

**The Influence of Online Reviews on Egyptians'  
Travel and Tourism Decisions**

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**Abstract.** Social media is playing an increasingly important role as an information source in tourism for tourists, who gather trustworthy information supporting the choice of destinations and services from peers. In particular, online reviews provide increasingly important sources of information in planning for travel and in tourism product purchases. The purpose of this paper is to study the impacts of online reviews on Egyptians' travel and tourism decisions. The paper depends on an analytical approach with an empirical study based on a questionnaire survey for a random sample of Egyptians, to understand the level of influence and trustworthy of online reviews on holiday plans and search for information generally, and on destination or accommodation choice particularly.

**Keywords:** Online Reviews, Social Media, User-Generated Content, Egyptians, Web 2.0, Travel 2.0

**Abbreviations:**

User-Generated Content (UGC)

Consumer-Generated Media (CGM)

Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

Product Review Systems (PRS)

**Introduction**

Tourism is the world's largest industry that growth, economic significance and potential are phenomenal across the globe. Online tourism is rapidly becoming a growing topic of research and its importance as future mode of acquiring information and purchase of tourism products and services is growing day by day (Dixit et al., 2006). Muñoz (2010) indicates that tourism as an information intensive industry can gain important synergies from the use of the Internet. Moreover, internet has profoundly modified consumers' purchase and pre-purchase behaviors, especially in the tourism sector, probably because it involves an intangible and experiential offer, in other words, the characteristics of tourism products and services are particularly well suited to online solutions.

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Ráthonyi (2013) explains that social networking sites have digitalized human social connections. Nowadays people have more and more friends and trying to maintain their social connections through these sites, while face to face connections permanently decrease. A number of studies focus on the impact and role of social media in travel related decisions, In this context, online user-generated reviews about travel destinations, hotels, and tourism services have become important sources of information for travelers (Pan et al., 2007). Each year hundreds millions of potential visitors consult online reviews. It's observed that consumer decision-making processes are strongly influenced by reviews from other consumers. In addition, it's found that reviews provided by other travelers are often perceived by readers to be more up-to-date, enjoyable, and reliable than information provided by travel service providers (Alcázar et al., 2014).

### Literature Review

#### 1- Social Media in Travel and Tourism

Social media can be defined as a group of Internet-based applications that is built on the ideological and technological foundations and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (UGC). There is a taxonomy scheme that classifies social media types according to their (a) level of social presence/ media richness and (b) level of self-presentation/ self-disclosure identifying six types of social media: (1) social networking sites (SNSs) (i.e. Facebook- LinkedIn) (2) Blogs, content communities (i.e. YouTube, Flickr, Slide share), (3) collaborative projects (i.e. Wikipedia, Wikitravel), (4) virtual social worlds and virtual game worlds (i.e. Second Life- World of Warcraft), (5) microblogs (i.e. Twitter), (6) consumer review and rating websites (i.e. TripAdvisor, Opinions) and internet fora (i.e. Thorn Tree, Fodor's Travel Talk). (Fotis et al., 2012). Ráthonyi (2013) adds that plenty of social networking sites exist with different purposes and functionality, as key platforms where users can become members, create a profile, and build a personal network connecting them to other users with whom they share their own content.



Source: Ráthonyi (2013: 106).

Figure 1: Key Social Media Platforms

As the social media use becomes widespread, number of users also increases day by day. Number of users of internet and social media all around the world is as follows; 2.5 billion people on the world use internet, 1.8 billion out of these users have an account on the social media networks. Ranking of the most popular first 10 social media platforms according to the active user statistics is as follows Facebook (1.184 billion), QQ (Tencent) (816 million), Qzone (632 million), WhatsApp (400 million), Google+ (300 million), WeChat (272 million), LinkedIn (259 million), Twitter (232 million), Tumblr (230 million), Tencent Weibo (220 million) (Sahin and Sengün, 2015).

In travel and tourism industry, Lopes et al., (2012) state that social networks are changing the way tourists plan their trips. These websites allow users to interact and share their opinions with others about touristic attractions, hotels and restaurants. Ráthonyi (2013) adds that nowadays social networking sites have a huge impact on how tourists create, organize and share tourism experiences.

Sigala, (2007) explains that tourists in order to decrease the uncertainty derive from the travel decisions collect more and more indispensable travel information. Ráthonyi (2013) indicates that altering tourists trust even more in other travelers' opinions rather than official marketing advices due to the spread of social media sites and user-generated contents. Many tourists need to obtain confirmation of other users that they have planned the best trip. An opinion or recommendations from an acquaintance or friend have a huge impact on the tourists' travel decision making process.

As evidenced by Buhalis and Law (2008), the emergence of social media in tourism and travel has significantly altered the experience. The new digital modes have become a source of information that is hard to avoid for tourists due to the large volume of user-generated content on the Web. Duguay et al., (2015) point out that social media hold a substantial place in search engine results and play an increasingly important role in the travel planning process.

## **2. Web. 2.0 and Travel.2.0**

Milano et al., (2011) introduce that at the close of the 20th century – roughly between 1997 and 2000 – a set of hardware and software technologies collectively known as the Internet had an enormous diffusion and radically changed most of our economic and social life. In the last few

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years a further “revolution” has impacted the way we communicate, work and conduct business. The buzzword for this is Web 2.0.

According to the characteristics of Web 2.0 - Several academic literatures, blogs articles attempted to define – it is a complex phenomenon. It complexity shows that Web 2.0 has got different dimensions of use such as technological, business philosophical and sociological. Web 2.0 is a concept originally coined during a conference brainstorming session between O'Reilly and Media Live International in 2004 who described it as an attitude rather than a technology (O'Reilly 2005). The key difference between traditional websites (Web 1.0) and (Web 2.0) is the participation of the users. Web 2.0 sites have the ability to be the platform for users to interact and collaborate with each other, in contrast to (Web 1.0) where users are limited to the passive viewing of content that was created for them (Cormode and Krishnamurthy, 2008). Web 2.0 describes World Wide Web sites that emphasize user-generated content, usability, and interoperability. Examples of Web 2.0 include social networking sites, blogs, wikis, folksonomies, video sharing sites, hosted services, Web applications, and mashups (Wikipedia, 2015).

A summary of the most common forms of Web 2.0 sites and their definitions is provided in Table 1. Cox et al., (2008)

**Table (1) Key Types of Web 2.0 User-Generated Content Sites**

Type of Web 2.0	Definition
<b>Blogs (Weblogs)</b>	Web pages that contain newsgroup-type entries, involving text, images and links to other 'blogs' in a chronological order with the newest posting listed first.
<b>Wikis</b>	Websites that allow the user to easily add, remove, edit and/or change its content to suit their individual preferences.
<b>Podcasts</b>	The blogging of audio content (i.e. MP3 format) which is accessed on a user demand.
<b>Social Networks</b>	Spaces on the Internet, such as My Space and YouTube, that allow a group of friends, peers or likeminded individuals to communicate, chat and share information on topics of interest. These may be in the form of pure 'socializing' sites or alternatively sites related to special interest topics (e.g. travel).

**Source: Cox et al., (2008:3).**

It was customary in the tourism industry for tourists to consult travel agencies to discuss options face-to-face. Researchers have argued that the innovations in information and communication technologies (ICTs) have

restricted the scope and threatened the longevity of travel agencies (Cheyne, et al, 2006). In this context, the use of search engines to search travel destinations and services often leads consumers to social media rather than directly to sites created for the purposes of marketing (Duguay et al., (2015).

Duguay et al., (2015) remark that two mega trends have begun to impact the way in which consumers interact with the industry: search engines and social media. For instance, tourists and travelers can discuss their experiences and find information on sites such as TripAdvisor, WAYN, and TravBuddy. Sites such as Travelocity and Expedia aggregate many tourism product offerings online and present users with best prices, while allowing for trip customizability. The growth and importance of such travel sites and applications has led to their network being dubbed Travel 2.0.

A Travel 2.0 site is structured to allow users to easily contribute words and images, reviews and travelogues. Consequently those who visit a Travel 2.0 site can gather multiple insights about a destination, hotel or other aspect of travel (Merritt, 2006). In other words, to be more detailed, Ráthonyi (2013) mentions that Travel 2.0 is a term that represents the extension and customization of the concept of Web 2.0 in the tourism sector. Travel 2.0 describes a new generation of travel websites with new technologies which enable social collaboration among travelers where tourists can share their experiences with fellow travelers. Tourists regard this information as more trustworthy and beneficial rather than professional travel advice that's why travelers are becoming increasingly more interested in seeking the opinions and reviews of the fellow travelers.

Duguay et al., (2015) point out those users of Travel 2.0 sites and applications do not form networks based on friendships or other relationships, as they would on other social media. Instead, communities are built within travel related forums and message boards. However, a new feature of TripAdvisor, the Traveler Network, lets users build networks of acquaintances in order to plan trips more effectively. Discussion with other travelers allows users to get responses to specific questions. Such sites have a marked influence on consumers' decision-making. Individuals post their subjective experiences, photos, videos, and reviews with the intention that individuals who are considering the same destination will access this content. This is fundamentally different from the traditional marketing framework in which the firm attempts to advertise a brand and sell its features to the consumer. In this way, Travel 2.0 has revolutionized the way in which consumers inform themselves, and others, on their travel destinations, methods of transportation, and other hospitality-related needs. Miguens et al.,

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(2008) conclude that Travel 2.0 sites operate as peer to-peer networks rather than following a business-to-consumer marketing pattern.

Cox et al., (2008) show a list of a range of popular Web 2.0 sites linked to travel and tourism (Travel 2.0) is provided in Table 2. These sites list as Commercial (with 5 star ratings), Commercial (with no-ratings) or (Non-Commercial). And is not yet an inclusive list of all Travel 2.0 sites, but merely some well-known ones.

**Table (2) A Sample of Popular Web 2.0 Sites Related to Travel (Travel 2.0)**

Site Name (Address)	Category
<b>COMMERCIAL SITES – 5 STAR RATINGS</b>	
TripAdvisor (www.tripadvisor.com)	Commercial – 5 star
Epic Trip (www.epictrip.com)	Commercial – 5 star
IgoUgo (www.igougo.com)	Commercial – 5 star
Lonely Planet's Blue list (www.lonelyplanet.com/bluelist)	Commercial – 5 star
Orbitz (www.orbitzinsider.com)	Commercial – 5 star
Virtual Tourist www.virtualtourist.com	Commercial – 5 star
Travelocity (www.travelocity.com)	Commercial – 5 star
Expedia www.expedia.com/destinations	Commercial – 5 star
Yahoo Travel (travel.yahoo.com)	Commercial – 5 star
TravBuddy (www.travbuddy.com)	Commercial – 5 star
(www.statraveljournals.com) STA Travel Blogs	Commercial – 5 star
<b>COMMERCIAL SITES – NO RATINGS</b>	
Flickr Travel (www.flickr.com/travel)	Commercial–No rating
Travelistic (www.travelistic.com)	Commercial–No rating
The Lobby (www.thelobby.com)	Commercial–No rating
Kayak (www.kayak.com)	Commercial–No rating
Visit Victoria (www.visitvictoria.com)	Commercial–No rating
Schmap (www.schmap.com)	Commercial–No rating
Trip Hub (www.triphub.com)	Commercial–No rating
Del.icio.us del.icio.us)	Commercial–No rating
<b>NON COMMERCIAL SITES</b>	
This Place I Know (www.thisplaceiknow.com)	Non-commercial
Wikitravel (www.wikitravel.com)	Non-commercial
Travel Blog (www.travelblog.com)	Non-commercial
Travel Rants (www.travelrants.com)	Non-commercial
Trips Log (www.tripslog.com)	Non-commercial
You Tube Travel (www.youtube.com/travel)	Non-commercial
World 66 (www.world66.com)	Non-commercial

Source: Cox et al., (2008:9).

### **3. Online Reviews in Travel and Tourism**

Terms such as ‘User-generated Content’ (UGC) or Consumer-Generated Media (CGM) are commonly used to highlight the pivotal role that individual consumers have in submitting, reviewing and responding to online content (Gretzel, 2006). In other words, Gretzel and Yoo (2008) explain that one form in which content is created online is as consumer reviews and ratings. Consumer reviews and ratings are the most accessible and prevalent form of electronic word of mouth (e- WOM). Moreover, consumer reviews are perceived as particularly influential because they are written from a consumer's perspective and, thus, provide an opportunity for indirect experience. They are also perceived as more credible than information provided by marketers.

Park, et al, (2007) report that about 70 percent of adults currently use consumer product ratings and reviews, and Consumer reviews serve two distinct roles: 1) they provide information about products and services; and, 2) they serve as recommendations. According to Noroozi and Fotouhi (2010) state that Product review systems (PRS) have also become an important aspect of travel planning ever since the Internet permeated the tourism industry. Consumers put more trust in the opinions of fellow consumers than in the content provided by product/service providers (Blackshaw and Nazzaro, 2005). Further, product reviews exist in the online space and can be easily accessed, linked and searched. Given that consumers are increasingly relying on search engines to search for information, consumer generated reviews will inevitably change the structure and accessibility of travel information, and subsequently, consumers’ perception of various products. Consequently, there has been a proliferation of online platforms wherein consumers can exchange travel related information and experiences (Noroozi and Fotouhi, 2010).

Cox et al., (2008) argue that one of the most unclear and under-researched issues related to user-generated content in the travel industry is the impact that such sites are actually having on the users’ travel behavior and decision making processes. The specific impact of UGC on the various sectors within the travel industry has yet to be substantially assessed.

But, Sahin and Sengün (2015) discuss that reviews and comments on web sites are important for preferences when the big ratio of internet users making travel plans is considered. In particular the users, who want to have

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information on the tourism destinations that they will use or accommodate for the first time, are influenced by these reviews and comments on the social media to a great extent. Emphasis on this idea, Cox et al., (2008) assure that there is some evidence to date to suggest that UGC sites are becoming a more trustworthy source of travel information than travel agents. In an online survey of more than 800 travelers conducted by Nielsen/Net Ratings, more than half the respondents indicated that user generated reviews provided on sites such as TripAdvisor.com were the most reliable source of travel. Evidently, Burton and Teasdale (2007) point out that user-generated reviews regarding travel were found to be trusted more by females than males, and particularly by the 25–34 year age group and those who were frequent travelers. Furthermore, those users who were planning long haul fly-drive or city breaks were more likely to trust user-generated reviews than were those who were taking beach breaks.

Noroozi and Fotouhi (2010) state that TripAdvisor.com, Hotels.com and IgoUgo.com are some of the many online platforms that provides this service to consumers. For instance, TripAdvisor.com is currently known to be the largest site for travel reviews with close to two million reviews of hotels, attractions and restaurants around the world and claims to contain “been there, done that” inside information and the best deals for the travel plans. Similarly, IgoUgo.com allows consumers to create profiles and travel lists that can be accessed by other consumers looking for information. Such information allows the site users to contact each other for further questions or even to build acquaintances with fellow consumers (IgoUgo.com, 2010).

TripAdvisor.com is currently a global website for travel information and advice, covering more than 270,000 hotels and attractions in over 30,000 destinations worldwide. It features hotels, attractions, and restaurant reviews written by consumers; a wiki for travel information similar in concept to a travel guidebook; "go Lists", where users list what to see or what to do; interactive maps based on the Google Maps engine; and "TripAdvisor Forums", an active traveler message board area. With more than 25 million reviews and opinions and nearly 30 million unique visitors a month, TripAdvisor is also the largest and most popular online travel advisory site (Noroozi and Fotouhi, 2010).

One of the concerns raised about the use of UGC sites when planning travel is how the consumer can be assured that the reviews they are viewing are in fact independent and hence trustworthy (Gretzel, 2006). Preventing commercial travel companies from manipulating the content provided on these sites has been a concern addressed by some of the key travel UGC players such as TripAdvisor. TripAdvisor employees a team of content reviewers who screen each individual posting against a number of criteria to assess the authenticity of the posting and reduce the opportunity for travel



businesses to skew the content submitted. Reviews which are considered to be ‘fake’ or ‘planted’ by travel providers are removed from the TripAdvisor site (Cox et al., 2008).

Lopes et al., (2012) display that the influence of user reviews is particularly important in hospitality and tourism industries, because the quality is only perceived after consumption according to the results, a 10% improvement in reviewers’ rating about a hotel can increase sales by 4.4% and a 10% increase in review variance can decrease sales by 2.8%.

**Table (3) Constructs of On line Reviews**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>
Information Content in the Review	The extent and depth of information provided in the review	ICON
Social Component of the Review	The reviewer's disclosure of socio-demographic information in the review and the consumers' perceived similarity with the reviewer on these dimensions.	IDENTITY
Decision Trust	Consumers' willingness to trust the information by the review and purchase the product/service	TRUST
Purchase Intention	Consumers' intention to purchase the product/service	INTENT
Activity Involvement	Consumers' involvement in the activity for which the product/service is being reviewed	INVOLVE

Source: Noroozi and Fotouhi (2010:87).

## **Methodology**

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

This research tries to answer the following questions and hypotheses:

#### **Questions**

**RQ1:** What reasons and to what degree are social media used by Egyptians during the holiday travel planning or information search?

**RQ2:** Do online reviews influence Egyptians’ holiday destination choice or accommodation choice?

**RQ3:** Are online reviews more trust for Egyptians than travel agents and official tourism websites?

#### **Hypotheses**

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- H1:** Social media are mainly used by Egyptians for holiday travel planning and for information search.
- H2:** The online reviews influence on Egyptians' holiday destination choice or accommodation choice.
- H3:** Travel and tourism related information provided in online reviews is more trust for Egyptians than travel agents and official tourism websites.

### **Data Collection and Measures**

An online and direct (offline) questionnaire survey is conducted at the period of June to September 2015 in a random sample of Egyptian travelers and tourists. The total number of targeted sample is (500). (361) of respondents completed the questionnaire achieving a response rate of (72.2%). Thus (361) questionnaires are used for analysis. Through a screening question it was assured that all respondents have taken at least one domestic or international holiday trip during the last year.

Respondents are asked to note their last trip within the last year, the destination (domestic- international) of this trip and the nights spent there. Three parts of questions explain: reasons for usage social media before during and after the holiday trip through (8) statements. Level of online reviews influence on destination and accommodation choice is measured by a 7 point scale ranging from "Not Influential At All" (1) to "Very Influential" (7). Level of trust to holiday travel related information from online reviews is measured by a seven point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7). To enable comparison of findings, the questionnaire also includes measures to provide socio-demographic characteristics for respondents.

### **Sample**

The sample (361 respondents) with the following characteristics: (gender) 45.6% is female and 54.4% male. (Age) 18.2% are less than 25 years, 38.4% from 25 to 40, 30.9% from 41 to 55, and 12.5% 56 or older. (Education) 21.3% have completed secondary school, 9.7% are university graduates, and 9% are post graduates. Also, 4.2% is living in the greater Cairo and 35.8% in other Egyptian Governorates.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Egyptian Use of Social Media Levels and Reasons for Use during the Holiday Planning Process**

The majority of respondents (93%) have visited at least one social media website during the last 3 months. Almost half (47%) of respondents visited social media websites several times a day, 35% almost every day, 11% only sometimes per week, and 5% very rarely. Level of use is found to be differentiated by age,  $\chi^2 (15, N=361) = 31.95, p = .01$ , and level of education,  $\chi^2 (5, N = 361) = 13.91, p = .04$ . The majority (92%) of respondents "under 25" visit social media websites many times every day while those who are "55 and over" less than 64%. For the level of education, University graduates and post graduates visit social media websites many times every day are (81%), while those who had completed secondary school are 70%.

For the three stages of travel planning process (before, during and after the trip), (3 statements) before their trip, 25% of respondents use social media information when trying to choose a destination for travel, 39% of respondents use social media to get information about accommodation options, and 40% look for ideas and information on excursions and other leisure activities. The analysis did not reveal any significant differences among ages, education level, and place of residence. Gender differences are observed only in usage levels for the purpose of choosing a good destination,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 361) = 4.70, p = .03$ , since 37% of males used social media for that purpose as opposed to 21% of women.

During the trip (3 statements), respondents basically used social media to be connected with their friends (58%), (26%) to find trip related information and 21% to provide comments and reviews about the travel experience. Significant differences among age groups were observed,  $\chi^2 (3, N = 361) = 11.62, p = .01$ : One every three travelers "below 25" posted reviews during trip, a percentage that drops to 6% for those aged 40 and above.

After the trip (2 statements), 74% of respondents use social media to share experiences and photos with friends and other travelers, 38% of respondents use social media to provide reviews and comments. Differences among age groups,  $\chi^2 (3, N = 361) = 11.38, p = .01$ . More than the third (39%) of respondents between 25 and 40 engaged in such activity, as opposed to only 10% of those aged over 56.

It is evident that H1 (Social media are mainly used by Egyptians for holiday travel planning and for information search) is rejected.

### **Online Reviews Influence on Destinations and Accommodation Selection**

By using measures on 7-point Likert scale, where: (1) Not influential at all, (7) =Very influential. Level of online reviews influence on destination

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choice is measured at 4.74 (Significant Difference SD = 1.63) and on accommodation choice on 4.71 (SD = 1.81) both on a 1-7 scale. Independent samples t-tests and one-way analysis of variance don't indicate to any significant differences in gender, education level, age, frequency of travel and region of residence. Table (4) shows more analysis for the change in destination and accommodation choice because of online reviews, respondents who read online reviews while they were thinking of their choice (N=288) are asked if they make any changes before their final decisions about destination and accommodation because of other travelers' opinions and reviews. The Pearson correlation test is used to test (H2) (The online reviews influence on Egyptians' holiday destination choice or accommodation choice.). (Table 4)  $p < .001$  proving that as influence from online reviews on destination and accommodation choice increases, more changes have made on the trip plans. As a result hypothesis (H2) is accepted.

**Table (4) Online Reviews Level of Influence in Egyptian Changing Destinations and Accommodation Selection**

Statements	Respondents %	Influence on destination choice (SD)	Influence on accommodation choice (SD)
I can't remember	4.1%	3.50 (1.58)	3.75 (1.90)
No changes	29.8%	3.75 (1.60)	3.60 (1.73)
Few changes	45.8%	4.35 (1.20)	4.75 (1.35)
Basic changes	20.3%	6.35 (1.58)	6.00 (1.83)
Pearson Correlation test: $r(276) = .31, p < .001$ $r(276) = .26, p < .001$			

Source: Statistical Data Analysis for Questionnaire Survey.

### Egyptians' Trust towards Online Reviews in Comparison with Other Information Sources (Travel Agents - Official Tourism Websites)

As shown in Table (5) and Figure (2), respondents are asked to express their agreement or disagreement with (5) statements in the statement of "I trust travel and tourism information provided by..." followed by the information source. Friends and relatives are the most trust source of information, followed by information provided by other traveler's online reviews in social media and websites, whereas shows and advertisements in (mass media) such T.V, Radio, newspapers and magazines are the least trustworthy among the travel and tourism information sources inspected.

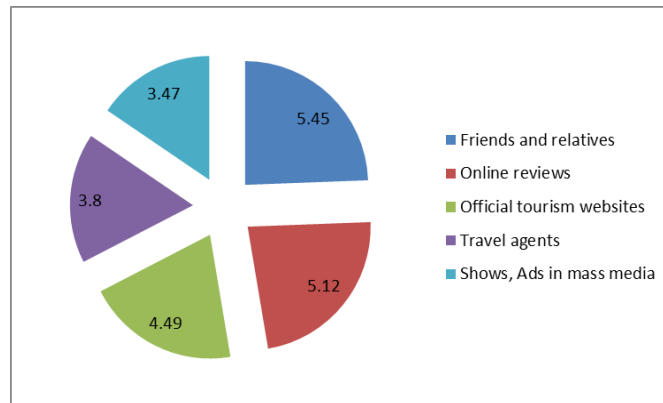
To examine H3 (travel and tourism related information provided in online reviews is more trust for Egyptians than travel agents and official tourism websites). One sample t-tests evidence that the value of 5.12 (observed as a mean level of trust of information provided by other travelers' online reviews in social media and various websites) is significantly different

to the means observed for official tourism websites  $t(360) = -8.562, p = .000$ ; travel agents,  $t(360) = -16.210, p = .000$ ; and mass media advertising  $t(360) = -19.755, p = .000$ . As a result, hypothesis (H3) is accepted.

**Table (5) Egyptian Trust Level in Sources of Travel and Tourism Information**

<b>I trust Travel and Tourism information provided by.... (N=361, 7-point Likert scale: 1= Strongly Disagree 7 = Strongly Agree)</b>	<b>Mean-Significant Difference (SD)</b>
Friends and relatives	5.45 (1.10)
Online reviews generated by other travelers on social media and various websites.	5.12 (1.32)
Official tourism websites	4.49 (1.62)
Travel agents	3.80 (1.31)
Shows, advertisements in T.V, Radio, newspapers and magazines	3.47 (1.26)

Source: Statistical Data Analysis for Questionnaire Survey.



**Figure 2: Egyptian Trust Level in Sources of Travel and Tourism Information**

## **Conclusion**

Wide spread of the Internet and rapid technological evolution have revolutionized all industries in the world especially tourism. Platform of tourism increasingly get to the internet nowadays which is vitally important because tourism is an information-based and information-intensive industry.

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One of the major results of Internet revolution is social media, which have been widely adopted by travelers to search, organize, share, and annotate their travel stories and experiences (Web 2.0), that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (videos, photos, texts etc...). Thus, the term (Travel 2.0) expresses the travel sites that take advantages of the web travelers- contributions.

Considering the important role of Travel 2.0 in travelers' decision making, this paper contributes other literatures in studying the extent and impacts of using Travel 2.0 websites in general and influence of online reviews on the travel and tourism decisions in particular. After displaying various and inclusive opinions developed by previous literatures related to the topic. According to the statistical analysis, the results are different with the results of some previous studies and similar to other studies, because the impact of social media in general and online reviews in particular on travel and tourism decisions differs among tourism source markets.

Social media are mainly used by Egyptians for holiday travel planning and for information search (before the trip), but majority of Egyptians depend on social media after the trip to share experiences and photos with friends and other travelers. Furthermore, online reviews influence on Egyptians' holiday destination and accommodation choice, by nearly (65%) make few and basic changes in their choices influenced by online reviews related to destination and accommodation. Moreover, travel and tourism information provided by online reviews is more trust for Egyptians than travel agents and official tourism websites. Finally, with the fast increasing number of social media users and wide range of influence, the theme of social media and online reviews extent and impact is still under studying and need more researches.

### **Recommendations**

- It's essential while interacting with social media in general and online reviews in particular to understand that these reviews are self-experiences for others affected by their needs and desires, which are very different. So, as a tourist you need to analyze the largest and latest possible number of reviews and compare without them to reach the closer assessment to reality.
- The thesis of social media impacts and online reviews influence is a rich current field for research. So, it's necessary for researchers in the field of tourism and hotel management to produce many future scientific papers, for more understanding to the relation between different forms of social media and consumer behavior in tourism industry.

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## تأثير التعليقات الإلكترونية على قرارات المصريين في السياحة والسفر

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التعليقات أو الاستعراضات الإلكترونية، المحتوى المقدم من المستخدمين، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، المصريين، ويب 2.0، السفر 2.0

### ملخص البحث

السياحة من أكبر الصناعات العالمية نمواً وأكثرها تأثيراً بالتطورات التكنولوجية المتسارعة وعلى رأسها شبكة الإنترنت وتبعتها وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي واحدة من أهم هذه التبعيات والنتائج للتطور التكنولوجي، هذه الشبكات التي مكنت البشر من التواصل على مدار اللحظة مع بعضهم البعض دون إعتبار يذكر لحدود الوقت والمكان والتكلفة. من أهم ما خلفته هذه الشبكات هو المواقع الإلكترونية التي أطلق عليها (الويب 2.0) Web 2.0 والتي تسمح للمستخدمين بتكوين محتواها من خلال مشاركتهم الخاصة من عرض ومشاركة التعليقات والتقييمات والصور ومقاطع الفيديو.... الخ، والتي سمي ما يتصل بها بصناعة السياحة والسفر بمواقع (السفر 2.0). Travel 2.0.

وحيث أن الدراسات حول هذا الموضوع مازالت جارية وتحاول متابعة تقييمه نظراً لنموه اليومي المتسارع وإتساع مساحة وأبعاد تأثيره، فالبحث الحالي يركز على متابعة ما بدأتها عديد الدراسات السابقة حول العالم من خلال دراسة حجم وتأثير (التعليقات الإلكترونية) في مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي وعلى المواقع ذات الصلة بالسياحة والسفر على قرارات المسافرين والسائحين تحديداً من (المصريين) عند التخطيط لرحلاتهم السياحية بشكل عام سواء الداخلية أو الخارجية، وعند إختيار المقاصد السياحية وأماكن الإقامة، إضافة لمحاولة التعرف على درجة أو مدى الثقة التي يولونها لهذه التعليقات الإلكترونية ذات الصلة .

وأعتمد البحث على 3 فروض لإثبات مدى صحتها أو عدم صحتها و 3 أسئلة للإجابة عليها، من خلال الاستبيان لعينة من المصريين الذين سافروا في رحلات سياحية على الأقل مرة واحدة خلال

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آخر عام مضى، ومع التحليل والاختبارات الاحصائية والمقارنة بنتائج الاختبارات السابقة، لم يستطع البحث إثبات أن المصريين يعتمدون بشكل رئيسى على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعى بشكل عام أثناء مرحلة التخطيط للرحلة السياحية، لكنه أثبت من خلال العينة أنهم يتأثرون بشكل كبير بالتعليقات الإلكترونية عند اختيار المقاصد السياحية وأماكن الإقامة لرحلاتهم وغالباً ما يقومون بتغييرات سواء محدودة أو كبيرة فى اختياراتهم بسبب هذه التعليقات الإلكترونية. كما أثبت البحث أن المصريين من خلال العينة يولون ثقة كبيرة للتعليقات الإلكترونية كمصدر للمعلومات المتصلة بالسياحة والسفر بعد الأقارب والأصدقاء وقبل مصادر حيوية أخرى مثل معلومات شركات السياحة والمواقع السياحية الرسمية.

**\*الشكر لمركز البحوث بكلية السياحة والآثار وعمادة البحث العلمى بجامعة الملك سعود على دعمهما للبحث.**