

## Significance of User-Generated Content in Travel and Tourism: An Exploratory Study

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### Abstract

The study examines the role of blogs as a source of information to travelers (residents of UAE) who wish to visit countries, choose hotels to stay and eat in different restaurants. The objectives of the study are to know the reasons why travelers are motivated to use blogs as a source of information, whether travelers share their views and experiences with other bloggers and to know the travelers future intentions towards blogging. The study revealed the following: The majority of the surveyed travelers have the motivation to blog to express what they feel about the countries visited, the hotels where they wish to stay, and the restaurants they plan to visit. Blogs help the travelers to comment on what other bloggers say about the hotels where the respondents have stayed and the restaurants they have visited. Blogging helps to search for information about hotels where the respondents can stay and restaurants at which they can eat. By blogging respondents: extract information about restaurants that interests them and countries that interest them, and are able to share information about food served by the restaurants they visited and customer services provided by the hotels they had stayed. A keenness to spend more time blogging in the future and their intention to continue blogging indicate the interest of the respondents to not only continue blogging but also motivate other travelers to blog.

**Keywords:** Blog; Countries; Hotels; Information; Restaurants; Travelers

### Introduction

Increased popularity and adoption of Internet has led to accelerated growth of User-Generated Content not only in volume but also in significance. One important type of User-Generated Content is the blog where millions of ordinary people have become content creators. This is a portal that brings information rich consumer communities together and makes interaction between clients and prospects possible. Blogs are now gaining the status of a primary communications channel for firms to link with their customers.

Blogs, also known as weblogs are an online journal, where a user posts his or her thoughts, emotions, comments and ideas with a degree of frequency. Blogs have brought about major changes in travel and hospitality services. Customers are asking for help in making travel decisions, from other people like themselves. Travel blogs act as platforms where tourists can remember, evaluate, store and enrich their travel experiences. Customers don't favor only the traditional methods of communication. They are looking for dialogues and not monologues. This is the beginning of a major change for travel and hospitality services marketing.

The recent popularity of blogging as a communication platform for travel and tourism brings us to some interesting questions. What makes people want to blog? In other words, what motivates them to adopt this new tool? What impact does it have on marketing in the area of travel and hospitality? Do the bloggers have an intention to continue blogging in the future?

### Literature review

A few studies have been undertaken to understand the experiences of consumers using travel blogs as a source of information. An attempt has been made to review the studies undertaken by different scholars.

Are blogs credible sources of information when compared to traditional word-of-mouth? While consumers do not generally

equate the overall credibility of blogs with that of traditional word-of-mouth, yet some consumers do appear to attribute similar levels of authoritativeness, a dimension of credibility to them [1]. Delight occurs when a customer receives beyond his expectations. Determinants of customer delight in tourism venues can be identified through travel blog analysis [2].

Bloggers seek information on travel blogs before deciding on their travel destination. Perceived usefulness, reputation, altruism, trust and subjective norm influence the intention on sharing via the travel blog [3]. Travel blogging has become part of tourist practices, particularly in post consumption stage. Travel blogs act as an important source of information on tourist activities and perceptions of destinations. An analysis of travel blogs reveal three common actions behind travel blogging: representing places, acts of self-presentation and identity construction [4].

Thus, a review of literature shows that some studies have been undertaken to know the role played by blogs as a source of information for travelers [5]. The present study is attempted to know whether residents of UAE who travel use blogs as a source of information.

### Objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to examine the motivational factors of

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travelers (residents of UAE who travel) as bloggers, their behavior depicted by its usage as a trusted source of information to know about countries which they plan/ wish to visit, hotels to stay, restaurants to eat, places of interest to visit, unique and ethnic products they wish to buy and their future intentions towards blogging.

To develop a holistic analysis of the stated research problem, following objectives have been developed for the study. The objectives of the study include:

To know to what extent residents of UAE who travel use blogs as source of information

To know whether the residents of UAE who travel share their views and experiences with others

To know the future intentions the residents of UAE who travel towards blogging

## Research Design and Methodology

A pre-designed questionnaire on a five point scale was used to collect the primary data from the respondents (experiences) residing in around the Emirates of Dubai and Sharjah. The questionnaire was framed to elicit the experiences of the respondents. Respondents were chosen using convenience sampling. Out of the 200 questionnaires distributed, 160 got back and were taken as the sample for this study.

## Sample profile

**Demographic information reported on the study indicated the following:** Male respondents represented 54% of the sample, while female respondents represented the remaining 46%, with 39% percent being under 25 years of age, 51% between 25 to 40 years of age and 10% over 40 years. The report also indicated that 56% of the respondents to be married and the remaining 44% to be single: With regards to nationality 51% of the respondents informed to be Asians and the remaining 49% to be Non- Asians. About 9% of the respondents reported to have studied up to school level, while 57% of the sample has done a bachelor degree and about 24% have done their masters and the remaining 10% of the respondents are diploma holders. The income levels of the respondents were 25% of the sample getting up to AED 5000 per month, while 24% earned between AED 5001 and 10,000, and 51% of the respondents earned over AED 10000 per month.

**Blogging habits of respondents reported on the study indicated the following:** The majority of the respondents appear to be moderately connected to social networks: Sixty four percent of the respondents' blog at least once a week: About three-fifth of the surveyed respondents indicated that they spend an hour blogging during each session.

**Results of factor analysis:** To identify and analyze blogs as travelers' source of information 25 variables were identified for this study at the time of initial finalization of the questionnaire. In order to extract the various factors, that indicated the motivational factors of the bloggers, the bloggers behavior depicted by its usage as a trusted source of information for travel services, and the intention of continuing to blog, a Principal Component analysis was applied on all the 25 statements included in the interval scale. Retaining only such of those factors which had Eigen values greater than one (as suggested by Kaiser), the researcher could infer that in total six factors have emerged. These six factors put together have explained 67% of total variance.

**Factor dimensions:** Only such of those variables that had loadings >0.60 have been included in the process of extracting individual factors from the analytical results. The results are presented

in Table 1. Thus, variables 1 to 3 constituted factor I. A close look at all the variables in the Factor I impelled the researchers to identify a common name. This factor was then conceptualized as "Motivation to blog-Related Factor". Variables 4 to 9 constituted factor II. A close look at the item in Factor II guided the researcher to conceptualize this factor as Use of Blogs as a medium to express-Related Factor. In a similar way, variables 10 to 15 formed factor III. This was grouped under the heading "Search for information -Related Factor". Factor IV is related to "Extract information-Related Factor" and comprised variables 16 to 18. Factor V is related to 'Sharing of information-Related Factor' and comprised variables 19 to 22. Finally, variables 23, 24 and 25 were all grouped under the heading "Interest to continue blogging and motivate others to blog-Related Factor".

The major outcomes of the factor analysis are presented below: The blog is the space where I express what I feel about the countries I visited (Factor loading 0.881) The blog is the space where I express what I feel about the hotels where I wish to stay during my visits (Factor loading 0.868), and the blog is the space where I express what I feel about the restaurants which I plan to visit (Factor loading 0.787) appear to be the primary reasons which motivate the respondents to blog: Use of blogs helps to comment on what other bloggers say about the hotels where I have stayed (Factor loading 0.841), the restaurants I have visited (Factor loading 0.810), to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different hotels I have stayed (Factor loading 0.808) seem to be the primary reasons for the surveyed respondents to use blogs. By Blogging respondents are able to search for information about different hotels (Factor loading 0.841), hotels where the respondents can stay (Factor loading 0.803), and about restaurants they can visit (Factor loading 0.801). It is also by blogging respondents extract information about restaurants that interests them (Factor loading 0.824), and information about countries that interests them (Factor loading 0.821). By blogging respondents are able to share information on the food served by the restaurants they have visited (Factor loading 0.842), views on the customer services provided by the hotels where they stayed (Factor loading 0.841), about a unique product that they purchased from a country that they have visited (Factor loading 0.833) Keen to spend more time blogging in the future (Factor loading 0.924) intend to continue blogging (Factor loading 0.903) and recommend others to join blogging (Factor loading 0.885) indicate the interest of the respondents not only to continue blogging but also motivate others to blog.

**Hypotheses testing:** In order to test whether blogging behavior of the sample respondents differs according to Gender, an independent t-test was applied on all the 25 variables (of the interval scale). Significant differences were noticed among the male and female respondents in two out of the twenty-five variables on which the test was applied. The results where significant differences have been noticed are presented in Table 2.

H1: Would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different hotels I have stayed is independent of the Gender. Interpretation: The analytical results of the t-test on Statement 8 (I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different hotels I have stayed) shows a mean value of 3.96 for male and 3.53 for female respondents which signifies that there exists a difference in their opinion with regard to receiving people's comments on what the respondents post on their blog about their experiences in different hotels they have stayed. Since the P-value  $0.008 < 0.05$  (at 5% level of significance), hypothesis1 is rejected.

Factor name	Statement number	Variables	Factor loadings
Factor-1 Motivation to Blog - Related Factors	1	The blog is the space where I express what I feel about the countries I visited	0.881
	2	The blog is the space where I express what I feel about the hotels where I wish to stay during my visits	0.868
	3	The blog is the space where I express what I feel about the restaurants which I plan to visit	0.787
Factor –II Use of Blogs as a Medium to express- Related Factors	5	I am willing to comment on what other bloggers say about the hotels where I have stayed	0.841
	6	I am willing to comment on what other bloggers say about the restaurants I have visited	0.810
	8	I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different hotels I have stayed	0.808
	9	I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different restaurants I have visited	0.788
	4	I am willing to comment on what other bloggers say about countries which I have visited	0.769
Factor-III- Search for Information Related Factors	7	I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different countries I have visited	0.736
	14	It is convenient to search for the information about hotels by blogging	0.827
	11	Blogging helps me to search more information about hotels where I can stay while visiting a country	0.803
	15	It is convenient to search for the information about restaurants by blogging	0.801
	10	Blogging helps me to search more information about countries I want to visit	0.774
	12	Blogging helps me to search more information about restaurants I like to go while visiting a country	0.717
Factor IV- Extract Information- Related Factor	13	It is convenient to search for the information about countries by blogging	0.647
	18	Blogging helps me to extract information about restaurants that interests me	0.824
	16	Blogging helps me to extract information about countries that interests me	0.821
Factor V-Sharing of information - Related Factor	17	Blogging helps me to extract information about hotels that interests me	0.779
	22	I like to share information and my views on the food served by the restaurants I visited	0.842
	21	I like to share information and my views on the customer services provided by the hotels where I stayed	0.841
	20	I like to share information about a unique product that I purchased from a country that I have visited	0.833
Factor VI -To continue and motivate others to blog - Related Factor	19	I like to share information about a particular place of interest I found interesting in a country that I visited	0.795
	24	I am keen to spend more time blogging in the future	0.924
	23	I like to continue blogging in the future	0.903
	25	I wish to recommend others to join and blog	0.885

Table 1: Identification of factors related to consumers blogging behavior.

Statement number	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	P
8	Male	87	3.96	1.005	0.008
	Female	73	3.53	1.015	
22	Male	87	3.60	1.055	0.014
	Female	73	3.99	0.858	

Table 2: Results of students t-test.

H2: Like to share information and views on the food served by the restaurants I visited is independent of the Gender. Interpretation: The analytical results of the t- test on Statement number 22 (like to share information and views on the food served by the restaurants I visited) shows a mean value of 3.60 for male and 3.99 for female respondents which signifies that there exists a difference in their opinion towards liking to share information and views on the food served by the restaurants they visited. Since the P-value  $0.014 < 0.05$  (at 5% level of significance), hypothesis 2 is rejected.

In order to test whether blogging behavior of the sample respondents differs according to their Age, an independent t-test was applied on all the 25 variables (of the interval scale). Significant differences were noticed among the respondents in two out of the twenty-five variables on which the test was applied. The results where significant differences

Statement number	Age	N	Mean	S.D	P
4	Up to 25	62	3.95	.902	0.015
	Above 25	98	3.56	1.020	
5	Up to 25	62	3.72	1.058	0.048
	Above 25	98	3.40	.982	

Table 3: Results of students t-test.

have been noticed are presented in Table 3.

H1: I am willing to comment on what other bloggers say about countries which I have visited is independent of the Age of the respondents. Interpretation: The analytical results of the t-test on Statement 4 (I am willing to comment on what other bloggers say about countries which I have visited) shows a mean value of 3.95 for Younger respondents and 3.56 for Older respondents which signifies that there exists a difference in their opinion with regard to willingness to comment on what other bloggers say about countries which they have visited. Since the P-value  $0.015 < 0.05$  (at 5% level of significance), hypothesises 1 is rejected.

H 2: I am willing to comment on what other bloggers say about the hotels where I have stayed is independent of the Age of the respondents. Interpretation: The analytical results of the t -test on Statement 5 (I am

willing to comment on what other bloggers say about the hotels where I have stayed) shows a mean value of 3.72 for Younger respondents and 3.40 for Older respondents which signifies that there exists a difference in their opinion towards their willingness to comment on what other bloggers say about the hotels where they have stayed. Since the P-value  $0.048 < 0.05$  (at 5% level of significance), hypothesis 2 is rejected.

In order to test whether blogging behavior of the sample respondents differs according to Nationality, an independent t-test was applied on all the 25 variables (of the interval scale). Significant differences were noticed among the Asian and Non Asian respondents in five out of the twenty-five variables on which the test was applied. The results where significant differences have been noticed are presented in Table 4.

H1: I am willing to comment on what other bloggers say about the restaurants I have visited is independent of the Nationality of the respondents. Interpretation: The analytical results of the t- test on Statement 6 (I am willing to comment on what other bloggers say about the restaurants I have visited) shows a mean value of 3.35 for Asians and 3.72 for Non-Asian respondents which signifies that there exists a difference in their opinion with regard to the statement that I am willing to comment on what other bloggers say about the restaurants I have visited. Since the P-value  $0.031 < 0.05$  (at 5% level of significance), hypothesis 1 is rejected.

H2: I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different countries I have visited is independent of the Nationality of the respondents. Interpretation: The analytical results of the t- test on Statement 7 (I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different countries I have visited) shows a mean value of 3.67 for Asians and 4.06 for Non-Asian respondents which signifies that there exists a difference in their opinion with regard to the statement that I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different countries I have visited. Since the P-value  $0.008 < 0.05$  (at 5% level of significance), hypothesis 2 is rejected.

H3: I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different hotels I have stayed is independent of the Nationality of the respondents. Interpretation: The analytical results of the t-test on Statement 8 (I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different hotels I have stayed) shows a mean value of 3.59 for Asians and 3.94 for Non-Asian respondents which signifies that there exists a difference in their opinion with regard to the statement that I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different hotels I have stayed. Since the P-value  $0.031 < 0.05$  (at 5% level of significance), hypothesis 3 is rejected.

H4: I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on

Statement number	Nationality	N	Mean	S.D	P
6	Asians	82	3.35	1.011	0.031
	Non Asians	78	3.72	.999	
7	Asians	82	3.67	.930	0.008
	Non Asians	78	4.06	.808	
8	Asians	82	3.59	1.087	0.031
	Non Asians	78	3.94	.938	
9	Asians	82	3.51	1.068	0.013
	Non Asians	78	3.92	.990	
22	Asians	82	3.60	.967	0.029
	Non Asians	78	3.95	.967	

Table 4: Results of students t-test.

Statement number	Employment status	N	Mean	S.D	P
7	Employed	122	4.03	.812	0.000
	Not Employed	38	3.37	.942	
8	Employed	122	3.95	.961	0.000
	Not Employed	38	3.18	1.036	
9	Employed	122	3.81	.998	0.032
	Not Employed	38	3.39	1.151	
17	Employed	122	3.79	.978	0.037
	Not Employed	38	4.10	.727	

Table 5: Results of students t-test.

my blog about my experiences in different restaurants I have visited is independent of the Nationality of the respondents. Interpretation: The analytical results of the t- test on Statement 9 (I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different restaurants I have visited ) shows a mean value of 3.51 for Asians and 3.92 for Non-Asian respondents which signify that there exists a difference in their opinion with regard to the statement that I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different restaurants I have visited. Since the P-value  $0.013 < 0.05$  (at 5% level of significance), hypothesis 4 is rejected.

H5: Like to share information and views on the food served by the restaurants I visited is independent of the Nationality of the respondents. Interpretation: The analytical results of the t test on Statement 22 (like to share information and views on the food served by the restaurants I visited) shows a mean value of 3.60 for Asians and 3.95 for Non-Asian respondents which signifies that there exists a difference in their opinion towards liking to share information and views on the food served by the restaurants they visited. Since the P-value  $0.029 < 0.05$  (at 5% level of significance), hypothesis 5 is rejected.

In order to test whether blogging behavior of the sample respondents differs according to Employment status, an independent t-test was applied on all the 25 variables (of the interval scale). Significant differences were noticed among the employed and the not employed respondents in four out of the twenty-five variables on which the test was applied. The results where significant differences have been noticed are presented in the Table 5.

H1: I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different countries I have visited is independent of the Employment status of the respondents. Interpretation: The analytical results of the t- test on Statement 7 (I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different countries I have visited) shows a mean value of 4.03 for employed and 3.37 for not employed respondents which signifies that there exists a difference in their opinion with regard to the statement that I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different countries I have visited. Since the P-value  $0.000 < 0.05$  (at 5% level of significance), hypothesis 1 is rejected.

H2: I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different hotels I have stayed is independent of the Employment status of the respondents. Interpretation: The analytical results of the t- test on Statement 8 (I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different hotels I have stayed) shows a mean value of 3.95 for employed and 3.18 for not employed respondents which signifies that there exists a difference in their opinion with regard to the statement that

I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different hotels I have stayed. Since the P-value  $0.000 < 0.05$  (at 5% level of significance), hypothesis 2 is rejected.

H3: I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different restaurants I have visited is independent of the Employment status of the respondents. Interpretation: The analytical results of the t- test on Statement 9 (I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different restaurants I have visited ) shows a mean value of 3.81 for employed and 3.39 for not employed respondents which signify that there exists a difference in their opinion with regard to the statement that I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different restaurants I have visited . Since the P-value  $0.032 < 0.05$  (at 5% level of significance), hypothesis 3 is rejected.

H4: Blogging helps me to extract information about hotels that interests me is independent of the Employment status of the respondents. Interpretation: The analytical results of the t- test on Statement 17 (Blogging helps me to extract information about hotels that interests me) shows a mean value of 3.79 for employed and 4.10 for not employed respondents which signifies that there exists a difference in their opinion with regard to the statement that Blogging helps me to extract information about hotels that interests me. Since the P-value  $0.037 < 0.05$  (at 5% level of significance), hypothesis 4 is rejected.

In order to test whether blogging behavior of the sample respondents differs according to marital status, an independent t-test was applied on all the 25 variables (of the interval scale). Significant differences were noticed among the married and the single respondents in three out of the twenty-five variables on which the test was applied. The results where significant differences have been noticed are presented in the Table 6.

H1: I am willing to comment on what other bloggers say about countries which I have visited is independent of the marital status of the respondents. Interpretation: The analytical results of the t-test on Statement 4 (I am willing to comment on what other bloggers say about the countries which I have visited) shows a mean value of 3.54 for married and 3.93 for single respondents which signifies that there exists a difference in their opinion with regard to the statement that I am willing to comment on what other bloggers say about the countries which I have visited. Since the P-value  $0.014 < 0.05$  (at 5% level of significance), hypothesis 1 is rejected.

H2: I am willing to comment on what other bloggers say about the hotels where I have stayed is independent of the marital status of the respondents. Interpretation: The analytical results of the t- test on Statement 5 (I am willing to comment on what other bloggers say about the hotels where I have stayed) shows a mean value of 3.67 for married and 4.13 for not married respondents which signifies that there exists a difference in their opinion with regard to the statement that I am

willing to comment on what other bloggers say about the hotels where I have stayed. Since the P-value  $0.037 < 0.05$  (at 5% level of significance), hypothesis 2 is rejected.

H3: I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different countries I have visited is independent of the Marital status Interpretation: The analytical results of the t-test on Statement 7 (I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different countries I have visited) shows a mean value of 3.67 for married and 4.13 for single respondents which signifies that there exists a difference in their opinion with regard to the statement that I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different countries I have visited. Since the P-value  $0.001 < 0.05$  (at 5% level of significance), hypothesis 3 is rejected.

### Future Intentions of Respondents towards Blogging

In order to test the travelers' future intentions towards blogging, Structural Equation Modeling technique with the help of SAS software (9.0 Version) was applied. Five hypotheses: Motivation to blog predicts the future intentions towards blogging, Use of blog as a medium to express opinion predicts the future intention to blog. Search for information predicts the future intentions towards blogging, Extract information predicts the future intentions towards blogging and sharing information predicts the future intentions towards blogging were tested. The factors correlation matrix was used as an input in the model. The model is estimated using maximum likelihood method. H1 Motivation to blog with t-value  $> 2.0209$  and Share information with t-value  $> 3.7766$  are found to be significant (at 5% level of significance) in predicting the future intentions of respondents towards blogging. The results are presented in Table 7.

### Discussion

On the basis of different analysis that was carried out, the following picture emerges: The majority of the respondents appear to be moderately connected to social networks: Sixty four percent of the respondents' blog at least once a week: about three-fifths of the surveyed respondents indicated that they spend at least an hour blogging during each session.

Factor analysis of the data clearly grouped the statements included in the interval scale into the following six factors: Motivation to blog-Related Factors, Use of Blogs as a Medium to express- Related Factors, Search for Information-Related Factors, Extract Information-Related Factors, Sharing of Information-Related Factors and Interest to continue and motivate others to blog-Related Factors. These six factors put together have explained 67% of total variance.

Application of the t-test on all the 25 variables (of the interval scale) to test whether the blogging behavior of the sample respondents differs according to Gender, showed significant differences among the male and female respondents in 2 out of the 25 variables on which the test was applied. On the basis of the t-test it was concluded that I like to receive people's comments on what they post on my blog about my experiences in different hotels I have stayed and like to share information and views on the food served by the restaurants I have visited are dependent on the Gender of the respondents.

Application of the t-test on all the 25 variables (of the interval scale) to test whether the blogging behavior of the sample respondents differs according to Age of the respondents, showed significant differences among the Younger and Older respondents in 2 out of the 25 variables

Statement number	Marital status	N	Mean	S.D	P
4	Married	90	3.54	.938	0.014
	Single	70	3.93	1.035	
5	Married	90	3.37	.966	0.037
	Single	70	3.92	1.076	
7	Married	90	3.67	.858	0.001
	Single	70	4.13	.879	

Table 6: Results of students t-test.

Hypothesis	Statement	Standard Error	Coefficient	t-value	Significant in predicting the User's Intention to blog to in the future
H1	Motivation to Blog predicts the intention to blog in future	0.0930	0.1880	2.0209	Significant
H2	Use of blog as a medium to express the opinion predicts the intention to blog in future	0.0961	0.1462	1.5203	Not Significant
H3	Search for Information predicts the intention to blog in future	0.1099	0.1132	1.0300	Not significant
H4	Extract Information	0.0974	0.0570	0.5846	Not significant
H5	Share information	0.2728	0.0722	3.7766	Significant

Table 7: Results of the structural equation model.

on which the test was applied. On the basis of the t-test it was concluded that willingness to comment on what other bloggers say about countries which I have visited, willingness to comment on what other bloggers say about the hotels where I have stayed are dependent on the Age of the respondents.

Application of the t-test on all the 25 variables (of the interval scale) to test whether the blogging behavior of the sample respondents differs according to Nationality of the Respondents, showed significant differences among the Asian and non Asian respondents in 5 out of the 25 variables on which the test was applied. On the basis of the t-test it was concluded that I am willing to comment on what other bloggers say about the restaurants I have visited, wanting to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different countries I have visited, hotels I have stayed, restaurants I have visited and wanting to share information and views on the food served by the restaurants I have visited are dependent on the Nationality of the respondents.

Application of the t-test on all the 25 variables (of the interval scale) to test whether the blogging behavior of the sample respondents differs according to Employment status of the respondents, showed significant differences among the employed and not employed respondents in 4 out of the 25 variables on which the test was applied. On the basis of the t-test it was concluded that I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different countries I have visited, I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different hotels I have stayed, I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different restaurants I have visited and Blogging helps me to extract information about hotels that interests me are dependent on the Employment status of the respondents.

In order to test whether blogging behavior of the sample respondents differs according to marital status, an independent t-test was applied on all the 25 variables (of the interval scale). Significant differences were noticed among the married and the not married respondents in 3 out of the twenty-five variables on which the test was applied. On the basis of the t-test it was concluded that I am willing to comment on what other bloggers say about countries which I have visited, I am willing to comment on what other bloggers say about the hotels where I have stayed and I would like to receive people's comments on what I post on my blog about my experiences in different countries I have visited are dependent on the marital status.

Application of Structural Equation Modeling technique was applied on five factors to find out the future intentions of the respondents towards blogging showed two factors- motivation to blog with a t-value of 2.209 and sharing information with a t-value of 3.7766 to be significant in predicting the future intentions of the respondents towards blogging.

Based on the study, it can be suggested that in this competitive

environment, where the respondents have clearly indicated that they are keen to continue blogging and also wish to spend more time blogging in the future, it will be profitable if the organizations providing tourism and hospitality services, segment their market on the basis of gender, age, nationality, employment status and marital status of their customers to get a better understanding as to how and to what extent their customers use blogs as a trusted source of information when they wish to travel. This will help the organizations in tourism and hospitality industries to provide relevant information about their offerings and services to their customers for their consideration before their customers can come to a decision and can also get the views and reactions of their customers. Additionally, this will help the organizations to know whether they can offer and provide customized services to their customers wherever possible.

### Limitations and Future Research

Firstly, any survey based method, including that adopted in this study, involves measurement error. In other words, the elicitation of a scale measurement, respondent's ability to accurately report their level of agreement with the survey statements. However, efforts were made to design the administered tool to be simple, easy to understand and respond. Convenient sampling was used to collect the data from one hundred and sixty respondents (travelers) living in and around the Emirates of Sharjah and Dubai.

Regarding future research, it is suggested that more samples from other Emirates can be taken for study. Further, separate studies can be undertaken on specific aspects such as countries that interests, hotels they wish to stay, restaurants they wish to eat, places of interests to see and the kind of shopping they wish to do.

### Conclusion

The study clearly shows that travelers irrespective of their gender, age, nationality, employment status and marital status have started to use blogs to not only search for information about touristic places and hospitality services before making a decision. They are also keen to share information about countries they have visited, wish to visit, hotels they have stayed or planning to stay and restaurants they have visited or planning to visit and the services they were given with fellow travelers. This gives ample opportunities for organizations that are providing tourism and hospitality services to give as much information as possible about their offerings and services to the travelers to enable them to consider and evaluate their offerings before deciding and also to motivate fellow travelers (using blogs) by sharing information and experiences with them. Additionally, this will help the organizations providing tourism and hospitality services to know the areas where they need to improve, include or even avoid whatever short comings that are expressed by the travelers who availed their services be it in their offerings or customer service provided.

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