
HOW DO SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS AFFECT DIGITAL NATIVES 2.0 TO TRAVEL INSIDE EGYPT? INTEGRATING THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR AND ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL

AHMAD MUHAMMAD RAGAB

FACULTY OF TOURISM AND HOTELS, MINIA UNIVERSITY, MINIA, EGYPT

ABSTRACT

Understanding generational differences in tourist behaviors helps in predicting and realizing future tourism trends. The new tourism market will be dominated by Digital Natives who have high expectations for technology and a more customized travel experience. In this vein, positive online reviews, suggestions, and recommendations provided by social media influencers (SMIs) help improve tourists' perception of tourism services and destinations, strengthen brand image, drive tourists' behavioral change, and increase tourism services sales. This research is designed to investigate the influence of SMIs on travel behavioral intention among the Digital Natives 2.0, people born after 1990, in Egypt. Through integrating the Elaboration Likelihood Model of persuasion and Theory of Planned Behavior, the study investigates the influences of the central route, argument quality, and the peripheral route, attractiveness, and credibility, on the attitude towards tourism SMIs which further affects the behavioral intention of Digital Natives 2.0 to travel to destinations endorsed by SMIs. Besides, the influence of subjective norms and perceived behavior control on behavioral intention are examined. Data is collected from 391 respondents, and the PLS-SEM technique is utilized to test the study hypotheses. The results supported that argument quality, attractiveness, and credibility are fundamental factors shaping Digital Natives 2.0 attitude towards tourism SMIs. Significantly, these three factors together predict 77.4% of the variation in the attitude towards tourism SMIs. Moreover, the study's model predicts 45.3% of Digital Natives 2.0 behavioral intention to travel to destinations endorsed by SMIs in Egypt. This makes social media influencers highly relevant for this market segment's travel decision-making. This research suggests that Egypt's tourism public and private sectors cannot afford to ignore the SMIs as an effective marketing tool for influencing domestic tourists' behavioral intention, especially Digital Natives 2.0, who represent more than 30% of total social media users in Egypt.

KEYWORDS: Social media influencers, domestic tourism, tourist behavior, Egypt.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has altered how people interact, engage, and influence one another (Jacobson et al., 2020). According to a recent report on latest digital insights and social media statistics (Statusbrew, 2021), 4.9 billion people used the internet in 2021, accounting for more than 62 percent of the global population. In 2021, the number of active social media users was estimated to reach 4.6 billion. This means that six out of every ten people on the planet have a social media account. With 2.8 billion daily active users, Facebook is the most popular social network on the planet. YouTube users watch approximately 1 billion hours of video content every day. Twitter also has 211 million active users daily. Similarly, around 100 million users post or watch live videos every day on Instagram (Statusbrew, 2021). These upsurge trends in the social media market have pushed marketers across all sectors, including tourism, to rethink marketing and promotion techniques (Chung & Koo, 2015). In this view, influencer marketing has gained substantial attention from theoretical and practical perspectives. In marketing, endorsement, a type of advertising that employs celebrities or well-known persons, is crucial to reinforce a positive reputation and achieve business goals (Booth & Matic, 2011). Lim et al. (2017) argued that, compared to other marketing techniques, social media influencers had positioned themselves as active endorsers by developing a variety of buzzwords in recent years and are regarded as one of the most cost-effective and efficient marketing tools. In a survey of 5,000 marketing agencies (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021), it was found that spending on social media influencer marketing to reach \$13.8 billion in 2021. Also, 75% of the surveyed agencies reported that companies intend to boost their standalone budgets on social media influencer marketing. Social media influencer marketing was used in the fashion, beauty, and style industries in the early stages. Then it extended to almost every economic activity, with tourism being one of the industries where influencers have had a particularly large impact. (Bakshy et al., 2011). The increasing importance of social media influencers, via which they affect the formation of their followers' attitudes and decisions, has been studied in many domains such as fashion and beauty (Paço & Oliveira, 2017), culture (Khalid et al., 2018), and health and fitness (Dodd, 2018). In this vein, Magno and Cassia (2018) mentioned that the influence of social media user-generated content on tourist attitude and decision has been studied extensively over the last decade. However, until now, tourism studies have given little attention to investigating the influence of a particular segment of users,

i.e., social media influencers. This is supported by Femenia-Serra and Gretzel (2020), who stated that while tourism businesses depend increasingly on social media influencer marketing, there is a lack of research on influencer marketing in the tourism sector.

In tourism marketing literature, it has been demonstrated that travel behaviors across generations vary in terms of motivations, information search, travel decision making, booking behavior, perception of destination attributes, and travel activity preferences (Huang & Lu, 2017). For example, Huang and Petrick (2010) found significant differences in domestic travel behavior among three generations in the United States (Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y). Hence, generational analysis is valuable for understanding future tourism trends (Gardiner et al., 2014). In this context, the second-generation Digital Natives (Digital Natives 2.0), people born after 1990, who represent on average 60% of social media users (Statusbrew, 2021), is less researched within the topic of influencer marketing in tourism, especially in Egypt, the study context. Thus, this research aims to advance knowledge on this topic in tourism. Specifically, this paper intends to fill this research gap by studying the influence of social media influencers on of Digital Natives 2.0 behavioral intention to travel to destinations endorsed by SMIs in Egypt through integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion.

For the study context, Egypt, this research is inspired by the "Winter in Egypt" initiative launched by the Ministry of tourism and antiquities (MOTA) in mid of January 2021 to promote domestic tourism during COVID-19. The MOTA has partnered with popular Egyptian social media influencers to promote tourist destinations (i.e., Luxor, Aswan, Hurghada, Marsa Alam, Sharm El Sheikh, Dahab, Nuweiba, and Taba) by highlighting the attractiveness of these destinations on social networking platforms with thousands of followers. The MOTA announced that the "Winter in Egypt" initiative succeeded in increasing the occupancy rate of participating hotels in these destinations by 50% (MOTA, 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER (SMIS)

Social media influencers (SMIs) marketing has evolved into a constant companion of media shift and, as a result, has become an essential component of marketing budgets. It is evident that sales are increasing due to influencers' recommendations (Spleen, 2020). Hence, the impact of SMIs on both the marketing mix and consumers continues to expand. According to Brown et al. (2008), influence is described as the ability to

affect someone, something, or a sequence of actions. Influence can take numerous forms, ranging from direct buying guidance to slight changes in a supplier's credibility. That is to say, the act of establishing an environment favorable to influencing another person's opinion on a particular issue is known as an influence; in business, this is critical. In this view, the social media literature (Meraz, 2009; Boyd et al., 2010) distinguishes between influencers and influence. The first term, "influencers," are social media users who have a considerable number of followers on social media platforms. Instead, the term "influence" refers to the social impact of content shared in social media. Social media influencers (SMIs) are identified as dynamic independent third-party endorsers who utilize posts, tweets, blogs, and other forms of social media content to influence audience sentiments towards certain subjects (Freberg et al., 2011). They usually interact with their followers by providing them with timely updates as well as new information (Liu et al., 2012). SMIs effectively publicize products, information, and latest promotions to online followers via a variety of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube (Keller & Fay, 2016). Likewise, Lin et al. (2018) and Xiong et al. (2018) elaborated on this, explaining the concept of SMIs identifying them as opinion leaders who, due to their social prestige, personal appeal, or competence, have a strong influence on consumers' opinions and behaviors, mainly through word of mouth. In this sight, SMIs are classified as per the number of followers; micro-influencers with fewer than 10,000 followers, meso-influencers with fewer than one million followers, and macro-influencer with more than one million followers (Audrezet et al., 2020). According to Harrigan et al. (2021), SMIs marketing is the second most effective promotional method in the USA market. Likewise, about 95% of marketers who have employed SMIs marketing campaigns have found them successful.

Many scholars stated that SMIs are one of the fastest-growing areas of marketing and an essential topic of marketing research (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Boerman, 2020). Generally, Ki et al. (2020) outlined two lines of research on SMIs; the first line focused on how SMIs can urge their followers' willingness to accept their recommendations. The second line of research, on the other hand, concentrated on the SMIs' position as tastemakers, describing how their aesthetic taste judgments influenced their followers' purchase decisions. Furthermore, in their systematic review of SMIs research, Vrontis et al. (2021) defined five areas of SMIs research, including SMIs characteristics and effects on consumers, psychological factors and influence on consumers, content quality and impacts on consumers, and evaluation of SMIs as a strategic marketing instrument. As such, several studies have demonstrated the importance of

SMIs in the customer decision-making process. For example, Ambarwati et al. (2019) concluded that SMIs influence predicts 87.6% of the decision to purchase cosmetic products. Zak and Hasprova (2020) determined that consumers of certain products (clothes, shoes, cosmetics, and services) tend to be influenced by SMIs compared to other media channels. In a study about restaurants and cafes, Gunawan et al. (2021) showed that Generation Z's brand awareness and purchase decision were influenced by SMI's reach, relevance, and resonance. Similarly, Liu et al. (2015) suggested that SMIs' capacity to provide content, attractiveness, experience, trust, and social identity demonstrates significant impacts at every stage of the consumer purchase decision process. In this regard, Giang (2018) found that four factors, including trust, content quality, influencer expertise, and consumer involvement, significantly impact the consumer's purchasing intention.

In this context, previous research considered the success of SMIs in marketing and promotion can be ascribed to multiple factors where followers regard them as personable, genuine, honest, and realistic information sources (Harrigan et al., 2021). Herein, the purchase intention is positively influenced by different underlying factors related to the characteristics attributed to SMIs, including SMI expertise and attractiveness (Torres et al., 2019; Trivedi & Sama, 2020), SMI inspiration, and enjoyability (Lee & Watkins, 2016), SMI credibility (Fink et al., 2020), and perceived enjoyment and quality content (Magno, 2017). On the other hand, De Jans et al. (2018) discovered that sponsorship disclosure has a negative impact on purchase intent. This indicates when SMIs disclose that they are paid for their posts would make them less effective and result in unfavorable feelings toward their posts and purchase intent among their followers.

Figure (1) illustrates the different aspects of SMIs characteristics.

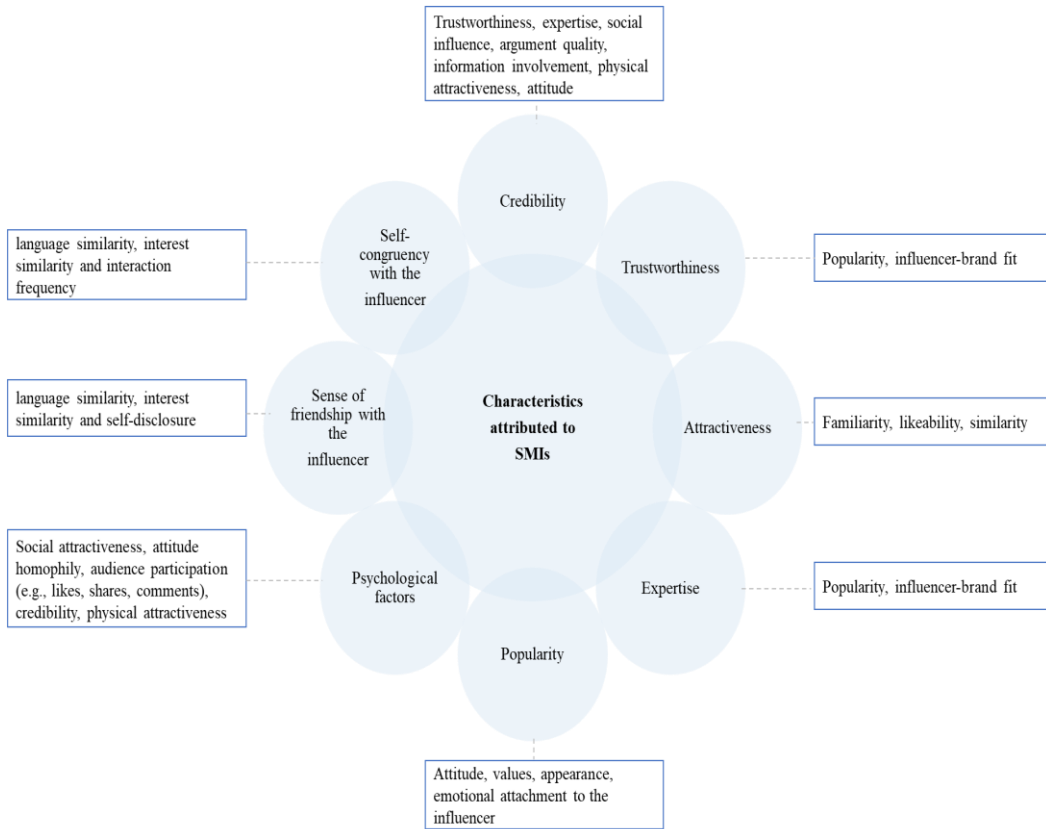


Figure 1. Different characteristics attributed to SMIs

Source: Adopted from Vrontis, D., Makrides, A., Christofi, M., & Thrassou, A. (2021). Social media influencer marketing: A systematic review, integrative framework and future research agenda. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 45(4), 617–644.

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER AND TOURISM

While social media is increasingly vital in all parts of life and industries, it is especially valuable in tourism. One reason is that tourism is an information-intensive industry that was already on the cutting edge of e-commerce development before social media technologies hit the scene (Gretzel, 2018). Since the introduction of social media networking, which has significantly influenced and transformed the travel decision-making process, contemporary tourists have been more active. According to Zivkovic et al. (2014), about half of travelers are likely to use social media information when looking for a tourism destination before they travel. This confirms the substantial role of social media in influencing

tourists' attitudes (Chiappa, 2011). In this regard, it is evident that travel and tourism are some of the most popular subjects on the "Big 4" social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram). This is explained by Christou and Chatzigeorgiou (2020), who stated that people enjoy sharing new experiences, and travel and tourism provide plenty of opportunities to do so. People also enjoy informing their friends and social media peers about upcoming travel plans and remembering about them once they have returned. This was verified by Sigala et al. (2012), who concluded that the practice of sharing travel experiences through social media platforms is radically changing the way that tourists look for, find, and read information on a large number of tourism choices in terms of tour components, services, and destinations. Thus, tourism can be considered a sector linked to information systems. Its products and services are intangible and need reliable, updated, extensive, and detailed information for their promotion and marketing. This rationalizes the influential role of SMIs in tourism. Recently, SMIs are being leveraged as an effective marketing tool for promoting and shaping a tourism destination's image (Jaya et al., 2020). In the tourism context, SMIs marketing has primarily been used by international hotel chains, with destinations catching up but still lagging behind (Gretzel, 2018). In this way, positive online reviews, suggestions, and comments provided by SMIs can help improve potential tourists' perception of tourism services and destinations, strengthen brand image, and influence tourists' purchase intention (Kracht & Wang, 2009). In this connection, Xu and Pratt (2018) said that correct SMIs marketing strategy could provide destinations with numerous benefits such as improving a destination's image, driving tourists behavioral change, and increasing tourism services sales. This is also proved by Ong and Ito (2019), who assessed the success of SMIs marketing campaign initiated by the Hokkaido Tourism Authority in Japan, determining that SMIs marketing was efficient in altering tourist attitudes. This was particularly regarding destination image, which in turn affects travel intentions and willingness to spread positive word-of-mouth.

According to recent empirical studies, a variety of characteristics need to be considered to gain desired benefits from SMIs marketing in the tourism domain. Pop et al. (2021) found that trust in SMIs has a positive impact on each phase of travel decision-making in the Romanian market, and SMIs' trustworthiness is critical for successfully influencing tourists' destination choices. The findings of Sesar et al. (2021) proved that SMIs have an impact on the travel behavior and motivations of Thai visitors in Thailand. These findings showed that SMIs influence stems primarily from their ability to help followers learn about new destinations in Thailand, receive useful information, and make trip planning easier. They

concluded that experience, expertise, and credibility are underlying factors of SMIs influence on consumers' decision-making in tourism. Also, the findings of Han and Chen (2021) suggested that SMIs' trustworthiness had a significant positive effect on followers' attitudes, which was connected with an increased intention to visit the SMIs' endorsed destination. Other research (Kapoor et al., 2021) found that when eco-friendly hotels use SMIs marketing, an attribute-value message is more effective in influencing guests' perceptions and intentions than a simple recommendation message. In another related study area and context, Maouahib and Fatima (2020) found that SMIs were successful in conveying a positive image of Algerian youth and their important role in sustainable tourism development, such as raising awareness about environmental protection and preserving sites, motivating individuals to become more involved in society, improving the image of the destination, generating influential word-of-mouth, and encouraging citizens to turn towards domestic tourism rather than choosing overseas destinations. Also, in a study of SMIs influence on millennials' choice to visit rural tourism destinations in Greece, Chatzigeorgiou (2017) concluded that millennials' trust in SMIs is determined by the SMIs' follower count, the personality displayed through social media postings and comments, and the activities presented through posts, videos, and images. The aforementioned SMIs' influence on travel decision-making and tourists' behavior intention rationalizes the need for conducting further research to understand how SMIs are vital to tourism destination marketing and realize how SMIs influence their followers in travel decision-making.

DIGITAL NATIVES

A generation is a group of people that were born during the same time period, experienced and was impacted by the same key life events during their early years, and consequently developed peer personalities with similar views, values, and behaviors for the rest of their lives (Huang & Lu, 2017). According to Prensky (2005), a Digital Native is anyone born after 1980. Nevertheless, the internet has evolved significantly since then, particularly with the advent of Web 2.0 or social media networking. Therefore, it is suggested to distinguish between the first and second generations of Digital Natives for more precision, with the second generation defined as anyone born after 1990 (Cowey & Potts2018). Also, Generation C, Google Generation, and i-Generation have been coined to describe Digital Natives (Rosen, 2010). They are frequently referred to as true Digital Natives due to their upbringing with Web 2.0 technologies (Joiner et al., 2013). David et al. (2012) identified the key attributes of Digital Natives as follows: 1) they are passionate about

content creation and combining contents from different sources to create their new content; 2) they prefer active communities to passive ones, and as such, use social media platforms regularly where they can take part in various discussions and engage in social conversations; 4) they accept complexity, and 5) they yearn to work in more creative sectors and be less constrained by inflexible social systems.

In this context, social media platforms allow Digital Natives faster access to information, more instinctive interactions, and the possibility of extending the tourism experience before and after a trip (Vercic & Vercic, 2013). According to the UNWTO (2021), by 2040, the new tourism market will be dominated by Digital Natives, who will account for the major share of the world population, 4.9 billion people. Although travel behaviors differ greatly between socioeconomic categories, the mainstream trend is toward creative and digital services. To this end, Digital Natives' behaviors are reshaping the tourism industry and providing an unprecedented opportunity for novel solutions to be implemented. They have high expectations for technology and a more customized travel experience. In this view, Starcevic and Konjikusic (2018) concluded that Digital Natives have contributed to substantial changes in tourism marketing strategies since they rely heavily on social media and SMIs for obtaining travel and tourism information. Also, they prioritize tourism experiences that can be shared on social media.

Given the above discussions, understanding SMIs influence on this growing segment of tourists, Digital Natives 2.0, better contributes to realizing what shapes their behavioral intention to travel to destinations endorsed by SMIs in Egypt, the context of this study.

THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY, EGYPT

According to the recent statistics published by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, the number of internet users in Egypt reached 61.8 million in October 2021 (MCIT, 2021). Among these users, 91% use the internet for communicating with others through social media platforms (Figure 2). Fakhreldin et al. (2020) mentioned that social media plays a significant role in the daily lives of Egyptian Internet users, with Egypt ranked 17th in the globe in terms of audience volume and first in the Arab world. They added that with 41 million Facebook users and 14 million Instagram users in April 2020, Egypt has the fastest growth rate and the number of social media users in the Middle East.

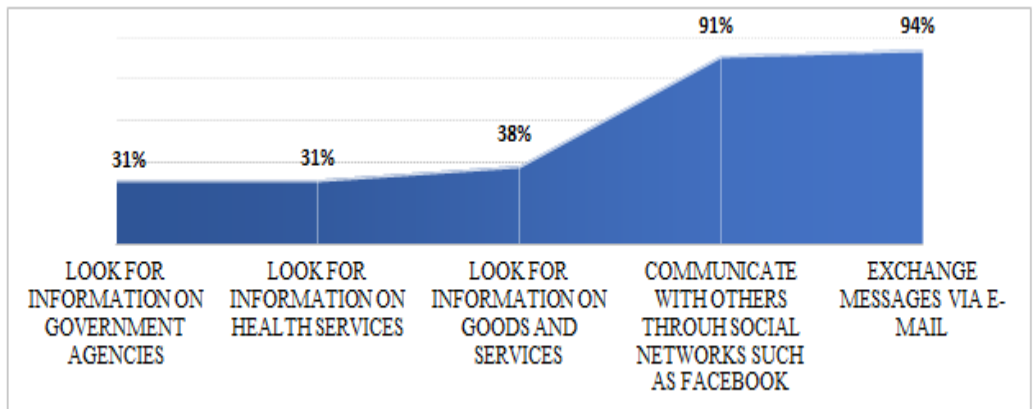


Figure 2. Internet Activities by Individuals

Source: MCIT (2021). ICT Indicators in Brief, November 2021. Cairo: Ministry of Communications and Information Technology

Based on explorations of data from social media platforms, it is reported that Digital Natives 2.0 accounted for 30.3% of total social media users in Egypt, 14.8 million (Hootsuite, 2021). The same report referred to YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram as the most used social media platforms in Egypt (Figure 3).

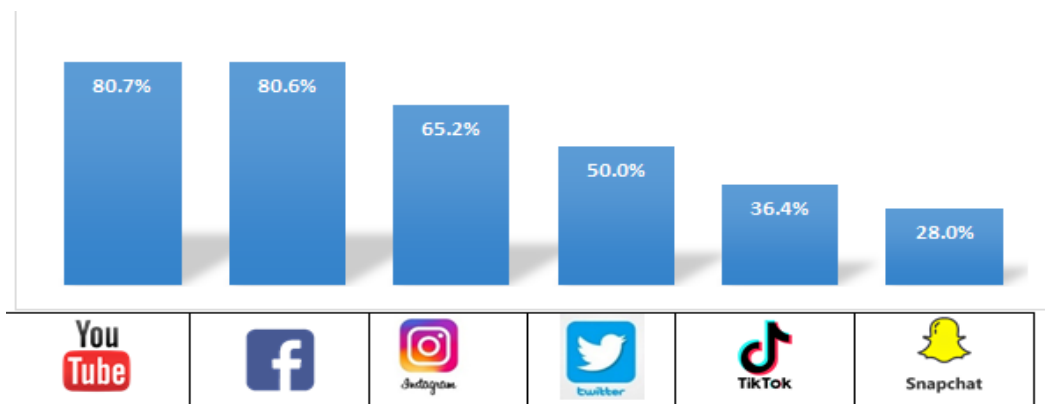


Figure 3. Most used social media platforms in Egypt, 2021.

Source: Hootsuite (2021). Digital2021 report for Egypt. Retrieved 05/01/2022 from <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-egypt>

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

The present study is founded on well-established theoretical frameworks, Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) suggesting that consumer behavior is predicted by behavioral intention (Ajzen, 2020). As such, an individuals' behavior intention is affected by their attitude towards undertaking an activity, which may be influenced by both central and peripheral stimuli communication (Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2006).

The TPB is one of the most widely used and empirically supported psychosocial theoretical models in a wide variety of consumer behaviors (Pelling & White, 2009). The TPB holds that human behavior is voluntary and determined by behavioral intention, which in turn, is constructed from three main processes: social attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 2020). Social attitudes arise from the interaction between behavioral expectations and their assessment, while the subjective norm refers to a person's view of social norms or relevant people beliefs that he/she should or should not undertake certain behaviors (Quintal et al., 2010). The perceived behavioral control involves the beliefs that the subjects have about their own capacity to carry out a certain behavior (Pelling & White, 2009). However, previous studies have questioned the TPB's ability to predict specific actions as a generic behavior model, further expansion of the TPB by integrating other components in a specific context was deemed required (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001; Meng & Choi, 2019). Based on this rationale, the TPB is expanded in the current study by including the ELM.

The ELM is a theory of social psychology that sought to integrate different theories of cognitive psychology on the phenomenon of human persuasion (Cyr et al., 2018). The ELM has dominated psychological research on attitudes for the past decades. According to this model, the change in attitudes that a certain message generates in consumers can occur through two different cognitive processing routes: the central route and the peripheral route (Li, 2013). Bhattacharjee and Sanford (2006) mentioned that the messages that are processed through the central route receive greater interest on persons part and are examined in a rational and deep way depending on the quality of their arguments. They added that the changes in attitude resulting from processing through the central route are relatively long-lasting, resistant to contrary messages, and faithful predictors of consumer behaviors. On the contrary, with peripheral path processing, persons devote much less attention to the message and evaluate it based on totally peripheral elements (the attractiveness of the source, the music, the quantity of the arguments, etc.) that have little to do with the quality of the arguments. The changes

in attitude that occur through this route tend to be less durable, easy to change with contrary messages, and poor predictors of behavior (Teng et al., 2014). The elaboration term refers to people adding their own thoughts to the specific information presented in a communication (Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2006). People with a high elaboration likelihood state are more inclined to scrutinize arguments carefully and are more convinced by argument quality than by peripheral cues, according to Bhattacharjee and Sanford (2006). Those with limited elaboration, on the other hand, are less likely to be driven to think attentively and are more likely to be influenced by peripheral stimuli (Li, 2013). Based on the above discussions on the conceptual frameworks as well as the review of different characteristics attributed to SMIs, the following hypotheses have been proposed (Figure 4):

H1. Argument quality significantly influences Digital Natives 2.0 attitude towards tourism SMIs.

H2. Attractiveness significantly influences Digital Natives 2.0 attitude towards tourism SMIs.

H3. Credibility significantly influences Digital Natives 2.0 attitude towards tourism SMIs.

H4. Attitude towards tourism SMIs significantly influence Digital Natives 2.0 behavioral intention to travel to destinations endorsed by SMIs.

H5. Subjective norms have a positive and significant influence on Digital Natives 2.0 behavioral intention.

H6. Perceived behavior has a positive and significant influence on Digital Natives 2.0 behavioral intention.

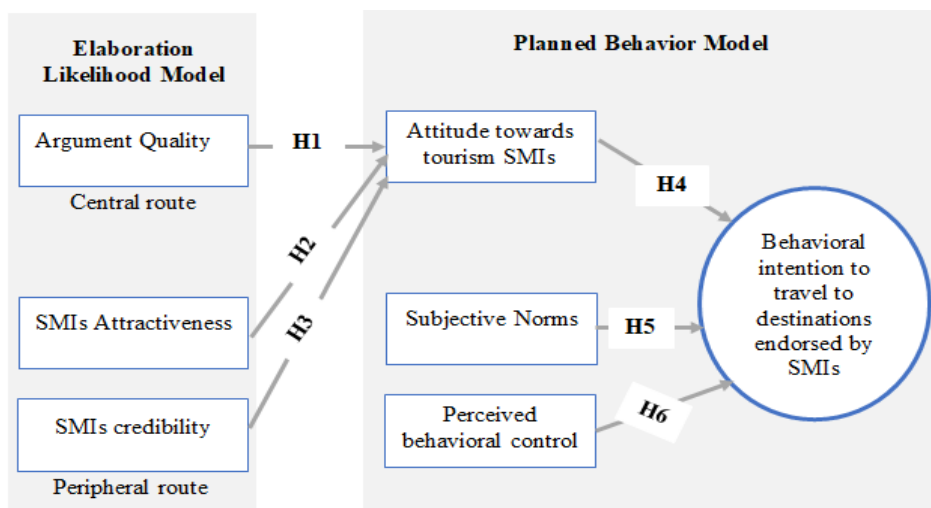


Figure 4. Study model.

RESEARCH METHODS

DATA COLLECTION

A quantitative survey was conducted to investigate the hypothesized relationships between constructs in the proposed research model. A web-based questionnaire (forms.office.com) was used to obtain data from study participants. Between November 9, 2021, and January 12, 2022, data was collected for around two months. Data was obtained from Egyptian young people who are part of the Digital Native 2.0 generation using the snowball sampling approach. Because the intended original items were in English, a back-translation process was utilized to ensure that the questions were clear and understandable in Arabic. The questionnaire consisted of initial 27 items on the study constructs. To ensure logical coherence and readability, this research was preceded by a pilot study among 30 respondents and two tourism marketing scholars. To this end, six items were removed, leaving 21 items that correspond to the seven constructs proposed in this study.

SAMPLING

The survey was conducted among Digital Natives 2.0 in Egypt aged 18-32. A total of 391 respondents participated in the study's survey. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the sample size was adequate. They stated that when the population is in millions, a sample size of 384 is sufficient (at 95% level of confidence and 5% margin of error). Also, the sample size was appropriate for this study because the sample-to-item ratio should not be less than 5-to-1 (Memon et al., 2020). As illustrated in Table (1), 41.7% of the total respondents were males, and 58.3% were females. Also, 61.2% of the respondents were 18 and 25 years old. 34.6% of the sample reported that they spend on average between 3 and 5 hours on social media platforms every day, while 31.7% spend more than 5 hours daily. Also, 100% of sampled people reported that Facebook is the most used social media platform. For travel plans inside Egypt during the upcoming 12 months, 39.4% have plans, while 51% did not decide yet.

Table (1) Characteristics of the sample

Characteristics	Frequency	
	n= 391	(%)
Gender		
Male	163	41.7
Female	228	58.3

Characteristics	Frequency	
	n= 391	(%)
Age		
18-25 years	239	61.2
26- 32 years	152	38.8
Average time spent daily on social media platforms		
Less than 1 hour	23	5.8
1-3 hours	135	34.6
3-5 hours	109	27.9
More than 5 hours	124	31.7
Most used social media platforms (multiple response)		
Facebook	391	100%
YouTube	348	89%
Instagram	196	50%
Twitter	149	38%
Tik-Tok	121	31%
Other	41	11%
Plans to travel inside Egypt in the next 12 months		
Yes	154	39.4
No	199	51.0
Not sure	38	9.6

MEASURES

The measurement items for constructs in this research were adopted from previous research to ensure validity, which consisted of seven constructs: argument quality, SMIs attractiveness, SMIs credibility, attitude towards SMIs, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, behavioral intention to travel to destinations endorsed by SMIs. All items were measured with a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The argument quality items were adopted from Shu and Scott (2014). The items of SMIs credibility were adopted from Sokolova and Kefi (2020). The items of SMIs attractiveness were adopted from Wiedmann and Mettenheim (2020). The items of attitude towards tourism SMIs were adopted from Xu and Pratt (2018). The items of subjective norms and perceived behavioral control were adopted from Park et al. (2018). Last, the items of behavioral intention to travel to destinations endorsed by SMIs were adopted from Jalilvand et al. (2012).

STATISTICAL PROCEDURE

Based on SmartPLS software (v 3.3.5), a partial least squares (PLS) method, ideally suited for predictive models, was applied to test the proposed study model. Moreover, to ensure the validity of all constructs' items, a valid factor analysis was used. The reliability was verified based on composite reliability (CR). Further, convergent and discriminant validity were tested.

RESULTS

DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

Table 2 presented means and standard deviations of the sample responses for the 21 items used in this study. The average value of the argument quality variable was 3.6 (SD= 0.683), SMIs attractiveness (M= 3.6, SD= 0.667), SMIs credibility (M= 3.8, SD= 0.640), attitude towards tourism SMIs (M= 3.8, SD= 0.616), subjective norms (M= 3.2, SD= 0.859), perceived behavioral control (M= 3.5, SD= 0.790), and behavioral intention (M= 3.7, SD= 0.791).

Accordingly, it can be said that Digital Natives 2.0 in Egypt view that the content posted by SMIs about tourism destinations and attractions in Egypt are of good argument quality, credible, attractive. These SMIs attributes are to be considered high in developing a positive attitude among Digital Natives 2.0 towards tourism SMIs and, in turn, influencing positively their behavioral intention to travel in domestic trips to destinations endorsed by SMIs inside Egypt. The perceived behavioral control variable is essential for shaping the travel behavioral intention of Digital Natives 2.0; however, the subjective norms variable has less importance

Table (2) Descriptive statistics of questionnaire items

Statements		Mean	SD	Perception
(AQ)	Argument Quality of SMIs Posts	3.6	0.683	Good
AQ1	I think they are clear	3.7	0.738	Good
AQ2	I think they are relevant for planning domestic tourism trips	3.3	1.019	Fair
AQ3	I think are of good quality	3.8	0.906	Good
(ATR)	SMIs Attractiveness	3.6	0.667	Good
ATR1	I think they are attractive	3.8	0.893	Good

Statements		Mean	SD	Perception
ATR2	I think they are persuasive	3.1	1.018	Fair
ATR3	I think they are presented in an interesting way	3.7	0.818	Good
(CR)	SMI's Credibility	3.8	0.640	Very good
CR1	I think they have abundant knowledge about tourism in Egypt	4.0	0.794	Good
CR2	I think they are trusted persons	3.5	1.051	Good
CR3	They provide accurate information that is consistent with reality	3.8	0.759	Good
(ATT)	Attitude towards Tourism SMIs	3.8	0.616	Good
ATT1	I think it is a good idea to rely on SMIs posts when planning travel inside Egypt	3.7	0.756	Good
ATT2	I think it is useful for me to use SMIs posts when planning travel inside Egypt	3.8	0.896	Good
ATT3	SMIs trigger my desire to make a travel decision to tourism destinations in Egypt	4.0	0.800	Good
ATT4	In general, I have a positive attitude towards using SMIs posts in travel planning inside Egypt	3.9	0.706	Good
(SN)	Subjective Norms	3.2	0.859	Fair
SN1	Friends/Family/Associates think I should depend on SMIs post in travel planning	3.1	1.021	Fair
SN2	Friends/Family/Associates would approve my usage of SMIs posts in travel decision	3.3	1.026	Fair
SN3	People whose opinions I value prefer to use SMIs posts in travel planning	3.2	1.017	Fair
(PBC)	Perceived Behavioral Control	3.5	0.790	Good
PBC1	The decision of depending on SMIs posts in travel planning is completely up to me	3.6	0.977	Good
PBC2	I have enough time and opportunity to follow information provided by SMIs about tourism destinations in Egypt	3.4	0.981	Good
(BI)	Behavioral Intention to Travel to Destinations Endorsed by SMIs	3.7	0.791	Good
BI1	When I go on a domestic trip, the probability of visiting tourism destination mentioned by SMIs is high	3.8	0.876	Good

Statements		Mean	SD	Perception
BI2	I will recommend my friends and family to visit tourism destination mentioned by SMIs	3.8	0.908	Good
BI3	I am greatly influenced by what SMIs offer when planning travel inside Egypt	3.5	1.043	Good

MEASUREMENT MODEL RESULTS

The scales' reliability and validity were examined before assessing the proposed hypotheses of this study. The convergent validity, which illustrates how the items are related to one another, and whether or not they may be included in the exact measurement, was tested based on three criteria (Hair et al., 2017). Factor loadings should be greater than 0.7, composite reliability (CR) should be greater than 0.7, and the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct should be greater than the variance resulting from measurement error; a value of 0.50 is acceptable. Table (3) showed all factors adopted in this study had loadings that were more than 0.70, ranging from 0.786 to 0.878. The CR of each construct was greater than 0.7, ranging from 0.786 to 0.879, and the AVE of each construct is greater than 0.60, ranging from 0.607 to 0.709. As a result, the three convergent validity criteria were met, factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) exceeded the cut-off values. In addition, to ensure that constructs were not redundant, multicollinearity was tested based on the variance inflation factor (VIF). The VIFs revealed that the values of the seven scale constructs in this study model were lower than the defined threshold (3.3), which is considered acceptable (Kock & Lynn, 2012). Accordingly, the measurement model used in this current study fits further analysis. The details of the measurement model assessment are presented in Table 3.

To further confirm the validity of the measurement model, the discriminant validity should be tested. The degree to which each latent variable is unique from the other constructs in the model is known as discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). For each variable, the square root of the AVE should be higher than the sum of all correlations between the variable and the other variables in the model (Hair et al., 2017). In this view, the square roots of the AVEs for the variables on the diagonal, as well as the correlations between the variables, indicated that the study model had an acceptable discriminant validity (Table 4).

Hence, the hypothesized relationships suggested in this study can be examined based on the adopted study model.

Table (3) Measurement model results

Factors	Factor loadings	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Collinearity (VIF)
Argument Quality (AQ)		0.822	0.607	
AQ1	0.742			1.196
AQ2	0.757			1.446
AQ3	0.837			1.582
SMIs Attractiveness (ATR)		0.878	0.706	
ATR1	0.847			1.713
ATR2	0.850			1.667
ATR3	0.823			1.637
SMIs Credibility (CR)		0.838	0.633	
CR1	0.756			1.394
CR2	0.844			1.645
CR3	0.785			1.334
Attitude towards Tourism SMIs (ATT)		0.862	0.611	
ATT1	0.786			1.584
ATT2	0.794			2.068
ATT3	0.724			1.683
ATT4	0.820			1.100
Subjective Norms (SN)		0.879	0.709	
SN1	0.806			1.100
SN2	0.885			1.635
SN3	0.832			1.685
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)		0.786	0.649	
PBC1	0.756			1.426
PBC2	0.852			1.790
Behavioral Intention to Travel to Destinations Endorsed by SMIs		0.877	0.703	
BI1	0.816			1.639
BI2	0.860			1.696
BI3	0.838			1.645

Table (4) Assessment of discriminant validity

Latent variables		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Argument Quality	0.779						
2	SIMs Attractiveness	0.630	0.840					
3	SIMs Credibility	0.587	0.525	0.796				
4	Attitude towards Tourism SIMs	0.435	0.531	0.535	0.782			
5	Subjective Norms	0.322	0.424	0.574	0.480	0.842		
6	Perceived Behavioral Control	0.340	0.378	0.392	0.442	0.435	0.805	
7	Behavioral Intention to Travel to Destinations Endorsed by SIMs	0.310	0.467	0.433	0.548	0.556	0.502	0.839

STRUCTURAL MODEL RESULTS

The data were subjected to the model fit Test to investigate whether the model's variables measure the original concept being developed. Hooper et al. (2008) stated that model fit measures calculated by the SmartPLS software, root mean square residual (SRMR), and normed fit index (NFI) are sufficient to claim the model fit. The finding revealed that the SRMR value was satisfactory at 0.062 (less than the threshold of 0.08), and the NFI value was 0.984 (greater than the threshold of 0.90) (Hair et al., 2017). Furthermore, the *R*² value (coefficient of determination) confirmed that the model predicted 77.4% of the variation in the attitude towards SIMs and 45.3% of behavioral intention to travel domestically, which is considered a high coefficient in these kinds of behavioral studies (Hair et al., 2017).

Path coefficients and associated *p* values were determined to assess the causal relationship of each proposed hypothesis in the study's structural model. Hair et al. (2017) suggested using 5,000 sub-samples in a bootstrapping procedure for this. Path coefficients indicated direct impacts in the predicted direction for the six causal relationships and were statistically significant at *p* 0.05. Thus, all hypotheses proposed in this study were supported. The findings of path relationship coefficients are presented in Figure 5 and Table 5. The results indicated that all six anticipated relationships were highly significant, and study hypotheses were supported. Argument quality ($\beta = 0.359, p < 0.000$), SIMs

attractiveness ($\beta = 0.381, p < 0.000$), and SMIs credibility ($\beta = 0.263, p < 0.003$) had significant and positive influences on attitude towards tourism SMIs. Also, it is found that attitude towards tourism SMIs ($\beta = 0.302, p < 0.005$), subjective norms ($\beta = 0.302, p < 0.002$), and perceived behavioral control ($\beta = 0.243, p < 0.014$) had significant and positive influences on behavioral intention to travel domestically to destinations endorsed by SMIs.

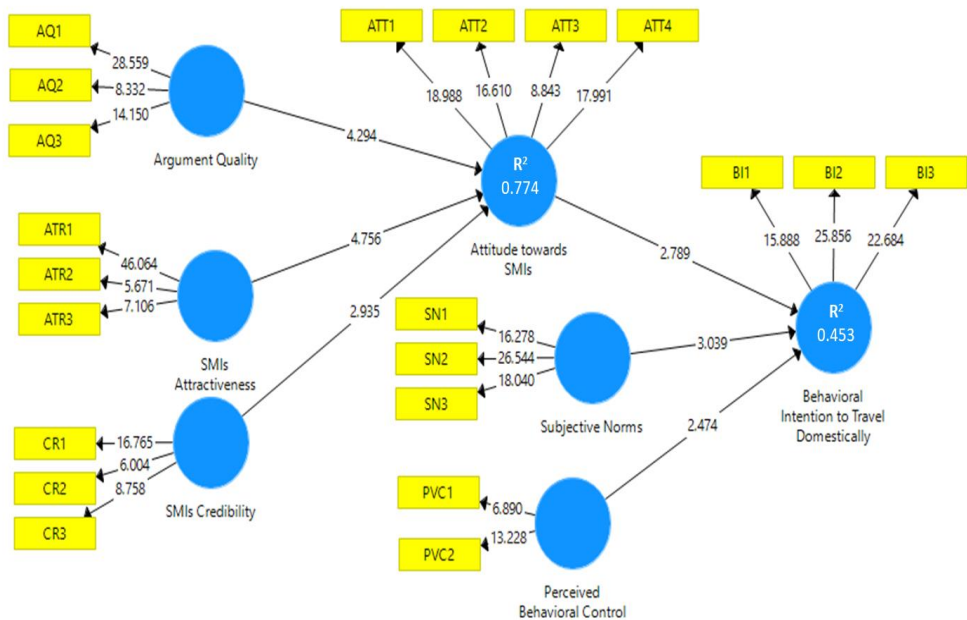


Figure (5) Structural model results

Table (5) Results of hypothesis test

Hypothesis		Path coefficient	p-value	Supported
H1	Argument quality -> Attitude towards tourism SMIs	0.359	0.000	Yes
H2	SMIs attractiveness -> Attitude towards tourism SMIs	0.381	0.000	Yes
H3	SMIs credibility -> Attitude towards tourism SMIs	0.263	0.003	Yes
H4	Attitude towards tourism SMIs -> Behavioral intention to travel domestically	0.302	0.005	Yes
H5	Subjective norms -> Travel behavioral intention	0.302	0.002	Yes
H6	Perceived behavioral control -> Travel behavioral intention	0.243	0.014	Yes

Discussions

In line with previous studies, such as Kapoor et al. (2021), the study findings confirmed that argument quality had a significant positive influence on attitude towards SMIs (H1, $\beta = 0.359$, $p < 0.000$). This confirmed that the clarity, relevance, and quality of SMIs posts about tourism destinations are keys to building a positive attitude towards tourism SMIs posts among Digital Natives 2.0. This was also in line with the findings of Andreani et al. (2021), concluding that the relevance and quality of SMIs posts positively affect brand awareness and attitude of Generation Z towards restaurants and cafes in Indonesia. Also, the results showed that Digital Natives 2.0 attitude towards tourism SMIs was influenced by SMIs attractiveness (H2, $\beta = 0.381$, $p < 0.000$), and SMIs credibility (H3, $\beta = 0.263$, $p < 0.003$). These results were consistent with previous research such as Ráthonyi (2013), who found the trustworthiness of social media information was an influential factor among young people concerning decisions connected with traveling in Hungary. Additionally, Nam (2018) explored that consumers' attitude is significantly influenced by their trust in SMIs and the attractiveness of content.

Based on these results, it is critical to understand that both central and peripheral routes; the two major routes of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) have a considerable influence on attitudes toward tourism SMIs among Egypt's Digital Natives 2.0. Bhattacharjee and Sanford (2006) supported this, who explained that the ELM does not mean that persons affected in different ways will have different outcomes. Indeed, two persons can reach the same conclusion (i.e., accept SMIs posts) even if they were influenced in two different ways (central-based vs. peripheral-based). As a result, tourism SMIs should produce relevant, transparent, attractive, and trustworthy posts in order to be more persuasive for Digital Natives 2.0 in Egypt influencing their travel behavioral intention.

The findings also indicated that those Digital Natives 2.0 who had favorable attitudes towards tourism SMIs (H4, $\beta = 0.302$, $p < 0.005$) perceived an equivalent positive impact on their behavioral intention to travel domestically to tourism destinations endorsed by SMIs. These findings were analogous to other studies into social media influence on tourists' purchase intention, such as Kasim et al. (2019). As in those studies, Positive attitudes regarding a particular product are a predominant predictor of consumer purchase intention. Likewise, a positive attitude towards a tourism destination endorsed by SMIs would increase the purchase intention among tourists.

Subjective norms and perceived behavioral control were additionally exposed to be fundamental predictors of the behavioral intention of

tourists within the framework of TPB. In specific, the findings showed that these subjective norms (H5, $\beta = 0.302$, $p < 0.002$) and perceived behavioral control (H6, $\beta = 0.243$, $p < 0.014$) had significant positive influences on travel behavioral intention among Digital Natives 2.0. Other research into consumer behavior in tourism, such as Zhou (2017), has confirmed that subjective norms, where an individual needs the approval of action from close people, and perceived behavioral control, where required resources for actions are available, are two major predictors of the behavioral intention. This means disapproval from a person's significant people or shortage of needed resources might reduce behavioral intention even when people have a positive attitude about an intentional act.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In tourism marketing literature, it has been demonstrated that travel behaviors across generations vary in terms of motivations, information search, travel decision making, booking behavior, perception of destination attributes, and travel activity preferences. According to the UNWTO, the new tourism market will be dominated by Digital Natives, who have high expectations for technology and a more customized travel experience. It is argued that Digital Natives have contributed to substantial changes in tourism marketing strategies since they rely heavily on social media and social media influencers (SMIs) for obtaining travel and tourism information. Also, they prioritize tourism experiences that can be shared on social media. Recent reports revealed that the second-generation Digital Natives (Digital Natives 2.0), aged 18-32 years represent on average 60% of social media users; however, it is less researched within the topic of influencer marketing in tourism, especially in Egypt. From this sprang, this research is designed to advance knowledge on this topic in tourism. For the study context, Egypt, this research was inspired by the "Winter in Egypt" initiative launched by the Ministry of tourism and antiquities (MOTA) in the mid of January 2021 to promote domestic tourism during COVID-19. This paper intends to examine the influence of SMIs on Digital Natives 2.0 behavioral intention to travel inside Egypt.

Based on the ELM, the present study investigated the influences of the central route (argument quality) and the peripheral route (SMIs attractiveness and credibility) on the attitude towards tourism SMIs which further affects the behavioral intention of Digital Natives 2.0 travel domestically inside Egypt to destinations endorsed by SMIs. Besides, the influence of subjective norms and perceived behavior control, rooted in the TPB, on travel behavioral intention were examined. A quantitative survey was designed to collect data from Digital Natives

2.0 in Egypt to test these causal relationships, and a partial least square-structural equation modeling method (PLS-SEM) was utilized. The results supported that argument quality, attractiveness, and credibility are the fundamental factors shaping Digital Natives 2.0 attitude towards tourism SMIs. Significantly, these three factors together predicted 77.4% of the variation in the attitude towards tourism SMIs. Moreover, the study's model predicted 45.3% of Digital Natives 2.0 behavioral intention to travel to destinations endorsed by SMIs, which is considered a high coefficient of determination in behavioral studies.

This study has theoretical implications in tourist behavior research. As illustrated, the study was based on the integration of TPB and ELM models, which empirically proved to be a promising conceptual model to be adopted in studying various aspects concerning the behavioral intention of travel among different tourist segments. Also, the model adopted in this study opens an exciting avenue for academics in Egypt to further study influencer marketing in tourism from a generational perspective. Moreover, this research provides important implications for tourism policymakers and businesses in Egypt. The public and private tourism sectors should pay attention to the new generational trends and adapt to their requirements and expectations. For example, tourism authorities in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States have employed generational analysis to segment tourism markets defining the Silent Generation (tourists who stay longer), Baby Boomers (are top spenders), Generation X (are more likely to travel with children), and Generation Y (are more active travelers) (Huang & Lu, 2017). Also, SMIs marketing should be seen as an indispensable marketing tool for targeting young generations, i.e., Digital Native 2.0, especially within domestic tourism promotion strategies. The findings of this study help in understanding the effectiveness of tourism SMIs and identifying the predictors of the persuasive SMIs among Digital Natives 2.0. This is important in designing influencer marketing strategies choosing the right tourism SMIs with a strong presence and influence on followers' travel behavior. That is to say, when selecting tourism SMIs, tourism marketers should pay attention to the quality of information that SMIs and their attractiveness and credibility share to ensure the success of this kind of marketing.

However, the study's findings should be interpreted with caution as data are limited to a specific segment of participants included in the study sample. For further research, it would be constructive to expand the study to different generations, comparing their travel attitude and behavior intention concerning the influence of SMIs. In addition, moderating effects (i.e., involvement, number of followers, cultural background, and demographics) on the relationships between SMIs characteristics and

followers' travel attitude should be further investigated. Also, the study model can be complemented in predictors of tourist satisfaction in future research. In a final concluding remark, although research suggests that tourism public and private sectors in Egypt cannot afford to ignore the SMIs as an effective marketing tool for promoting domestic tourism and driving tourists behavioral change, still this new marketing tool does not substitute for or replace traditional tourism marketing efforts, especially for some segments such as senior tourists.

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