# EXAMINING STAKEHOLDERS' ROLES IN ESTABLISHING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM-AN INTERNATIONAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY

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*Abstract: Planning and development for the tourism industry have focused on sustainability ideas and problems. It has grown more difficult to address issues of sustainability, environmental protection, and local community involvement. However, the past studies are limited in terms of how stakeholders in the tourist industry interact and how this engagement might help achieve sustainability goals. Today the era has changed and the audience are now available on virtual or online modes rather than the physical ones. Based on this and existing frameworks, we propose an extended framework along with roles and responsibilities of each, adding the online communities including travel vloggers in this. A systematic literature is done to identify the role of new stake holder, online communities, in creating sustainable tourism in the market.*

**Key Words:** *Sustainable Tourism, Stakeholders' Role, Online Actors, SLR*

## INTRODUCTION:

According to Yu and Review (2012), tourism being a consumer of inputs and producer of final goods makes greater impacts on GDP thereby establishing its role as an economic pillar. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC] (2019), the direct, indirect, and induced impact of travel and tourism (T&T) in 2019 accounted for USD 8.9 trillion contributions to global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (i.e., 10.3% of global GDP); 330 million jobs (i.e., 1 in 10 jobs around the world); USD 1.7 trillion visitor exports (i.e.,6.8% of total exports; 28.3% of global services exports); and USD 948 billion capital investment (i.e., 4.3% of total investment).

Benefits from tourism should be shared amongst a wide range of stakeholders (Heslinga et al., 2019), with emphasis on local communities (Roxas et al., 2020). In pursuing sustainability, coordinating various stakeholders (i.e., authorities, tourists, tourism business, local people) is vital (Björk, 2000). In achieving sustainability, governance of tourism destinations remains a challenge. Following the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) 2030 Tourism Roadmap for Inclusive Growth, the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 (i.e., partnerships for the goals) requires strengthened partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders.

In order to realise the common goals of public and private players, governance refers to changes in the function of the government and a rising role for non-government actors (Pierre, 2005). According to (Koscak & O'Rourke, 2017), "the most successful models of multi-stakeholder action have been those which combine elements of international and national intervention as well as the distinctive inputs of regions and local communities, whether public, private or mutual". In order to achieve SDG17, which calls for including

several stakeholders, it is crucial to address the importance of stakeholder involvement in managing tourism sites. To ensure broad participation and consensus-building, sustainable tourist development requires the intelligent input of all relevant stakeholders as well as sound administrative management. The practise of achieving sustainable tourism requires constant observation of influences and the introduction of the necessary preventative and/or corrective measures whenever necessary. (VU et al., 2021).

The ST method works best when studying the tourist business, which is dynamically complicated and subject to a variety of internal and/or external feedback effects (Aronson, 1996). Also, a lot of the complicated challenges in the tourist industry depend on previous actions and current actions taken by other players. Likewise, Aronson (1996) it was also stressed that ST is most effective when used to address problems brought on by: (1) weak stakeholder coordination; (2) participation of many parties; (3) recurrence of problems made worse by prior attempts to address them; (4) circumstances where an action affects the natural and competitive environments; and (5) problems with indirect solutions. Most significantly, the research is vital for comprehending emerging countries' experiences (e.g. the Philippines, Thailand). The country's tourism hotspots have been inspired to pursue sustainability as the number of visitors has increased. Therefore, it has become crucial to comprehend how the tourism industry works as a system with a range of value chain participants. Of equal importance, according to Donaldson (2017), ST is excellent for combining the ideas from different fields into a single framework. This is crucial since the development of tourism calls for a multi-stakeholder strategy.

Based on above critics, we have some frameworks related to highlighting stakeholders' role, this paper aims to fulfil the gap in already available frameworks, by identifying roles of online communities including travel vloggers in creating sustainable development through systematic literature review.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

- to examine current frameworks for stakeholder relations in the travel and tourism sector;
- To propose an augmented stakeholder framework that will contain online communities along with travel vloggers, through systematic literature review.
- Explicate how online actors/communities can establish synergies and harness their respective roles and collaborative advantages in creating sustainable tourism.

## LITERATURE REVIEW:

*Systematic Literature Review:*

We conduct a systematic literature review (SLR) (Dewey & Drahota, 2016) to determine the volume of research on tourism governance models already done. By doing this, gaps in the literature will be found, reinforcing the importance of this study. We adapted the SLR method of Pertheban et al. (2019) and Kitchenham and Brereton (2013).

Various tourist governance approaches, frameworks, and dialogues would be subject to our scrutiny. Various electronic academic databases should be searched for and used to pick scholarly articles. Searches must be restricted to English-language sources only; they must not be geographically limited. It will concentrate on issues on tourist governance in relation to sustainability and articles with visual diagrams. The terms "tourism governance," "governance models," and "stakeholder governance models" should be utilised while doing

research. The study's inclusion or exclusion would be determined by looking at the title, abstract, general themes, and full-text requirements.

*Sustainable Tourism and Stakeholders' Involvement:*

Sustainable development is the awareness that we should live and fulfil our needs in a way that it must not hurt the fulfillment of the needs of future generations. The ultimate goal of the concept is to utilize today's resources in a way that you may leave similar amount of resources for future generations (Birendra et al., 2021). Similarly, sustainable tourism development is hosting the current tourist in an effective manner that there must be similar attractions left for upcoming tourist generations (CHAMIDAH et al., 2020).

The discussion of sustainable tourism has included the importance of stakeholder participation in addition to the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) idea (Elkington, 1997). As stated in (Bramwell, 2015), the tourism business is seen as multi-stakeholder and is made up of stakeholders with a variety of goals and interests. To overcome obstacles and remain competitive, sustainable tourism requires close collaboration between travel agencies, tourist sites, and government agencies (national, regional, and municipal). (Angelkova et al., 2012).

According to Freeman (1984) stake holder is "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives as employees, customers, suppliers, stockholders, banks, environmentalists, government, members of the communities, governments, etc". It consists of group of people who have direct or indirect relationship with each other and who can provide economic or social benefit and without which organization can't work properly (VU et al., 2021). To bring sustainability in tourism, stakeholders must be involved (Byrd et al., 2009). The term "stakeholders in tourism development" consist of people who are directly or indirectly involved in tourism development, planning and execution involving local and national government, tourism donor agencies, financial advisors, tourism project developers, destination marketing organizations, employees dealing in tourism sector, supplier and seller of tourism products etc (Vrontis et al., 2022).

The modest environment that international vacation industry functions in grants extraordinary difficulties for which travel destinations are bound to pursue way out to last and be sustainable (Lee & Jan, 2019). The victory of attaining sustainability depends on the role and work of all the stakeholders that add to producing the total travel experience (CHAMIDAH et al., 2020). It collaborates their cooperation as sustainable tourism competitiveness (STC). STC is the capability of a tourism place to rise tourism output via the growth and development of travel industry that pays to the wellbeing of citizens while sustaining national and traditional resources (Aall & Koens, 2019).

In order to make sure that each and every stakeholder is performing his/her duties well every business whether tourism related or not conduct analysis known as stake holders' analysis (Ullah et al., 2022). It is a process according to which stakeholders having similar interest and values are grouped together (VU et al., 2021). From several literatures (e.g., Björk, 2000; Fennell & Malloy, 1999; Miller & Twining-Ward, 2005) We selected a wide spectrum of tourism stakeholders, including visitors, businesses, locals, officials from the government, and non-governmental organisations. In prior literature only the interactions between and among stakeholders have been thoroughly elucidated. The roles, collaboration, and shared obligations of tourism stakeholders have not received much

attention. More crucially, there has been little explanation on what can be done when certain stakeholders band together and utilise their distinct collaboration advantages.

*Online Communities and Travel Vloggers:*
According to recent studies, the average individual can use their smartphone for up to one-fourth of the day. (Zeljko, Jakovic & Strugar, 2018). Information and communications technology have quickly developed leading to social media, and user-generated content (Shen, Sotiriadis & Zhou, 2020). Social media, social media influencers, and influencer marketing are all subjects of expanding body of literature. Even though more study has been conducted on the subject in recent years, it is still a relatively fresh and uncharted territory. The study aims to describe social media influencers, influencer marketing, the new class of user-generated content, and the characteristics that make influencers unique and successful. Previous research only sporadically connects social media power with travel-related material. There is a lot of information on social media that deals with travel and tourism, but it is rarely examined in terms of how social media influences tourism, and more especially sustainable travel. Social media influencers are online personalities with a sizable following who often operate across one or more social media platforms, such as YouTube and Instagram (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Varsamis, 2018).

Similarly, Enke and Borchers (2021) Social media influencers may be characterised as outside players who have a substantial number of pertinent connections and a particular capacity to persuade stakeholders. Their success is greatly influenced by their fans or subscribers, but they also depend on the quantity of hits, views, and shares. This influences their credibility and degree of achievement (Freberg et al., 2011). Social media influencers are distinct from traditional celebrities in that they try to build their own personal brands, a feeling of individuality, and the opportunity for stardom. Because of their job, they develop strong bonds with followers by regularly posting details about their life online. (Kay et al., 2020).
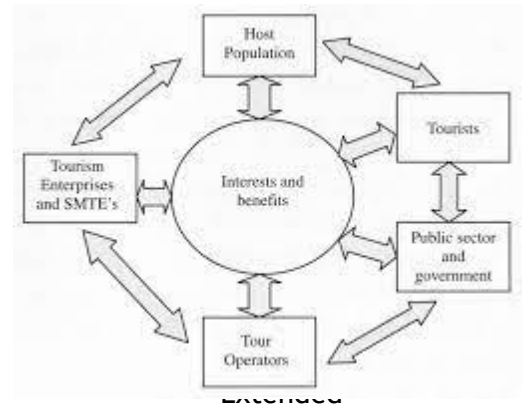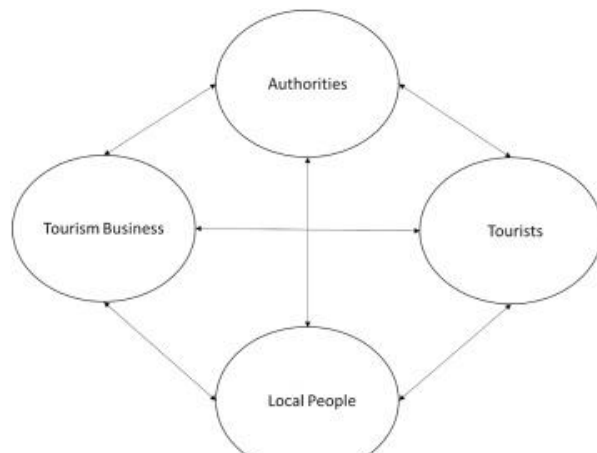
Among these social media influencers, travel-related influencers and travel vloggers are among the most well-known and continue to gain popularity; further study is required to establish their value. (Kay et al., 2020). Additionally, research has been conducted in fields including fashion and beauty, health and fitness, food and beverage, and even high-tech software to identify influencers. (Sokolova et al., 2020). However, the travel and tourism sector pays little attention to social media influencers, particularly when it comes to sustainable travel.

With the help of modern technology, everyone is digitally connected. With just one click, we may access a vast amount of data, pictures, and movies. A bigger amount of time every day is spent online on smartphones, often up to a quarter of a day, cellphones have progressively become part of everyday life for a massive quantity of people (Zeljko et al., 2018).
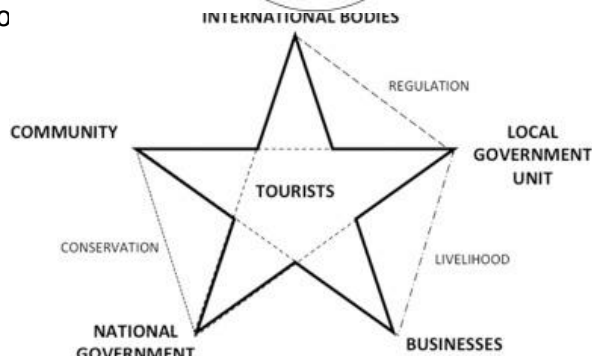
Due to increase screen time and importance of travel vloggers as an online community, travel vloggers through their vlogs create significant impact in creating sustainable tourism (Boom et al., 2021). Therefore, this paper investigates the role of travel vloggers in creating sustainable tourism by proposing an extended and augmented framework.

## RESEARCH FRAMEWORK:

Existing Framework:





Extended

Pro



The proposed framework has all other previous stakeholders along with an additional online community, that is to be supported by SLR.



**Framework Elements:**

| International Bodies | tourism organizations that aid in developing and managing tourism. Specifically, among others, we consider UNWTO, WTTC, and Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) under this stakeholder group |
|---|---|
| National Government | national tourism organizations (NTOs) that regulate tourism |
| Local Government | Perform a critical role on the success of its local tourism industry and a strong influence in conserving its resources. |
| Businesses | to supply tourism products and services to tourists, they create employment and livelihood opportunities to local communities. |
| Communities & Online Actors | people living in an area & Travel vloggers and related public on social media |
| Tour Operators | private organizations arranging tours for public to earn profit |

## CONCLUSION, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS:

From above done SLR it can be concluded that online community also plays crucial role in creating sustainable tourism. In today's era, where eight out of 10 individuals are available online and try to spend their maximum time there, one cannot ignore the impact of online community. Earlier we had main stream media with highest number of viewers but now the trend has shifted towards digital and social media. People used to see news and watch entertainment programs on televisions and radio but now everybody has his own hand held/ portable device in his hand, which keeps him connected throughout the world 24/7.

So, it is founded that online community must be the part of key stake holders in creating sustainable tourism. Online community comprises of each and every player who are directly or indirectly available on online platforms, mainly including travel vloggers, social media influencers and their followers. They have strong power to influence their followers in order to bring change in the environment. Online community due to their availability of 24/7 do not miss any episode of their opinion leaders and do watch them any time, they become free. They follow them with true spirit.

This brings theoretical and managerial implications as well. IT is added in the already existing model, ignoring this main element. Managers, site operators, tour planners, destination marketing organizations, future travelers, government and private businesses and any other players must consider the role of online community, when designing their campaigns and serving the tourist. They must follow the social media accounts of top opinion leaders so that, they can bring in the wave of sustainability in tourism.

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