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The Correlation between the independent variable (Social Media Influencer and Halal Tourism), mediating variable (Trust), and dependent variable (Travel Decision) showed the value of 0.479, 0.432, and 0.465 respectively. Since the value of the Pearson correlation coefficient is between 0.3-0.7 indicates that a moderate relationship occurs between the variables of this study.[74]

Regression Analysis

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis-Model Summary

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	**T**	**Sig.**
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
(Constant)	1.326	.310	4.240	.000	
TD	.578	.068	.475	8.139	.000

N = 250, R = 0.458, R square = 0.229, adjusted R square = .217; F Stat= 95.149; p<0.01

Dependent Variable= Travel Decision (TD)

Predictor: Travel Decision (TD)

Regression analysis identifies the strength of relation and quantity of impact of variables. Here R represents the correlation between IVs and DV. The value of R is 0.458 which shows that both IVs have moderate relation with DV. Furthermore, the explanatory power of the model is represented by the value of R square. 0.229 is the value of R square which is between 0 to 1 and depicts that there is a 22.9 change in DV (Travel Decision) by changing IVs (Social Media Influencer and Halal Tourism). R square showed the variation for the

sample while adjusted R square represents variation for the population.

Beta is considered as the slope of relation.[75] However, the significant value of the variable (Social Media Influencer and Halal Tourism) is less than 0.05 whereas the value of t is 4.240 and 8.139 which is more than 2, which shows that the hypothesis carries a strong positive relationship between the variables. Therefore, the relationship between SMI and HT (IVs), and TD (DV) is significant, and hypotheses i.e., H1, H2, and H3 are accepted.

Mediation Analysis of Trust

Table 6: Mediation Analysis of Trust

	Coeff.	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
INT_1	.1495	.1061	6.212	.007	.0455	.6789

The table showed that since the primary paths H1, H2 and H3 are significant, which is less than 0.05 (p>0.05), and T-value is 6.212, which is greater than 2. As the primary path is significant, so further steps of mediation were checked. This shows that hypotheses H4 and H5 are accepted. Hence mediation between IVs and DV is occurring.

Hypothesis Summary

Table 7: Hypothesis Summary

Hypotheses	Statement of Hypotheses	Result
Hypothesis 1 (H1)	H1:Social Media Influencer has a significant impact on Travel decisions.	**Accepted**
Hypothesis 2 (H2)	H2:Halal Tourism has a significant impact on Travel decisions.	**Accepted**
Hypothesis 3 (H3)	H3:Trust has a significant impact on Travel decisions.	**Accepted**
Hypothesis 4 (H4)	H4:Trust mediates the relationship between Social Media influencers and Travel decisions.	**Accepted**
Hypothesis 5 (H5)	H5:Trust mediates the relationship between Halal Tourism and Travel decisions.	**Accepted**

Discussion

In this study, it is clear that Social Media Influencers impact the Travel decision of travelers. Moreover, many previous studies support this hypothesis as[76] travel marketers have recognized the potential of travel influencers to make changes in the decisions of travelers and it is an afforded way to target the customers. Furthermore, Gretzel[77] also analyzed that social media stars have a strong influence on the decision-making of their followers. Also, Hudders[78]

depicted that the greater the impact of social media influencers in case of destination choice, the more chances are there to change holiday plans. However, travel marketers and organizations can use this influential role of influencers to impact the decisions of travelers.[79]

Moreover, Halal tourism has a significant impact on travel decisions. As the data is collected from a Muslim country so all the people are highly concerned about the halal availability of products and services. Past research also supported this hypothesis as[80] people consider the key attributes of Halal tourism when they decide to travel. Moreover, Wardi [81] believes that the Shariah code highly impacts the travel decision of Muslims whether they should travel to that specific destination or not. Opposite this study, some studies show that not all Muslims are much concerned about halal tourism when making decisions.[82] Trust has a significant impact on Travel decisions and is also accepted. However, some authors believe that trust has no positive effect on travel decisions.[83]

This study analyzed that trust influence the relationship between Social Media Influencer and Travel Decision as influencers help in trust-building and hence aids in the decision-making to travel. Past papers also supported this study as Lou [84] believe that trust is the factor that urges the followers to buy a product or service by impacting their decision. Many other studies are in favor of this study but many researchers there oppose this study as Hudders [85] sponsored posts to reduce the trust of consumers. People may think that the influencers are paid by the companies that's why they are giving a good review and hence lack trust that influences their purchasing or decision to travel.

Furthermore, the mediating role of trust with halal tourism and Travel decision is also supported by many previous scholars as[86] his study states that the organizations that deal with halal offers gain the trust of consumers and develop the satisfaction in the consumers that eventually helping in travel decisions. Further research is also in the support of this study. But, [87] trust has an insignificant impact on travel decisions in the context of halal tourism. Moreover, it is found in the studies that halal concerns also help in gaining the trust of non-Muslim travelers and hence influencing their decisions and intentions to travel to that halal-friendly destinations.

Conclusion

The research topic is developing trust through social media influencers and halal tourism to impact the travel decision. This study showed that social media influencers are a useful tool to impact the decision of travelers by gaining trust. Furthermore, the study also describes that Muslims are highly concerned about halal tourism and their decisions and trust are also dependable on halal concerns. Here, in this research, it is clear that to gain trust and to impact the decisions it is important to capture their concerns about halal tourism and to

gain their attention, use the latest marketing tool of social media influencers.

This research shows the significant relation between IVs and DV and trust also mediates the relationship. Many previous studies also support the significant and positive relationship between social media influencer and traveling decision and much research show that halal tourism impacts the decisions of Muslim travelers. Past researchers also stood up with the point that halal tourism and social media influencers help gain trust.

There is sufficient knowledge about this field but according to Kristin,[88] still limited research in this field according to trends and as these are the latest marketing techniques, this field is very vast and has voids. Hence, relations between social media influencer, halal tourism, trust, and travel decisions has been the concern of this study. Here, the current study implies that trust mediates the relation between IVs i.e., social media influencers (SMI), Halal Tourism (HT), and DV i.e. travel decision (TD), and IVs and DV have relations with each other. This is the first study of its type where these variables are combined in the context of Pakistan. This research also paves way for further research and urges the researchers to test and develop theories in these emerging fields. This research is very useful and acts as a road map for the companies to focus on halal concerns and influencer marketing techniques to capture the customers as this study shows that influencers can affect the decisions of consumers and depicts that Muslim traveler is highly concerned about halal availability of the products throughout their journey. This study also shows that to gain trust it is important to target the demands and pay heed to new techniques of marketing.

This study is in the context of traveling and guides the managers and provides them information that they must use social media influencers and provide halal facilities to customers to enhance their trust and impact their traveling decisions. This study also has some limitations. In this study, there is no discussion about other factors that can influence the decisions of travelers and the other attributes of influencers that help gain trust and impact decisions as all the influencers are not trustworthy. This study could also be conducted by taking only 3 to 4 influencers and having responses of people on these specific influencers, and this will show which characteristics and attributes of an influencer make him a good influencer and then help managers to find these attributes in influencer before selecting any influencer. The other limitation is that the data is collected only from Gujranwala, so it is difficult to generalize it. Furthermore, there is limited time to conduct the whole research.

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