

## VIRTUAL REALITY AND BLOGGING IN TOURISM: APPROACHED TOWARDS CREATING BETTER TOURIST EXPERIENCE

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## **Abstract**

Virtual reality in tourism (virtual tourism) and blogging are highly valuable for visitors and travellers since they allow them to undertake a scouting trip before embarking on their adventure, avoid being hassled and avoid crowds while learning more about the location they are visiting or have already been. This paper provides an overview and analysis of the relationship between virtual tourism, blogging, and making the image of tourist destinations through promotion virtually and via blogs. According to the study's findings, virtual tourism cannot replace the actual experience, but it can assist in recreating it if the user has previously visited the location, bringing out new nuances in their experience, or giving them a taste of the destination ahead of time if they have not yet visited. Also, when it comes to digital marketing for tourism, blogging is the frosting on the cake because it is utilized for promotion and communication throughout the pre-travel period, focusing on behavioral factors.

## **Introduction**

Virtual reality (VR) and blogging are two of the most significant recent technical breakthroughs to have a significant impact on the tourism sector. The tourism business has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic for a long time and will shape the travel behavior for next generations. However, every crisis can construct some positive outcomes, as difficulties stimulate new and innovative ideas (Oncioiu I. & Priescu I. 2022). Tourist destination promotion is an excellent strategy to generate excitement for "new normal" travel and keep the place on tourists' minds once they are able to vacation again. In virtual tourism, there is no physical contact, so there is no social distancing, which is suitable for the pandemic (Sharma, G.D. et.al 2021). Furthermore, virtual tourism offers an educational viewpoint, allowing potential tourists to get a comprehensive grasp of the destination through guided videos (El-Said, O.; Aziz, H. 2021). Tourism nowadays relies heavily on photo realistic 360-degree images (Marasco et al., 2018). Moreover, blogging plays an important role in the tourism industry by telling a story and engaging the ideal customers. In a short term, the blog is a written text post published on the internet, a photograph (photolog) or a video (vlog). Travel blogs are online journals of travel experiences (Cardell and Douglas, 2016). Travelers today look for experiences in VR and on travel blogs, which are becoming a source of inspiration for destination searches and vacation planning. Bloggers are the reporters of the new century. The Web2.0 brings a second generation of opportunities for collaboration and information sharing based on online communities and hosted services. The result of this study recommend that in scheming virtual destinations or vlog, tourism marketers need to consider consumers' psychological, self-sufficiency and relatedness so as to increase the virtual tourist's autonomy. Due to its economization of time, place, costs, and accessibility, this kind of tourism is more cost-effective than actual tourism, and users can travel anywhere and anytime at the lowest possible cost. This technology provides marketers opportunities to offer more gripping metaphors of tourism destinations to potential tourists by giving them a sense of what it is like to be there, a "try before you buy" experience (Tussyadiah, I.P., et.al 2017). While VR or blogging has momentous applications in lots of sectors, counting healthcare, entertainment, education or marketing, this paper center on the utilization of technology in the tourism industry. As an example, a hotel promoted its honeymoon packages using virtual reality to target newlyweds. Potential customers might enjoy virtual tours of the hotels, as well as the destination landmarks and nearby locations, such as the Grand Oasis Hotel in Cancun, which offers a 360o hotel VR tour. People are turning to virtual reality technology to

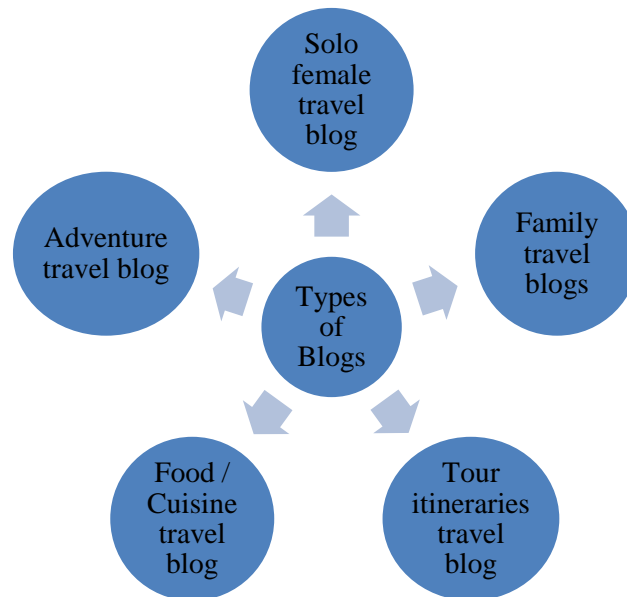
satiating their requirement to travel post COVID-19 pandemic and self-quarantine have made it increasingly difficult to enjoy tourism in the actual world. After the COVID-19 pandemic, governments and agencies in many countries are developing virtual travel content and advertising to attract tourists to their countries.

### **Review of Literature**

For travellers, the Internet has become a valuable resource. Virtual reality is a fully computer-generated three-dimensional environment in which users can traverse and interact using one or more of their five senses (Huang, Y.C et.al 2016). VR can also be defined as a computer-generated environment that allows a user to interact with numerous stimuli (Limniou et al. 2008) and understand landscape, objects, and sound effects in a virtual medium, giving the client the sagacity of reality “being there” and blogs act as an online Word-of-mouth communication.

The term blog is derived from the phrase weblog, and it contains four terms and they are blog, blogger, blogging and blogosphere (Myers G., 2010). A blog is a website similar to a book's pages where a blogger's discourse takes place. A blog's author is the individual who writes it and hence generates the mainstream of the content.

Blogging is defined as the act of writing a blog or interacting on blogs, and it will be viewed as a way of communication, for example, among community members. The term blogosphere also refers to the blogging society. Consumers may now obtain not only comments from close friends, family members, and coworkers, but also thoughts from strangers who may have been affected to a particular destination with the help of technology. Today, a growing number of travellers look for travel-related information online. Reading travel blogs is a significant source of inspiration and offers many benefits to readers: the Web is easily available; content is chosen and frequently updated; and blog entries guarantee first-hand accounts of other travelers' experiences. From the perspective of the blogger, several blogging techniques can be used in online settings, allowing for creative presentation of one's own travel experiences in a multimedia style, incorporating text and images. Additionally, travel blogs can be seen as platforms for community members to interact, offer travel tips, and voice their thoughts on various tourist attractions. "Facilitators of the tourist dream" are travel writers (Curzi, 2011). In fact, the blogger's comments, both positive and negative, are considered as trustworthy and authentic. There are various types of popular travel blog (where the entire focus is on the world of travel) like:



*Fig 1: Types of travel blogs*

*Source: Compiled by Authors*

Web 2.0 in tourism, also known to as 'Travel 2.0', comprises of latest technologies such as media, mash-ups, AJAX (Asynchronous JavaScript and XML), classifying, web forums and message boards, wikis, customer ratings and assessment systems, virtual community games, podcasting, blogs and online videos (vlogs) (Adam, J. et.al 2007).

Gretzel et al. (2007) reported in a study conducted with users of Tripadvisor.com that the most accepted online actions carried out during the planning phase for th trip were looking at other 'tourists' comments and materials and reading travel-related blogs. Out of the 1.9 billion WebPages on the internet today, there are approximately 600 million blogs. Every year, almost 3 billion blog entries are published around the world. That's 8.28 million blog posts published per day, and 5,750 blog posts published each minute (Byers K. Jan. 2022). The most visible type of blog in the tourist industry tends to be travel blogs, which provide personal trip stories and recommendations in the form of travel diaries or product reviews.

Individual travel blogs are now hosted on a number of public travel blog platforms. Travelblog.org, travelpod.com, blog.realtravel.com, yourtraveljournal.com, and travelpost.com are all good examples. Travel blogs, according to Puhringer and Taylor (2008, p 179), are "the equivalent of private online diaries," consisting of "one or more individual entries tied mutually by a general theme (for example, a trip itinerary." Individuals who create and maintain travel blogs are known as travel bloggers. Paid partnerships, guest pieces, sponsored posts, advertising, and affiliate connections are some of the ways people try to make wealth from their journey blogs. Travel bloggers may also engage in offline activities relating to their blogs, such as teaching 'how to blog' classes or giving speeches. To augment their blogging income, many travel bloggers take on other jobs, such as freelance writing or copyrighting (Azariah 2016a). Travel bloggers, according to Duffy and Kang (2019), are persons who stage their performances of self in order to influence their audiences for personal, commercial, and/or cultural gain. Travel blogs can also be used to track visitor perceptions of a particular destination (Lange-Faria W. & Elliot S., 2012). The DMO can gather data on the many features and attitudes of travellers toward the location, which can then be used to tailor the marketing approach to the consumer profiles. The DMO can benefit from all of the information acquired in blogs and on the internet

(Woodside A. et.al.2007). According to Tourmag (2015), Britain has been collaborating with bloggers as part of their marketing plan. Collaboration with tourism bloggers has helped them promote various programmes and increase tourist numbers. Male bloggers and readers are more likely to be youthful, broadband users, Internet veterans, financially well-off, and well-educated (Rainie L. 2005).

According to Guttentag (2010), sensor technology is particularly significant in tourism, and VR applications are commonly utilized in this business to design and plan models. They allow you to view your surroundings from a variety of perspectives. Virtual tourism can present travellers with a complete image of a hotel or destination, allowing those who want to travel to become comfortable with unfamiliar destinations and lowering tourists' perceived danger or anxiety (O. Lee and J.E. Oh, 2007). VR tourism applications, according to Tavakoli and Mura (2015), can use pretend 3D models of both real and fictitious destinations. Molinillo et al. (2018) shared profiles, photographs, and videos on three social media sites with high global Internet usage, including Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. For Bauman (2010), traveling is a characteristic of the modern era. Because it is always moving and changing, he describes the modern world as liquid. People are in perpetual motion. They are ready to be adaptable and work hard to get knowledge about what will happen next. According to Poster (2001), technology is currently heavily influencing culture, resulting in virtual reality. This new way of being is the outcome of combining the imaginary with the real, resulting in the production of new experiences and identities. When images of destinations are displayed in VR rather than in a standard 2D format, a sense of being present at the locations increases (i.e., telepresence), and the desire to visit the locations evolves (i.e., mental imagery). According to Hyun M.H. and O'Keefe R.M. (2012), telepresence functions as a mediator of the effect of online virtual information on mental picture creation. Blogging is frequently regarded as a less expensive marketing activity than traditional advertising (Shropshire, C. 2005) and a non-traditional means to define a destination's image. Tourism narratives and stories have always been popular, and blogs, like traditional journaling or any other form of written travel narrative, are about expressing and sharing the inner experiences of travellers with others who are interested and 'care enough to read an account of a person's thoughts and feelings' (Conhaim WW., 2003: 27). In their study, Sussmann and Vanhegan (2000) asked, "Can VR applications be an alternative for tourism products?" Virtual vacations are not viewed as sufficient or suitable substitutes to real holidays, but they have the prospect to be a significant complement to the real vacation experience, according to their findings. The study did, however, highlight how virtual travel might be beneficial to disabled or elderly vacationers. Furthermore, as virtual reality technology advances, the entertainment sector has discovered a method to make these advancements highly effective in marketing exciting tourist destinations (Gutierrez et al., 2008). Virtual reality applications have now infiltrated every facet of our life, starting with video games and the leisure industry, bringing an important change to the tourism industry (Gurau C., 2007). Virtual tourism has been commended as a tool for hotels and destinations to emphasize the elusive of their locations, capturing the unique sense of the place and attracting visitors who might not have considered it otherwise. VR has the potential to be tremendously helpful in the areas of entertainment, education, accessibility, cultural preservation, and marketing. Touchpoints from the real and virtual worlds along the entire customer journey (CJ) must be integrated as the world becomes more and more digitally oriented (Schüller, 2012). Emerging technologies like augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR), which have been turning the physical customer journey into a phygital one (Neuburger, L. et al., 2008), have changed how passengers are inspired, book, plan, and enjoy travel (2018). AR and

VR can play a crucial part in piquing passengers' curiosity and inspiring as well as informing them about their next vacation destination instead of providing them with static 2D photographs of a destination (Tussyadiah, Wang, & Jia, 2016, 2017; Marchiori et al., 2018). Several tourism stakeholders have already used 360-degree real-world captured or computer-generated virtual reality video to entice tourists or give them sneak peeks at lodging options, scenery, or activities at the location (Yung & Khoo-Lattimore, 2017; Beck & Egger, 2018). As an illustration, the global hotel brand Marriott debuted "The Marriott Teleporter," an immersive 4D VR travel experience. With an HMD, people could experience different travel locales, and the addition of 4D components like wind, heat, or moving floors allowed for a notion of space change and even deeper (mental) immersion (Marriott International, 2015).

### **Virtual Reality/Blogging to take over traditional marketing**

The usage of interactive video material, 360-degree movies, and virtual reality, especially following COVID-19, is a trend that is becoming more and more prevalent nowadays. It is the brand-new marketing tactic that is poised to rock the world. In the past, traditional marketing relied on merely "telling" the audience the tale; but, with virtual reality, the audience is now literally placed inside the narrative and taken along for the adventure. One of the most crucial strategies for telling the tale and involving the target audience in the destination brand in the tourist sector is blogging and virtual reality. Over time, blogs in particular are more time and money efficient than other traditional marketing strategies. This idea has succeeded because it has the potential to utterly captivate and engross the audience, evoking deep emotional ties. Now, telling stories has given way to living stories. Particularly after COVID-19, virtual reality has emerged as a stepping stone to replace traditional marketing for the global recovery of the travel and tourist industry. Virtual tourism can be as simple as a video showing a travel destination. The "tourist" uses their hearing and visual senses to watch the film. People can now safely and quickly travel to any location in the globe thanks to virtual reality technology, such as travelling through the Himalayas' snowy trails, taking in the sunset on Goa's lovely beaches, or experiencing the most thrilling skydiving experience ever! VR apps are better at evoking emotions and causing emotional reactions than print marketing and TV commercials. The travel and tourism industry is trying to rebuild and rebrand itself due to the threat of new COVID pandemic waves, and virtual reality (VR) could be the key tool for doing so. Instead of just showing visitors a destination or potential travel routes, VR introduces them to virtual worlds where they can interact, communicate, and explore to decide whether or not it is worthwhile to book a real trip.

### **Objective of the study**

1. To contribute a thorough understanding of Virtual reality technology in tourism.
2. Reviewing and analyzing current research on virtual tourism.
3. Examining how blogs can be used to express and influence travel experiences.
4. This paper looks at how to leverage virtual tours and blogs to strengthen the tourism industry by using virtual tours as an alternative model in the face of an economic crisis.

### **Design/ Methodology/ Approach**

Millions of people could be reached through virtual tourism and blogging. In this paper, we will explore how virtual tourism and blogging can be used to contribute to economic growth and sustainability, especially under the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry. The study consists of a text review of books, journals, websites, and newspaper articles, so thematic and content analyses are essential to the research. The chapter reviews and analyses

literature on Virtual tourism, blogging, and travel blogs published from 2000 to April 2022 is done.

### **Interactive vs. Passive tourist**

Every traveller is different, bringing with them a special combination of experiences, motives, and desires (Buhalis & Law, 2008). While passive travellers like to unwind at spas or health resorts, interactive travellers need more engaging travel experiences at places with interesting content. The advent of the Internet enabled the "new" traveller, who is more informed and seeks out the best possible value for their money and time (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Tourists are increasingly looking for locations that are intriguing, daring, and capable of producing amazing experiences and stories. However, given that it is known that active tourists spend more money than idle ones do, tourist locations are making every effort to provide a variety of experiences and activities (Letho et al, 2004; Gibson, 2004; Slak Valek, 2008). No matter how daring a travellers may be, it's doubtful that they'll leave for a new place without being aware of it. A multifaceted look at the city that includes a virtual reality tour of well-known locations, a 360-degree tour, and learning about the tourist experience while reading blogs and lists of entertaining things to do while visitors are in town. Potential customers can use this information to decide whether they want to visit a particular place.

### **Virtual Reality & Blogging - New Level of Digital Evolution**

People have always been on the move, but their motivation has changed over a period of time. Traveling, as well as the habit of writing about vacation excursions, has an elongated history (Shackley, 2006). "VR" stands for virtual reality technology. There were only a few military and academic laboratory concepts at first. With the continued development of computer and sensor technology until the turn of the century, it progressively moved from the workplace to the practical stage and was widely used in various spheres of human existence, resulting in a new situation (Schmitz S. & Tsobgou D.L., 2016). Virtual tourism is a computer-generated environment that allows users to engage with various stimuli and experience landscape and sound effects through virtual media to simulate being in a certain location (Huang et al. 2013).



Fig. 2: Woman looking at house size with virtual reality

Source:[https://www.freepik.com/premium-vector/woman-looking-house-size-with-virtual-reality\\_20687333.htm#page=2&query=virtual%20reality%20in%20tourism&position=26&from\\_view=search](https://www.freepik.com/premium-vector/woman-looking-house-size-with-virtual-reality_20687333.htm#page=2&query=virtual%20reality%20in%20tourism&position=26&from_view=search)

The Global Virtual Tourism Market was estimated to be worth US\$ 5 billion in 2021 and is expected to reach US\$ 24.10 billion by 2027, with a CAGR of 30.95 percent between 2022 and

2027, according to Market Data's prediction (April 2022). The COVID-19 epidemic, however, has caused the tourism sector to reach an all-time low (<https://www.marketdataforecast.com/market-reports/virtual-tourism-market>).

However, travel booking websites, virtual reality, blogs, and trip photography will aid in the extension of travel and tourism firms. Innovation is a lever of technological advancement that propels economic growth (Roman M. 2020). Tourists should use VR technology and read blogs to impact behavioural intent because planning a vacation today is impossible without easy access to information. Viewers who experience a property in this fashion are more likely to wish to return in the future, and they can readily share the virtual offerings with their friends and family. In India, the Ministry of Tourism has teamed up with OutsideVR, a travel technology business. The goal of this partnership is to enable people to virtually tour India and to promote Incredible India promotions (Joe T. 2020). During the holidays in recent years, the news of overtourism in several areas has dominated the mainstream media. Time shifting, traffic shifting, and picking non-popular or off-beat tourist routes are all key ways to deflect people away from major tourist locations. In addition to the aforementioned diversion tactics, virtual tourism, which is based on computer and Internet technologies, will provide travellers a new tourism model to choose from. Many places of the planet are forbidden territory. This could be due to the fact that we cannot afford to get there since they are in remote regions or because the area is closed to visitors totally. However, with the introduction of virtual tourism, no region of the globe is now unreachable! A person can learn about a museum by reading the description and looking at the photographs, but with virtual reality, they can go into the museum and have a virtual tour using a VR headset. The tourism and travel industry may provide web users with an immersive experience of the location. People feel as though they are exploring the sites on their own, which is even more interesting than videos and 360-degree photographs. Blogging, on the other hand, is a must for every location because it is a more cost-effective way to spend marketing funds. Blog content is evergreen that means it will always be accessible and can be reshared indefinitely, giving it an indefinite existence. It also aids in the development of a vibrant web presence for the resort among tourists.



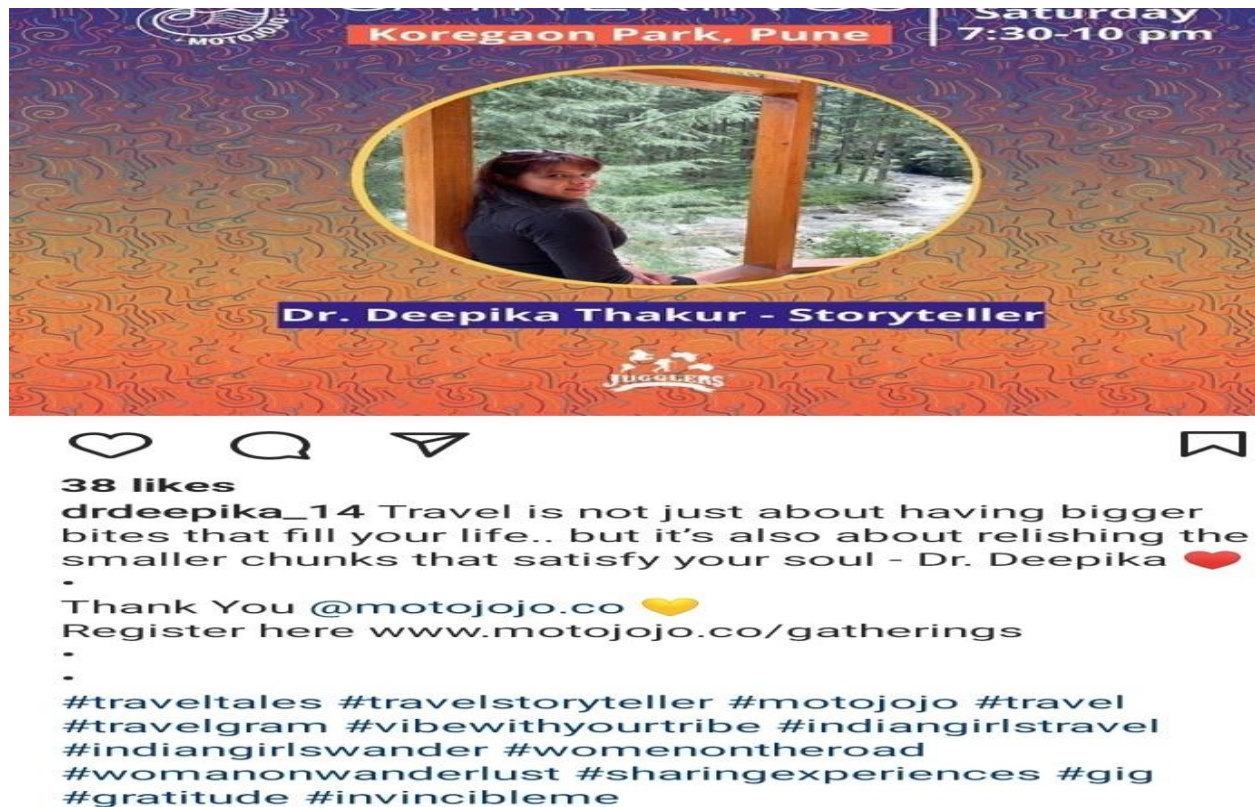


Fig. 3: Blogging on Social Media by the tourist about her travel experience

Source: Instagram Dr. Deepika Thakur, (Permission taken)

**Facts & Statistics related to Virtual Reality & Blogging**

<b>Virtual Reality</b>	<b>Blogging</b>
<p>According to Jovanovic B. on 6<sup>th</sup> May. 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The virtual reality market was valued at \$15.81 billion in 2020.</li> <li>· 23 million VR-related jobs will open by 2030.</li> <li>· Sony has sold more than 5 million PlayStation VR units.</li> <li>· VR is expected to become mainstream in the next 3-4 years.</li> <li>· Consumer spending on VR and AR, according to VR market statistics, is expected to reach \$72 billion by 2024.</li> <li>· On a global scale, 171 million people use VR in some manner.</li> <li>· VR is most popular among people aged 25 to 34.</li> <li>· 22% of VR users want more immersive and interactive content.</li> </ul> <p>According to All the Research Company (An Avira Group Company), Aug. 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The Global Augmented reality/Virtual reality in the travel and tourism market ecosystem was valued at US\$ 74.6 million in 2018 and is expected to reach US\$ 304.4 million by the year 2023, growing at a CAGR of 32.5%.</li> </ul>	<p>According to Coral Ouellette on April 22, 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The average blog post takes 3.5 hours to write.</li> <li>· Bloggers who write articles of 2,000+ words are far more likely to have strong results</li> <li>· There are about 70 million posts being published each month by Word Press users.</li> <li>· 43% of people admit to skimming blog posts.</li> <li>· Blogs have been rated as the 5th most trustworthy source for gathering online information.</li> <li>· Titles with 6-13 words attract the highest and most consistent amount of traffic.</li> <li>· 53% of marketers say blogging is their top content marketing priority.</li> <li>· Articles with images get 94% more views as opposed to those with no visuals.</li> <li>· Using photos of real people instead of stock photos can result in a 35% conversion increase.</li> <li>· 19% of bloggers are now including videos in their typical posts.</li> </ul> <p>According to Nick G. 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Adding a blog to your existing website can increase traffic by as much as 434%.</li> <li>· Approximately 7.5 million blog posts are created every day.</li> <li>· 77% of internet users read blogs.</li> <li>· An average blog post is 2,520 words.</li> <li>· The most profitable blog is the Huffington Post, with an annual income of \$500 million.</li> <li>· 53.3% of bloggers are between 21 and 35.</li> <li>· Seven-minute reads attract the most attention from the internet audience</li> </ul>

Table 1: Facts & Figures related to Virtual Reality (VR) and Blogging (Source: Compiled by Researchers)

### **Tourist experience through exchange of blogging**

The personal C2C (Customer to Customer) category encompasses the great majority of travel-related blogs on the internet. Travel blogs, which are essentially a personal form of online diary, are generally used to share personal journey stories and knowledge with friends and family back home (Schmallegger D. & Carson D. 2008). The weightage of blogs in the tourism industry is enormous. Tourists are gradually turning more to the internet for travel-related information. More consumers are turning to online reviews for advice on anything from which movies to see to which stocks to buy (Guernsey L. 2000). Consumers can save time and make better judgments by searching for and reading other people's comments about a product (Hennig-Thurau T. & Walsh G.).

Travel blogs, as components of global assemblages, connect people and locations around the world. Marketing management, management, and marketing research can all benefit from blogs. Customer summary, customer attainment, customer commitment, brand awareness, brand strengthening, reputation management, and customer service are all obvious uses for blogs (Laboy F. & Torchio P. 2007 and Dellarocas C. 2003). Some hotel firms have also offered incentives to tourists who leave comments on their blogs, such as concessions and coupons (Price J. & Starkov M. 2006). Hotel or airline blogs are frequently created by employees or sponsored bloggers to provide travellers with the most up-to-date information or insider anecdotes about the firm. The primary goal of such blogs is to provide more engaging and credible information on the website, as well as to promote ongoing communication with clients. Travel blog material differs greatly from tourist communication and marketing information provided by organizations and locations. They appear more authentic as tourists share their experiences on various topics such as public transportation, train rides, scenic drives, things to do alone or with friends, local cuisines, food and wine to try while visiting, hospitality, local market, non-touristy things to do, fairs & festivals not to miss, hiking, camping and backpacking, off-beat places, kid friendly, dispensaries, comparing destinations, what to wear while travelling, the best season to visit, etc. Thematic contexts for blog narrative include the recreation alternatives and services connected with tourist destinations, travelers' perceptions, and destination identities, according to content analysis. Using temporal and spatial features that correspond to scene-recall or spatio-temporal occurrence of trip events, the narrative analysis gives meaning to bloggers' travel experiences. Both forms of analysis give useful information on tourist travel and consumption behaviour (Cohen S.A et al. 2014), such as movement patterns, activities, interests, and overall satisfaction with the vacation experience. As a result, both at the individual and managerial levels, travel blogs or blogging serve as a viable and influential resource for the travel and tourist business. Travel blogs are regarded as a reliable medium for exchanging information.

### **360° Virtual tours (VT) – Travel Substitute during COVID-19**

Virtual tours have a lot of potential in situations when getting a real-life experience is difficult owing to COVID-19. Many travel agencies have been severely impacted by COVID-19, since many governments have implemented lockdowns to prevent the virus from spreading. The tourism business has been impacted by the Covid-19 outbreak and requires a new innovation in order to return to normalcy. The rapid development of Virtual Reality (VR) and Virtual Tours (VT), as well as their success in recreating real-life experiences and satisfying the need to travel and escape from daily life, has created an opportunity for virtual vacationing, particularly when

actual travel is not feasible. Alternative modes of travel are getting more popular as consumer anxiety and ambiguity become a major concern for tour operators. In this perspective, virtual reality is gaining traction since technology allows passengers to experience several of the world's most inaccessible locations from the comfort of their own home, opening up enormous possibilities for usage as a trip alternative (Nilsson NC et.al. 2018). Because of the ongoing spread of COVID-19, the instruction to 'stay inside, keep safe' restricts people's outdoor movements, a 360° virtual tour can be a solution that also reduces tension. A 360° virtual tour is a three-dimensional virtual simulation of an actual attraction, destination, or tourist experience that is created as a preparation to visiting a destination or as a way of extending the past experiences of consumers (Kim M.J., & Hall C.M. 2019). Schweibenz (2019) wrap up that virtual museum tours are eulogized as a valuable tool for stimulating interest and enticing visitors to the actual attractions or destinations they represent in the VT environment. People who had constructive experiences with 3D virtual world tourism destinations were more inspired to visit the real places subsequently, according to Huang et al. (2013, 2016). Bogicevic et al. (2019) also discovered that a hotel VR experience influenced users' mental picture of a hotel, which influenced users' sensation of presence and the hotels sensory, affective, behavioural, and intellectual brand experiences. For example, in 2020, the Singapore Tourism Board published "Experience Singapore Now" proposal, which allowed visitors from all over the world to almost discover some of the city-state's most iconic attractions and districts. On the event of India's 75th Independence Day happiness, the Ministry of Tourism (MOT), in cooperation with the Association of Indian Universities, has released a series of 12 episodes as part of 'Dekho Apna Desh,' a virtual trip across India's rich cultural history (The Economic Times, 16th August. 2021). Many countries' official tourist boards have also introduced a variety of VR options for prospective visitors to experience their countries. The German National Tourist Board offers virtual reality tours of the country. The Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation is using virtual realism to promote activities such as yoga and snorkeling. Tourism Ireland has also produced a virtual reality experience to highlight Northern Ireland's attractions (Blog from Successive technologies). Through immersive virtual reality experiences, companies like Google, Oculus (Meta), The Hydrous, and Viveport can assist address the needs of such tourists. Viveport allows adrenaline addicts to indulge in free (and paid) VR excursions like jumping off the Burj Khalifa and touring destinations around the world, while Like The Hydrous offers VR experiences of the seas and oceans, making conservation education available to the public. People can have remarkable experiences from the comfort and safety of their own homes, and travelers' experiences can be enhanced. Virtual tourism, according to Spielmann N. and Mantonakis A. (2018), is a simulated context built from a sequence of photographs or videos, augmented by written narrative, auditory guiding, or sound effects, in an attempt to accurately recreate the genuine site experience. Due to the longevity of the COVID-19 epidemic, some pavilions at Expo 2020 Dubai, the most recent world exposition, are available in 360° movies, walkthroughs, video tours, and other internet presentations. Travelers who are elderly or disabled have a very good chance of seeing tourist destinations through virtual reality. Many programs, including "Ascape" and "YouVisit," allow virtual visitors to explore various locations all over the world from the comfort of their homes. Everest VR allows users to ascend Mount Everest without exerting any physical effort, and SpaceVR is developing 360-degree material that allows users to view footage from low earth orbit that is sent back to earth (Neuburger, L. et al (2018). Additionally, Hilton has partnered with Opera Mediaworks and agency partner OMD to launch the mobile-first campaign, which transports users to the hotel chain's Barbados resort virtually.

One of the first hotel marketers to use 360-degree video in a commercial is Hilton Hotels & Resorts. Visitors will be given a two-minute tour of the Hilton resort in Barbados, which will include vistas of the beach, pool, ocean, and hotel grounds. Instead of touching or swiping to navigate to the next scene, users of 360-degree video can have a more immersive experience simply tilting or rotating their smartphone (Samuely, A.).

#### **Few examples of Virtual Tourism (Fanthorpe H. Dec.2020)**

1. The "We'll Be Waiting for You" ad in Virginia is trying to keep travellers dreaming. The state's main video serves as a fantastic reminder to visitors of all the best reasons to visit, from its magnificent, deserted landscapes to its immaculate vineyards and dazzlingly starry skies.
2. Covid-19 can be an opportunity, as Portugal's #Can't Skip Hope campaign reminds us: a reason to pause, reimagining our future, and dream, dream, dreams.
3. Dubai 360 is an online portal that features a variety of panoramic video and photo content from across the city. Take a virtual tour of the Etihad Museum and the Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood, as well as a peek inside the sky-scraping Burj Al Arab.
4. California, USA: While there are many amazing virtual tourist campaigns across the United States, California is one of the best. The Oakland from Home campaign promises "behind-the-scenes" virtual tours and movies displaying everything from local music to "how-to" craft tutorials.

#### **Few examples of Blogging (wanderlust.co.uk)**

1. Oneika the Traveller: A journalist and TV broadcaster who has travelled over 115 countries and is the host of Travel Channel's One Bag and You're Out and Big City, Little Budget. Oneika is a travel advocate who blogs about the places she's been, her travel style suggestions, and her experiences travelling as a black person.
2. Adventurous Kate: Since 2010, Kate has been travelling full-time and has made it her duty to explain women how to travel the world on their own – effortlessly, safely, and adventurously. Her enthusiastic posts will undoubtedly motivate anyone.
3. The Opposite Travelers: Rachel and Ryan from Canada have extremely different travel preferences. Rachel prefers to travel in comfort and luxury, whereas Ryan is more daring. Their blog demonstrates how two very different travel approaches can work together to generate remarkable travel experiences.
4. Life Part 2: Retirees Jonathan and Sarah met in Chiang Mai and decided to inspire other baby boomers to travel more and have their own retirement adventures. Their action-packed blogs demonstrate that the world is not a terrible place to avoid, but rather a place that curious retirees should explore.

#### **Conclusion**

As a result of the so-called "electronic word of mouth," user-generated comments, photographs, and videos on vacation resorts become an effective bottom-up marketing tool for travel locations. The adoption and spread of new technology will ultimately determine the impact of blogging and virtual reality on travel and tourism. A computer-generated world where a user can get immersed, look around, and control the experience is the classic definition of virtual reality (VR) (Yung, R. et.al 2019). The lines separating the physical world from the digital world are blurry. As a result, visitors engage with both virtual information and material as well as the perception that the destination is a real and physical geographic region. This can result in a closer connection to the place. Thus, virtual content not only creates a parallel universe but also enhances the tourist

experience. At the same time, the entirety of visitors' emotive, cognitive, and sensory responses prior to, during, and following engagement with the virtual environment can be widely referred to as the virtual experience in tourism and hospitality (Godovykh, M. 2020). Until the epidemic is finished, progress has been gradual and incremental, with little likelihood of upsetting the travel sector or reducing travel-related carbon emissions. Virtual reality and blogging, although their usefulness in increasing the attractiveness and accessibility of tourist locations, have a number of drawbacks and risks. A blog must be fascinating, amusing, and informative, as well as give networking opportunities, or it will quickly wither and become useless. A travel blog covers a wide range of topics, from photographs and videos of tourist destinations to the use of tourism-related facilities. Creating a well-designed virtual tourism itinerary is critical for tourists who use virtual tourism to supplement on-site tourism and to improve tourist interactions with the destination so that visitors have the same feelings about the place as they do about on-site tourism. Overall, blogs have a unique ability to reflect how visitors experience the destinations that they remember. This results in a destination brand promise that may be communicated through a variety of travel blogs. Travel blogs are a relatively new technological phenomenon for tourism marketers and the tourism industry in general, with significant consequences for destination promotion. The tourism sector could be altered by combining virtual reality and blogging and since vacation planning today would be impossible without quick access to information, tourism stakeholders should encourage their customers to adopt and use VR technology by educating them about the advantages of doing so, investing more money in such technology, and creating incentive programs to encourage adoption.

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