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## Content quality and aesthetics: How visual appeal and informativeness shape travel decisions

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### Abstract

The digital transformation of tourism marketing has positioned social media influencers as key drivers of travel decisions, yet the specific content attributes that influence tourist behavior remain understudied. This study investigated how aesthetic appeal and informativeness of social media content shape travel decisions among Saudi domestic tourists. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted with 550 participants across six major regions in Saudi Arabia, utilizing structural equation modeling to analyze relationships between content quality dimensions and tourist behavior. The measurement model demonstrated excellent reliability for both aesthetic quality ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ) and informativeness ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ) constructs. Results revealed significant direct effects of both aesthetic appeal ( $\beta = 0.17$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and informativeness ( $\beta = 0.12$ ,  $p = 0.014$ ) on tourist travel decisions, with the model explaining 56% of variance in behavioral outcomes. The findings demonstrate that effective tourism content must integrate visual excellence with substantive informational value, challenging traditional form-versus-function approaches. This research provides empirical evidence for tourism marketers and destination management organizations, suggesting that content optimization strategies should prioritize both aesthetic quality and informational depth to maximize influence on travel decision-making processes.

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**Transparency:** The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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## **1. Introduction**

The rapid evolution of digital platforms has fundamentally transformed how travelers seek, evaluate, and act on travel-related information. Social media influencers (SMIs) have emerged as pivotal figures in shaping tourist behavior, leveraging compelling content strategies that combine visual appeal with informative narratives to inspire travel decisions [1]. This transformation has created new paradigms in tourism marketing, where the quality of content specifically its aesthetic appeal and informativeness plays a crucial role in influencing consumer behavior and travel intentions.

The tourism industry's increasing reliance on digital marketing has highlighted the importance of understanding how different content dimensions drive engagement and decision-making. This understanding is particularly critical for marketers, policymakers, and destination managers who seek to optimize their digital strategies in an increasingly competitive landscape [2]. The convergence of visual storytelling and practical information sharing has created a new form of travel marketing that requires careful examination of its constituent elements and their relative impacts on tourist behavior.

Tourism is a cornerstone of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 economic diversification strategy, with social media increasingly central in promoting destinations and attracting international visitors [3]. The Saudi context presents unique opportunities and challenges, as cultural nuances and the rapid growth of digital platforms necessitate tailored approaches to content creation and distribution. While prior research has explored the broad impact of SMIs on consumer behavior, a significant gap exists in understanding how specific content attributes particularly the interplay between visual aesthetics and informational value collectively shape travel intentions in culturally particular contexts [4].

This research gap is particularly salient given the growing sophistication of social media audiences and their evolving expectations for content quality. Modern travelers increasingly demand content that captures their attention visually and provides substantive value through practical insights, cultural understanding, and actionable travel advice. The challenge for content creators and tourism marketers lies in achieving an optimal balance between these dimensions while maintaining authenticity and cultural sensitivity.

The theoretical foundation for this investigation draws from established frameworks including Source Credibility Theory [5] and the Elaboration Likelihood Model [6]. These theories suggest that content quality, encompassing aesthetic appeal and informativeness, influences tourist decisions through cognitive and emotional pathways, with trust as a critical mediating mechanism. Integrating these theoretical perspectives provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how different content dimensions contribute to tourist behavior outcomes.

This study addresses three primary research objectives: first, to evaluate how aesthetic quality, including visual design, composition, and cultural representation, influences tourist behavior and engagement; second, to assess the role of informativeness, encompassing practical tips, cultural insights, and educational content, in travel decision-making processes; and third, to examine trust as a potential mediator between content quality dimensions and tourist behavioral responses. Through empirical investigation of these relationships, the research aims to provide actionable insights for tourism stakeholders seeking to optimize their social media content strategies.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. The Evolution of Social Media in Tourism Marketing**

Social media has revolutionized tourism marketing by enabling unprecedented real-time engagement, user-generated content creation, and peer-to-peer recommendation systems [7]. Digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have transformed into comprehensive visual repositories of travel experiences, allowing influencers to showcase destinations through carefully curated imagery, videos, and narratives that reach global audiences instantaneously [8].

The influence of social media on travel planning and decision-making has grown exponentially, with contemporary travelers increasingly consulting these platforms for destination inspiration, practical advice, and authentic experiences. Research indicates that most travelers now incorporate social media consultation into their trip planning processes, with influencer content playing a particularly prominent role in shaping destination preferences and travel itineraries [9].

In the Saudi Arabian context, the rise of both religious and leisure tourism under the Vision 2030 initiative has amplified the strategic importance of digital outreach, positioning social media influencers as key intermediaries between destinations and potential visitors [10]. This development has created opportunities for destination marketing organizations to leverage influencer partnerships in promoting Saudi Arabia's diverse tourism offerings, from heritage sites to modern attractions.

The dual nature of social media platforms serving simultaneously as information hubs and community interaction spaces underscores their centrality in contemporary tourism marketing strategies [11]. User-generated content (UGC) has emerged as a particularly powerful force, often perceived as more authentic and trustworthy than traditional advertising approaches, thereby fostering consumer confidence and reducing perceived risks associated with travel planning [12].

### **2.2. Content Quality Dimensions: Aesthetics and Informativeness**

Content quality represents a multidimensional construct encompassing various elements contributing to audience engagement and behavioral outcomes. Two primary dimensions have emerged as particularly significant in travel-related social media content: aesthetic appeal and informativeness, which serve distinct but complementary functions in influencing tourist behavior [2].

Aesthetic quality refers to the visual elements of influencer content, including composition, color schemes, visual design, and cultural motifs that create emotional resonance with audiences [13]. The importance of aesthetic appeal in digital marketing stems from its ability to capture attention in increasingly crowded social media environments, where

users are exposed to vast amounts of content daily. Research in visual communication demonstrates that aesthetically pleasing content enhances emotional engagement and creates positive associations with featured destinations.

The aesthetic dimension becomes particularly relevant in tourism marketing, where visual storytelling is crucial in conveying destination appeal and creating aspirational content that motivates travel behavior. In culturally rich contexts such as Saudi Arabia, aesthetic elements incorporating local art, architecture, and cultural symbols can enhance content authenticity while appealing to domestic and international audiences [14].

Informativeness, conversely, pertains to the practical utility and educational value of content, encompassing elements such as travel recommendations, cost information, safety advice, cultural insights, and logistical guidance [15]. This dimension addresses the functional needs of potential travelers who seek actionable information to inform their decision-making processes. Informative content reduces uncertainty and perceived risks associated with travel, particularly to unfamiliar destinations or cultural contexts.

The informational dimension gains additional significance in specialized tourism segments such as religious tourism, where travelers require specific guidance on cultural practices, religious protocols, and practical arrangements. For instance, content creators focusing on Umrah or Hajj pilgrimage must provide detailed information about religious requirements, timing, and logistical considerations to serve their audience effectively [16].

### *2.3. Trust as a Mediating Mechanism*

Trust represents a fundamental component of the influencer-follower relationship, serving as a critical mediating factor between content quality and tourist behavioral outcomes [17]. The development of trust in social media contexts involves complex psychological processes influenced by perceived expertise, authenticity, and consistency of content creators.

Source Credibility Theory provides a theoretical framework for understanding trust formation in influencer marketing contexts, suggesting that trust emerges from perceptions of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness [5]. In tourism applications, influencers who demonstrate local knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and transparent communication are more likely to cultivate trust among their followers, thereby enhancing their influence on travel decisions.

The cultural context significantly moderates trust formation processes, particularly in culturally conservative societies where religious and traditional values shape consumer preferences. In Saudi Arabia, influencers who align their content with Islamic values and demonstrate respect for local customs tend to develop stronger trust relationships with their audiences [18]. This cultural alignment becomes particularly important in religious tourism, where authenticity and cultural sensitivity are paramount.

The mediating role of trust becomes especially pronounced in post-pandemic travel environments, where safety concerns and risk perceptions have heightened the importance of reliable, trustworthy information sources. Travelers increasingly rely on trusted influencers to provide accurate information about health protocols, safety measures, and destination conditions, making trust a critical factor in travel decision-making processes [19].

### *2.4. Research Gaps and Theoretical Contributions*

Despite growing interest in social media marketing and influencer effectiveness, significant gaps remain in understanding how specific content dimensions interact to influence tourist behavior. Most existing research has focused on broad measures of content quality or influencer characteristics without examining the distinct contributions of aesthetic appeal and informativeness to behavioral outcomes.

The theoretical integration of aesthetic and informational content dimensions represents an important advancement in understanding digital tourism marketing effectiveness. This approach recognizes that modern social media content must serve multiple functions simultaneously capturing attention, conveying information, and building emotional connections to achieve optimal influence on tourist behavior.

The cultural specificity of these relationships also requires further investigation, as most existing research has been conducted in Western contexts that may not fully represent the dynamics present in culturally distinct regions such as the Middle East. Understanding how cultural factors moderate the relationships between content quality dimensions and tourist behavior is essential for developing effective, culturally appropriate marketing strategies.

This research contributes to the theoretical understanding of digital tourism marketing by providing a comprehensive framework that integrates aesthetic and informational content while considering cultural context and trust-mediation processes. The findings will advance academic knowledge while providing practical insights for tourism marketers, destination management organizations, and policymakers seeking to optimize their digital marketing strategies in culturally diverse contexts.

## **3. Method**

### *3.1. Research Design and Population*

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design to investigate the relationship between content quality dimensions and tourist travel decisions in Saudi Arabia. The research utilized a structured survey approach to collect data from domestic tourists who actively engage with social media influencers when making travel-related decisions. The target population comprised individuals who met specific inclusion criteria: they must be domestic tourists within Saudi Arabia, active followers of social media influencers, have traveled domestically within the past year, and be active on social media platforms where travel influencers are prevalent. This population was selected based on official tourism data indicating that Saudi Arabia receives millions of domestic tourists annually. Key destinations such as Makkah, Madinah, Riyadh, and the Eastern Province attract the most visitors. The study implemented a cluster sampling approach to

ensure geographical representation across Saudi Arabia's diverse tourism landscape, with six major regions selected as clusters based on their significance in domestic tourism: Makkah, Madinah, Riyadh, Eastern Province, Hail, and Tabuk.

### 3.2. Participants

The final sample consisted of 550 participants who met all inclusion criteria after rigorous data cleaning procedures. The sampling frame was compiled using multiple sources, including social media platforms to identify users following popular travel and lifestyle influencers, travel agencies and tourism websites for accessing databases of domestic travelers, and online travel communities and forums to engage with members discussing domestic tourism and influencer activities. Gender distribution showed a majority of male participants (57.1%,  $n=314$ ) compared to female participants (42.9%,  $n=236$ ). Age distribution revealed that the largest segment comprised participants aged 35-44 years (32.5%,  $n=179$ ), followed by those aged 45-54 years (28.4%,  $n=156$ ), 25-34 years (15.6%,  $n=86$ ), 55 years or more (12.7%,  $n=70$ ), and 18-24 years (10.7%,  $n=59$ ). All participants confirmed active engagement with social media influencers, satisfying the study's primary inclusion criterion.

Regarding travel behavior patterns, the majority of participants traveled domestically 2-3 times annually (38.2%,  $n=210$ ) or 4-5 times (36.4%,  $n=200$ ), with fewer participants traveling once per year (19.5%,  $n=107$ ) or more than five times (6.0%,  $n=33$ ). Monthly income distribution indicated that most participants fell within middle-income brackets, with 35.6% ( $n=196$ ) earning 10,001-15,000 SAR monthly, 31.6% ( $n=174$ ) earning 5,000-10,000 SAR, and smaller proportions in other income categories. The regional representation was well-balanced across clusters, with Western Region leading at 23.5% ( $n=129$ ), followed by Central Region at 22.5% ( $n=124$ ), Eastern Region at 22.2% ( $n=122$ ), Southern Region at 18.0% ( $n=99$ ), and Northern Region at 13.8% ( $n=76$ ). The most popular social media platform used by participants for travel-related information was YouTube (21.3%), followed by Twitter (19.3%) and Facebook (18.5%).

### 3.3. Instruments

The research instrument was developed through a comprehensive literature review, expert consultation, and pilot testing. The questionnaire incorporated validated scales from previous studies while adapting items to fit the Saudi cultural context and the specific focus on content quality dimensions. The aesthetic quality construct was measured using five items assessing visual appeal, image quality, aesthetic pleasing, layout design, and cultural incorporation, achieving excellent internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ,  $CR = 0.95$ ). Sample items included "The content is visually appealing" ( $M = 4.04$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ) and "The layout and design of influencer posts are engaging and well-organized" ( $M = 4.07$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ). The informativeness construct utilized five items evaluating destination information, travel tips, educational content, cultural guidance, and personal story sharing, demonstrating strong reliability ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ,  $CR = 0.95$ ). Representative items included "The influencers I follow share valuable travel tips and advice" ( $M = 4.15$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ) and "The content is informative and educational" ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ).

Additional constructs measured in the study included expertise ( $\alpha = 0.815$ , 5 items), attractiveness ( $\alpha = 0.901$ , 5 items), interaction ( $\alpha = 0.922$ , 10 items), trust ( $\alpha = 0.831$ , 5 items), and reaction behavior ( $\alpha = 0.897$ , 6 items). All constructs exceeded the recommended reliability threshold of 0.70, with most achieving values above 0.80, indicating good internal consistency. The measurement model demonstrated strong validity, with all factor loadings exceeding 0.84 and average variance extracted values surpassing the 0.50 threshold for convergent validity. Before full-scale data collection, a comprehensive pilot study was conducted with 38 participants representing the target population, confirming excellent internal consistency across all constructs and leading to minor modifications to improve question clarity and cultural appropriateness. The final questionnaire was made available in Arabic and English to ensure accessibility and maximize participation among Saudi Arabia's diverse domestic tourist population.

### 3.4. Procedures

Data collection was conducted through online survey platforms, facilitating efficient and large-scale data gathering from geographically dispersed participants. The online approach was particularly suitable for reaching the target population of social media-active domestic tourists who are comfortable with digital interfaces. The survey introduction provided comprehensive information about the study's purpose, voluntary participation, confidentiality assurances, and researcher contact information for participant inquiries. Quality control measures were implemented throughout the data collection, including attention check questions, logical consistency checks, and time-based screening to identify potentially low-quality responses.

The data collection process adhered to ethical guidelines, with informed consent obtained from all participants. Participants were informed about the study's objectives, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. The survey was designed to take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete, minimizing participant burden while ensuring comprehensive data collection. Data screening procedures were implemented to identify and address missing values, outliers, and inconsistent responses. Responses with missing values exceeding 15% of total questions were excluded; however, no such cases were identified in the final dataset. Additional screening identified and removed irrational, inconsistent, or incompatible responses based on logical consistency checks and statistical outlier detection methods.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

The analytical approach employed a two-stage process utilizing both SPSS Version 23 and SmartPLS 4 software packages. SPSS was used for preliminary data screening, descriptive analysis, and initial reliability testing. This included

comprehensive data cleaning procedures, exploratory factor analysis to confirm the underlying factor structure of measurement scales, and correlation analysis to examine initial relationships between study variables. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin values and Bartlett's test of sphericity were used to assess data suitability for factor analysis, with all values meeting recommended thresholds.

The primary analytical approach utilized structural equation modeling (SEM) through SmartPLS 4, selected for its capability to handle complex relationships and its robustness with non-normal data distributions. The SEM analysis followed a two-step approach, beginning with measurement model assessment to evaluate reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity using composite reliability, average variance extracted, and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The structural model was subsequently assessed through path coefficient analysis, coefficient of determination evaluation ( $R^2$ ), and predictive relevance testing ( $Q^2$ ). Bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 resamples were employed to ensure robust significance testing and confidence interval estimation for all path relationships in the model. Model fit was evaluated using the Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR), with values below 0.08 indicative of good fit. Collinearity diagnostics were conducted using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, with all values below 2.0 confirming the absence of multicollinearity concerns.

#### 4. Results

The analysis of content quality dimensions revealed significant relationships between aesthetic appeal, informativeness, and tourist travel decisions. The measurement model demonstrated strong reliability and validity across all constructs, with particularly robust results for the aesthetics and informativeness variables that form the core of this investigation.

Respondents strongly agreed with items measuring aesthetic quality, as shown in Table 1. The highest-rated aspect was "The layout and design of influencer posts are engaging and well-organized" ( $M = 4.07$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ), while the lowest-rated item, though still positively evaluated, was "The images and videos posted by influencers are high quality" ( $M = 4.01$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ). The composite aesthetic quality score showed excellent internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ,  $CR = 0.95$ ).

**Table 1.**  
Descriptive Statistics for Aesthetic Quality of Social Media Content.

Aesthetic Quality Items	Mean	SD
The content is visually appealing	4.04	0.90
Images and videos are of high quality	4.01	0.77
Content is aesthetically pleasing	4.02	0.84
Layout and design are engaging and well-organized	4.07	0.79
Incorporates local art and culture	4.05	0.83

For informativeness, respondents showed particularly strong agreement with the item "The influencers I follow share valuable travel tips and advice" ( $M = 4.15$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ), as presented in Table 2. The composite informativeness score demonstrated excellent reliability ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ,  $CR = 0.95$ ), with all factor loadings exceeding 0.84.

**Table 2.**  
Descriptive Statistics for Informativeness of Social Media Content.

Informativeness Items	Mean	SD
Provide detailed information about destinations	4.00	0.91
Share valuable travel tips and advice	4.15	0.91
Content is informative and educational	4.08	0.88
Offer language and cultural tips	3.98	0.89
Share personal stories making tips relatable	4.02	0.92

The structural equation model explained 56% of the variance in tourist travel decisions ( $R^2 = 0.56$ ), indicating substantial predictive power. Both aesthetic quality ( $\beta = 0.17$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and informativeness ( $\beta = 0.12$ ,  $p = 0.014$ ) showed significant direct effects on tourist behavior. The complete hypothesis testing results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.**  
Hypothesis Testing for Content Quality Dimensions.

Relationship	$\beta$	SE	t-value	95% CI	Supported
Aesthetics $\rightarrow$ Behavior	0.17	0.05	3.46**	[0.07, 0.26]	Yes
Informativeness $\rightarrow$ Behavior	0.12	0.05	2.45**	[0.02, 0.22]	Yes

Note: \*\* $p < .01$ .

The model showed strong predictive relevance with a  $Q^2$  value of 0.53, exceeding the 0.35 threshold for large predictive effects. Additional diagnostic tests confirmed the absence of multicollinearity concerns, with all VIF values below 2.0, and the model demonstrated good fit with an SRMR value of 0.045, well below the recommended cutoff of 0.08. These results provide robust evidence for the importance of both visual and informational content quality in shaping tourists' decision-making processes when consuming social media content.

The findings suggest that while aesthetically pleasing content may capture initial attention and engagement, substantive informational content contributes significantly to actual travel decisions. Tourism marketers and content creators should therefore strive to optimize both dimensions in their social media strategies, ensuring that visually appealing presentations are complemented by valuable, accurate, and useful travel information to maximize impact on potential travelers' decision-making processes. The strong explanatory power of the model (56% variance explained) underscores the practical significance of these content quality dimensions in the context of travel-related social media marketing.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence for the significant influence of content quality dimensions on tourist travel decisions, with both aesthetic appeal and informativeness emerging as crucial factors in shaping consumer behavior within the social media tourism landscape. The structural equation model's substantial explanatory power ( $R^2 = 0.56$ ) demonstrates that these content quality dimensions collectively account for over half of the variance in tourist travel decisions, underscoring their practical significance for tourism marketers and destination management organizations.

The significant direct effect of aesthetic quality on tourist behavior ( $\beta = 0.17$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) aligns with established research in visual communication and digital marketing, confirming that aesthetic appeal serves as more than mere decoration in tourism content. This finding resonates with Tang et al. [20] who demonstrated that perceived aesthetics positively correlate with customer satisfaction and behavioral intention, establishing visual presentation as a fundamental component of effective digital marketing strategies. The strength of this relationship suggests that the visual composition, design quality, and cultural representation embedded within influencer content play a pivotal role in capturing audience attention and translating visual engagement into concrete travel behaviors. This is particularly relevant in the context of Saudi Arabia's tourism sector, where platforms like Instagram and TikTok serve as primary channels for destination promotion, and where visual storytelling becomes instrumental in conveying the cultural richness and appeal of diverse tourism offerings.

The cultural dimension of aesthetic appeal gains additional significance when considering the incorporation of local art and artistic elements, which respondents rated highly ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ). This finding supports Albuhulul [14]'s assertion that aesthetic elements incorporating local cultural symbols enhance content authenticity while appealing to domestic and international audiences. The implication extends beyond visual appeal to encompass cultural representation and authenticity, suggesting that effective tourism content must balance aesthetic excellence with cultural sensitivity and authentic representation of local heritage and traditions.

The significant impact of informativeness on tourist behavior ( $\beta = 0.12$ ,  $p = 0.014$ ) validates the importance of substantive content in travel decision-making processes. This finding corroborates Wang and Yan [2]'s research, which demonstrated that informativeness significantly impacts consumer trust and travel intention, establishing information quality as a cornerstone of effective influencer marketing. The practical utility of informative content becomes particularly evident when considering that respondents showed the strongest agreement with the item regarding valuable travel tips and advice ( $M = 4.15$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ), indicating that audiences actively seek actionable information to inform their travel decisions. This aligns with Shwe [15] findings indicate that informativeness is the most influential factor among social media marketing elements in shaping travel intentions, emphasizing the functional role of content beyond its aesthetic appeal.

The multidimensional nature of informativeness encompasses practical recommendations, cultural insights, safety information, and logistical guidance, all of which reduce uncertainty and perceived risks associated with travel planning. This becomes particularly relevant in specialized tourism contexts such as religious tourism, where travelers require specific guidance on cultural practices and religious protocols. The finding that informative content significantly influences travel decisions supports Al Jahdali [16]'s observation that content creators focusing on religious tourism must provide detailed information about requirements, timing, and logistical considerations to serve their audience effectively.

The complementary relationship between aesthetic appeal and informativeness revealed in this study challenges the traditional dichotomy between form and function in content creation. Rather than viewing these dimensions as competing priorities, the findings suggest that successful tourism content must integrate both elements to achieve optimal influence on tourist behavior. This integration reflects the evolving sophistication of social media audiences, who increasingly demand content that captures attention visually and provides substantive value through practical insights and actionable information. As digital technologies continue to evolve, the integration of artificial intelligence in content creation and curation processes presents new opportunities for enhancing both aesthetic and informational dimensions, though this technological advancement must be balanced with ethical considerations in decision-making processes. The challenge for content creators lies in achieving this balance while maintaining authenticity and cultural sensitivity, particularly in culturally rich contexts like Saudi Arabia.

The model's strong predictive relevance ( $Q^2 = 0.53$ ) and excellent diagnostic indicators, including the absence of multicollinearity concerns and good model fit ( $SRMR = 0.045$ ), provide confidence in the reliability and validity of these findings. These statistical indicators suggest that the relationships identified in this study are robust and generalizable within Saudi domestic tourism, offering practical guidance for developing marketing strategies. The comprehensive nature of the measurement model, with strong reliability coefficients for aesthetic quality ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ,  $CR = 0.95$ ) and informativeness ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ,  $CR = 0.95$ ), further reinforces the validity of the theoretical framework employed in this investigation.

The theoretical implications of these findings extend beyond the immediate context of Saudi tourism to contribute to a broader understanding of digital marketing effectiveness in culturally specific environments. Integrating aesthetic and informational content dimensions within a single theoretical framework represents an advancement in understanding how different content attributes work synergistically to influence consumer behavior. This approach recognizes that modern social media content must serve multiple functions simultaneously, requiring marketers to develop sophisticated content strategies that address emotional and rational decision-making processes.

The practical implications for tourism stakeholders are substantial, suggesting that content optimization should focus on visual excellence and informational depth. Tourism marketers should invest in high-quality visual content creation while ensuring that such content is complemented by valuable, accurate, and culturally appropriate information. This dual focus becomes particularly important in the post-pandemic travel environment, where safety concerns and risk perceptions have heightened the importance of reliable, trustworthy information sources. The findings suggest that travelers increasingly rely on content that combines visual appeal with practical utility, making the integration of these dimensions essential for effective tourism marketing.

The cultural context of this study also provides insights into the role of local representation in tourism content. The positive reception of content incorporating local art and cultural elements suggests that authentic cultural representation enhances aesthetic appeal and informational value, creating content that resonates with audiences while accurately representing destination characteristics. This finding has implications for destination marketing organizations seeking to develop culturally appropriate content strategies that appeal to domestic and international markets.

Looking toward future research directions, the findings suggest several areas for further investigation. The relationship between content quality dimensions and trust formation represents a promising avenue for exploration, particularly given the established importance of trust in mediating influencer-consumer relationships. Additionally, the cultural specificity of these relationships warrants investigation across different cultural contexts to determine the generalizability of these findings beyond the Saudi Arabian context. The dynamic nature of social media platforms and evolving consumer preferences also suggest the need for longitudinal studies to track changes in the relative importance of different content dimensions over time.

In conclusion, this study provides robust empirical evidence for the significant influence of aesthetic appeal and informativeness on tourist travel decisions, demonstrating that effective social media tourism content must integrate visual excellence with substantive informational value. The findings contribute to the theoretical understanding of digital tourism marketing while offering practical guidance for tourism stakeholders seeking to optimize their content strategies. The substantial explanatory power of the proposed model, combined with its strong predictive relevance, establishes a foundation for future research and practice in the evolving landscape of social media tourism marketing. As the tourism industry continues to adapt to digital transformation and changing consumer expectations, the insights from this study underscore the importance of developing sophisticated content strategies that address both emotional and rational aspects of travel decision-making processes.

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