

# Content Analysis on Sustainable Travel of Foreign YouTube Vloggers in the Philippines

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**Abstract:** Travel and tourism information have been increasingly accessible through the media and video-sharing platform YouTube. The purpose of this study is to improve awareness, understanding, and acknowledgment of sustainable content created by foreign social media influencers locally through their YouTube travel vlogs. The study codes are based on the triple bottom line (TBL), which is determined by content analysis. The study of 50 YouTube videos about sustainable travel vlogs in Philippine destinations from five content creators revealed that the three do not seem to have an interest in promoting consistent sustainable travel in their vlog uploads from the pandemic period to the current day. Environmental sustainability was the most featured content by all the three pillars whereas 198 coded references spread among five YouTube vloggers. In the travel vlogs, foreign YouTube influencers inconsistently promote sustainable traveling. The findings of this study add value to the field of sustainable tourism research and provide sustainable guidance for tourists, especially the effective use of creating vlogs for YouTube travel content creators.

**Keywords:** Content creator, Economic, Environmental, Social, Sustainability, Sustainable travel, vlogs, YouTube.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a significant contributor to the world economy as it is one of the highly profitable and fastest-growing sectors (Manzoor, 2019). 21st-century tourism is revolutionized with the transformational nature of innovative forms and technologies (Chatzigeorgiou & Christou, 2019; Buhadis, 2019). Its development may be sustained through the support ensured by the paradigm shift (Loureiro, 2019). Technology plays a significant role in travel and tourism. It affects human experiences, trip organization, and the traveler's behavior (Anaya & Lehto, 2020). One of the most dominant social media and video-sharing platforms is YouTube. Since tourism is the key sector of service and communication, Kayumovich (2020) mentioned that internet advancements in marketing have brought the industry to persuasively adapt to social media. YouTube is a major video-based platform that is widely used for multimedia information dissemination (Lalangan, 2020). Travel vlogging has been an extremely trendy video content for YouTube content creators to publish on their channel. According to Cupin (2020), YouTube Philippines announced the top 10 creators and seven among them have published travel content which shows that traveling is popular video content in our country. Notable studies conducted by Mittal & Kaur (2020), Kauppinen & Pavlova (2017), and Munnukka et. al. (2019) argue that YouTube vloggers have a significant influence on their viewers as their content serves as entertainment and engagement. Most Filipinos seek YouTube videos about attractions and destinations before traveling to get an initial information. The way content and information are disseminated on the internet has enormous potential, but research discussions on sustainable travel and tourism on YouTube have received relatively little attention (Chu, 2020, as cited in Buckley, 2011) most especially in the Philippines.

Two significant research gaps were identified in this study despite the existing studies covering the subject of vlogs. To begin with, most of the previous research focused on the connection of travel vlogs to decision-making (Lodha & Philip, 2019), destination image (Liang, 2020; Trinh & Nguyen, 2019; Peralta, 2019), and viewer's attitude (Xuan, 2018). There are only a few content creators who consider adding components of sustainability and directly speak about it on their YouTube videos (Chu, 2020), even though there is an increasing understanding of the importance of sustainable travel. Prior studies commonly explored user-generated video content using the YouTube platform (Trinh & Nguyen, 2019; Liang, 2020), leaving sustainable travel a fertile area for conducting academic research. Second, sustainable analysis of travel vlogs containing the Philippines has been the subject of minimal to no recent studies. Limited research was conducted on Foreigner YouTube travel vloggers that have content about the Philippines. Among the exceptions, the study investigated by Peralta (2020) centered on the branding of the Philippines on travel vlogs of non-Filipino creators, featuring destinations namely Compostela Valley, Romblon, Palawan, Bohol, Dumaguete, Cebu, and Siargao. Moreover, the study did not provide the lack of sustainable efforts of content creators as well as the expanding culture of YouTube travel vloggers. This overlook tackling potential underlying mechanisms (Cheng et al., 2020) particularly when sustainability is perceived and discussed. In an international context, a study by Chu (2020) in Sweden focused on how sustainable travel is discussed in YouTube travel vlogs, as well as how it is viewed. Her study explored adventure, city, and sustainable travel vlogs featuring Amsterdam, Peru, Copenhagen, Philippines, and London from travel vloggers with diverse nationalities from Europe, Asia, and North America. Travel-related influencers are among the widely known who have been showing a notable impact on mass change (Kay et al., 2020), yet, when it comes to sustainable tourism, and in the field of travel and tourism, they are studied rarely (Chu, 2020). This is the reason why further research is needed for local studies are very limited with how sustainable practices of travel vloggers are evident in their content. Moreover, to recognize the importance of YouTube travel content creators for they continue to be unexplored.

In the attempt to succeed upon bridging the research gaps and to come up with a better understanding, the researchers will be adopting the study of Chu (2020) upon exploring how social media influencers, particularly in YouTube, are slowly adapting and

adding elements of sustainability to their content (Trinh et al., 2019; Cheng et al., 2020). The objective of this research paper is to study and explore how Foreigner YouTube travel vloggers provide information about sustainable travel. This will be done with an emphasis on how the three pillars of sustainability are presented in online shared travel videos. This will provide an understanding of how vloggers effectively use their platform as advocates of sustainable traveling in creating their content.

The main objective of this research paper is to find out how Foreigner YouTube vloggers create content that contains sustainable traveling practices within their experience, based on the three pillars of sustainability: economic, environmental, and social and propose responsible tourism by YouTube travel vloggers. Furthermore, it aims to address the following:

- How do YouTube vloggers show sustainable practices in all three pillars of sustainable development - social, economic, and environmental?
- What are the sustainability issues presented by the vloggers based on their narration?

The findings of this study will redound to the benefit of the following: (a) YouTube content creators to upload quality videos with improvement for more effective content that will appeal to their viewers. (b) YouTube audience, most especially those who travel, to gain wider knowledge on sustainable traveling. (c) Lastly, for future researchers to consider more varieties and ways of analyzing travel vlogs with how sustainability is engaged with the topic.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL/THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Sustainability is concerned with fulfilling present-day demands without jeopardizing future generations' capacity to satisfy their own. Sustainability is a paradigm composed of three pillars: economic, environmental, and social – often referred to as profits, planet, and people (Grant, 2020). Companies are increasingly making public pledges to sustainability via activities such as waste reduction, investment in renewable energy, and support for groups dedicated to a more sustainable future. Furthermore, sustainable tourism destination development is seen as a key component of the global development agenda. Translating sustainability ideas and principles into policy remains a problem for emerging countries such as the Philippines whose tourist sectors have remained a key pillar of economic development (Gutierrez et al., 2020). Sustaining public policy needs tourism development to have a beneficial effect on the environment, economy, and society via active stakeholder engagement.

Consequently, travel vlogs are usually created by travelers. Travel vlogs are depictions of destination experiences that may be used for promotional/marketing purposes by public and commercial tourism organizations (Peralta, 2019). The stories and pictures in vlogs clearly establish the essential and essential destination pictures for place marketing. Nowadays, travel vlogs are popular among younger generations. Travel vlogs are time-consuming but an enjoyable way for social media influencers to film themselves chatting and sharing personal tales about traveling, which is typically done in front of a camera; they mainly discuss the location of their stay and the people they meet (Tambunan, 2019; Liang 2020; Tolkach et al. 2021).

A study by Chu (2020) aimed to determine how sustainable travel is addressed and perceived in YouTube travel vlogs. The study codes are based on the three pillars of sustainability: economic, environmental, and social. This study seeks to elicit narratives about local lodgings, restaurants, and stores, as well as cultural, historical, and interpersonal contacts with local people, in tourist settings. Moreover, it seeks to generate narratives regarding natural enjoyment, material usage in the environment, and mobility. As a conclusion to this research, YouTube travel vlogs only indirectly and rarely discuss sustainable travel. In comparison to social norms, economic and environmental codes were quite obvious. The many definitions of social sustainability complicate the coding process. While there is a growing awareness of sustainable travel, 'popular' YouTube influencers are hesitant to adapt and include sustainability in their messaging; nevertheless, perception levels were higher than expected (Chu, 2020). It is essential to educate 'popular' social media influencers on the need for sustainable travel. On the same note, the purpose of this research is to improve awareness, understanding, and acknowledgment of sustainable content created by social media influencers locally through their YouTube travel vlog contents.

Chu (2020) defined economic sustainability in their study as promoting and adding capital to a destination or area. They found numerous economic sustainability narratives in various 'sustainable travel' vlogs. More obvious economic sustainability narratives present in the vlogs, as cited by chu (2019), "try to support the local business" (Madeline Olivia, 2019), "vote with your dollar" (Vagabrothers, 2018), "try to support the local businesses" (Madeline Olivia, 2019), and "go eat at local restaurants" (Madeline Olivia, 2019), even sharing "every dollar that we spend goes right back in the local community" (What Doesn't Suck, 2019). They conducted an interview to get data from their respondents. The interview findings show a high level of perception of economic sustainability cues from travel vlogs (Chu, 2019). They found that their respondents noticed a pattern of messages to avoid destinations and areas that already have heavy tourism activity. In addition, the viewers perceived the narratives about going off the beaten path and going more out of the way to find less popular attractions (Chu, 2019). Furthermore, Interviewees perceived the restaurants and in some instances the pricing, but this was rarer as only one travel vlog shared pricing. Chu then proceeded to define Environmental sustainability as making optimal use of environmental resources like nature-based attractions, which still maintain essential ecological processes and help preserve the environment and biodiversity. The results in their research paper found environmental narratives included in the YouTube travel vlogs, Narratives like 'sustainable travel vlogs' expose a few different themes such as statements like "when you go hiking pick up the trash" (What Doesn't Suck, 2019), "pack like a minimalist" (The Girl Gone Green, 2019), "bring your own eco-friendly toiletries" (What Doesn't Suck, 2019) and "eating less meat" (Vagabrothers,

2019). They also mentioned avoiding aerosol can sprays, opting for a menstrual cup for females, and even avoiding purchasing animal products as souvenirs or claiming medical benefits (Vagabrothers, 2019). Ultimately, the results of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the types of content available on sustainable travel as well as the fact that the viewers are more receptive to any of these messages.

A gap in their paper is that their limitations do not apply to all consumers of content on YouTube. What is considered sustainable in one nation, or culture may not be in another, sustainability at its core could be criticized as inconsistent (Chu, 2019). Specifically, the interviewees' nationalities are as follows, German, Swedish, Scottish, Swiss, Spanish, Hungarian, Syrian, Iranian, American, Mexican & Canadian, with approximately 8 interviewees of each gender. All the respondents are avid YouTube users who believe themselves to be fairly self-travelers, especially when it comes to research. Filipinos are not a part of this study, therefore begs the curiosity of the researchers of this paper. This study will be beneficial and relevant to the tourism industry in the Philippines.

The existing body of knowledge advocates for the importance of social media platforms in marketing tourist destinations. Despite these advancements, there is a scarcity of studies on how social media contributes to the sustainability of tourism locations. Another local study by Yamagishi et al. (2021), argues that sustainable tourism (ST) agendas and efforts may coexist with the conventional competitive goal of social media marketing as a communications strategy for tourism stakeholders. To illustrate the assessment method, a case study of Kalanggaman Island (Philippines), a developing tourist attraction, is conducted. Three distinct policy options are investigated: a minimum-effort option, graphics-intensive strategies, and collaborative approaches. While the effort scenario causes counting metrics, comments, and Web traffic to grow, the motion scenario increases reach, counting metrics, comments, and Web traffic (Yamagishi et al., 2021). Finally, the collaborative approach improved awareness, shares of voice, comments, and lead counts. Using the framework, policymakers and decision-makers may examine ST agenda initiatives that might help disseminate the idea.

A few research gaps were found in spite of previous studies addressing the topic of vlogs. A most prior study had been done on the correlation between travel vlogs, location images, and viewers' feelings and perceptions. While these areas are mostly looked upon, sustainability has been overlooked. Even though there is a growing awareness of the significance of sustainable travel, just a few content producers include components of sustainability in their YouTube clips (Yamagishi et al., 2021). Until far, previous studies have focused on user-generated video material on YouTube (Trinh & Nguyen, 2019; Liang, 2020; Peralta 2019). Furthermore, the study of travel vlogs from the Philippines has gone unaddressed for quite some time. Therefore, this research study is tackling the under-researched area of travel vlogs in the Philippines, particularly analyzing the sustainability of the YouTube vloggers' travel content. This study seeks to increase awareness, comprehension, and recognition of social media influencers' sustainable content through the use of YouTube vlogs, particularly in the Philippines.

The theory of the Triple Bottom Line emerged in the late eighties together with the rise of sustainable development ideals at the time (WCED 1987). (Elkington, 1999), who coined the term Triple Bottom Line mentioned that “developing this comprehensive approach to sustainable development and environmental protection will be a central governance challenge—and, even more critically, a market challenge—in the 21st century” (p. 16). The TBL Travel Content Diagram shows how YouTube vloggers directly affect the triple bottom line of sustainability from their travel content. As the objective of this paper is to understand the sustainable travel content produced by YouTube vloggers through content analysis, it is important to understand when the content has sustainable travel aspects present, may it be economically, environmentally, and/or socially. In this study, the Sustainable YouTube Content Model shows the process of how to travel vloggers include sustainable elements which are economic, environmental, and social sustainability in their video content using the YouTube platform. According to Chu (2020), people have a lot of impact on a destination, that is why gestures such as when YouTube content creators buy local products or try eating at local restaurants, they will be able to help to grow economic sustainability immediately through inserting capital in a local destination. On the other hand, one of those considered by a traveler is the ease of access and the environment itself that will be able to influence their decision making, and with this, environmental sustainability is composed of nature appreciation, environmental-friendly materials, and environmental transportation. Furthermore, this will identify the personal experience of a YouTube travel vlogger upon choosing a certain destination in the Philippines. Economic sustainability is defined as the preservation of capital that is linked to other two sustainable aspects, where the natural environment and historical places are preserved for the next generations (Dragono, 2020). YouTube travel vloggers nowadays want to socialize with locals from the host destination, where they mostly include themselves in festivals or in a local community just to share and be knowledgeable when it comes to the culture and tradition that the destination has (Chu, 2020). Social sustainability is composed of independent traveling/self-discovery, interacting with locals, and cultural/historical aspects. This model of sustainable travel content justifies that if enough people watch sustainable travel content on YouTube, they may start to consider and practice travel sustainability on their own more.

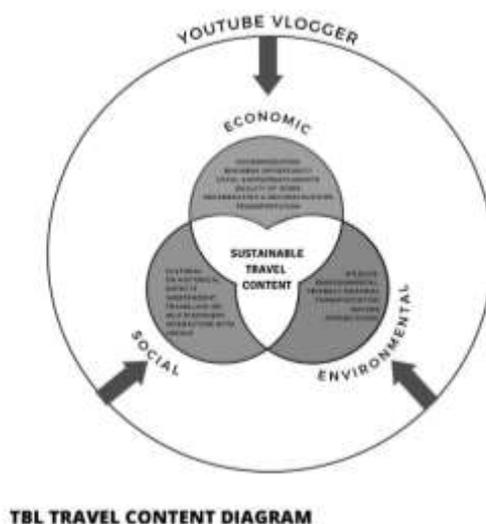


Figure 1. TBL Travel Content Diagram

### III. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research paper applied qualitative content analysis as part of the research design to know and identify complex and pliable standards that are suitable for this research. Through content analysis, this study can focus on a particular topic such as sustainable travel vlog focused on the three pillars of sustainability and its meanings. One of the reasons why qualitative content analysis is fit for this study is that it aids a reduction in the quantity of data or information that is used rather than adding to it. More so, this allowed the researchers to know if the YouTube travel content creators can include sustainable topics in their vlogs.

The travel content vlogs in this study are chosen and discussed under the criteria and description provided by the researchers. The researchers chose ten travel content vlogs from the five content creators on YouTube, there are fifty travel content vlogs from those five content creators observed and followed under the following criteria. (a.) The vlogs are sustainable travel content that appreciates and tackles sustainability aspects, (b) the travel content creator shall be in the YouTube industry as a vlogger for more than 5 years and have stayed or moved here in the Philippines. (c.) his/her travel content vlogs are from the pandemic period year March 2020 up to the present, (d.) each travel content vlog shall have a minimum number of 100k views (e.) lastly, the travel content vlogs that are part of the research paper are both seen and watched by the researchers.

The research work conducted in this study was carried out with the use of different materials. Firstly, personal computers were used along with several programs for collecting information, taking notes, and writing like Microsoft Word and Google Docs. Secondly, citfast was the tool used for citing academic sources and organizing the reference list of the study. Before gathering the research data, the researchers used Microsoft Excel in determining keywords from each sub-codes which were helpful in identifying sustainable cues from the videos. Upon gathering each content, the researchers utilized a web-browser extension called NCapture which captured full videos from a YouTube link. Lastly, the software used to code was NVivo12 for identifying and analyzing video content. All of these will support future researchers to understand the process on how the results were obtained and to allow the replication of the study.

Furthermore, the 50 travel content vlogs from YouTube were downloaded using the software NCapture which is connected as an extension for Google Chrome. The researchers collected and classified the vlogs to their respective nodes to be able to summarize and identify the codes using the software NVivo12, Once the researchers created the file the first thing to do is navigate all the vlogs needed for coding. Then, researchers were observed the travel content creator and imagery in vlogs upon textually analyzing them for the main codes with certain sub-codes: 'Economic Sustainability' – 'accommodation', 'business opportunity', 'local vendors, shops and restaurants', 'quality of work', 'regeneration and reconstruction', and 'transportation' 'Environmental Sustainability – 'nature appreciation', 'environmental-friendly materials', 'transportation', and 'wildlife' and 'Social Sustainability – 'independent traveling/self-discovery', 'interacting with locals', 'dialect', 'cultural and historical aspects.'" This will serve as the guide for the nodes. Next, the researchers watched, identified codes, and cited the time mentioned from each of the vlogs mentioned if needed.

In this study, researchers identified how YouTube travel content creators nowadays discussed the three pillars of sustainability which were economic, that can be defined as providing and supporting local communities through implementing laws to regulate tourism activities. Secondly, one of the common and known pillars of sustainability is environmental sustainability described as the best use of contributing and preserving biodiversity while supporting health and well-being. Lastly, is to expand the understanding about sharing and respecting cultural and historical information, participating in community and local exchange that defines social sustainability (Chu, 2020) There are main codes and sub-codes that are part of this research paper to gather and interpret data easily with the help of NCapture and Nvivo12 software.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

In this study, we have chosen five different travel content vloggers on Youtube that fulfill the criteria provided by the researchers. When the selection of the participants is final, the researchers individually informed all the potential participants through an email containing that they will be participating in an educational purposes study. We made sure that they were free to choose whether to be part of the study or not without any negative consequences affecting their job nor their Youtube channel. During the data collection process, the researchers made sure that the chosen travel vlogs were the ones included in the study. Confidentiality is our top priority, even though the Youtube platform is one of the known public sources of information when it comes to travel, the researchers does not include any personal details coming from the travel content creators to protect their rights as a vlogger. Only the data that is part of and collected throughout the research paper writing process will only be used within the scope of the study. This research paper undergoes De La Salle University Dasmariñas - Ethical Review Committee (DLSUD – ERC) where the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB) sets a requirement and gives this study an e-certificate confirming that this research paper is high quality and clinically important.

### **IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The researchers analyzed 50 videos from 5 YouTube travel vloggers. From each foreign YouTube travel vlogger, 10 videos were selected based on the criteria. From BecomingFilipino, all videos gathered has a total of 3 hrs 7 mins 51 secs, 2 hrs 30 mins 35 secs from The Juicy Vlogs, for Finnsnow, 2 hrs 52 mins 40 secs, while 2 hrs 15 mins 27 secs for Bisayanghilaw, and last but not the least is Making it Happen for 2 hrs 17 mins 43 secs with all in all total of 13 hrs 4 mins 16 secs for the 50 videos. Within the sample videos, there were 6 cues for economic sustainability, 4 environmental sustainability cues, and 3 cues for social sustainability. As part of the criteria, the researchers focused on travel vlogs with a minimum of 100k views. Among the 5 YouTube travel vloggers, 4 of them are couples doing their vlog and BecomingFilipino was the only one doing his job alone as a content creator. All of the participants are ages 25-40 and were foreigners who stayed here in the Philippines and were part of the industry of YouTube vlogging for more than 5 years. This study recognizes the different kinds of diversity. The aim of the researchers to seek cultural diversity is to show the fact that YouTube vlogs can be acquired by multicultural people, especially the YouTube platform nowadays is one of the known sources of information online. Given also the aim to provide cultural diversity to understand if the three pillars of sustainability can possibly be mentioned in a travel vlog.

This study provides a starting point for exploring the innovative forms of sharing video content in marketing communication channels. In this generation, social media is a powerful tool that has changed how people connect and communicate (Hou, 2019). Moreover, there are roles played on the internet such as being social media users and content providers in the digital era. Throughout the world, “social media influencer” is the term that has been widely used (Woodcock & Johnson, 2019, as cited in Chu, 2019), which serves as means of achieving fame and influence (Hou, 2019), most especially in the Philippines. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram are the most popular across all social media platforms. YouTube, on the other hand, is clearly an exception in this category with its simplified user interface design and visual elements that paves the way for users of media to utilize it upon researching and getting initial information about their next vacation spot. Tourism is a fast-growing industry, and its impacts are also increasing as it expands. This study explored how travel vlogs on YouTube show acknowledgment on sustainability. Along with its purpose, the findings demonstrated that YouTube travel vlogs in the Philippines seldom and indirectly address a sustainable form of travel. Based on the videos, foreign travel content creators do not directly include sustainability in their messaging hence, they show no intent of spreading sustainable traveling.

To begin with, this study unravels that among famous foreign travel vloggers, there is a lack in demonstrating sustainable practices while traveling. Most of the influencers chosen for this research do not have long-term habits of sustainability, although there were considerably one to two who significantly demonstrated self-sufficient traveling. This still needed to be addressed because the drawback was lack of consistency in all their travel vlogs. Despite these previously stated deficiencies, several varieties of making a trip vlogging content were discovered in this research. In each video, the vlogger’s intended destination was specified through supplementary texts, but there were no captions or brief subtitles providing further basic information about it. Some of the foreign YouTube influencers display their distinct personalities through how they show their own style of unique vlogging. This includes channels featuring young locals riding scooters, luxurious experiences, majestic islands, unknown spots, and hidden paradise, and food cooked in a traditional way. The majority of travel videos that fit the minimum number of 100k views criteria display a focus on footage with background music in forms of montage clips and scenic drone shots. These are shown in several minutes and reveal that they are made as destination promotional videos rather informative.

The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) is an approach where it has established the foundation for a persistent plan for businesses making a transformation to sustainability. Whereas sustainability creates the three fundamental characteristics of sustainable development. It also seeks to comprehend the qualitative conceptualization of sustainability and its function that serves in a group. The World Commission on Environment and Development mainstreamed it by defining sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” (Correia, 2019, as cited in Harlem, 1987, p.41). The notions of sustainable development are not interchangeable, but they can also adjust once the YouTube travel vlogger mentioned any of the three pillars of sustainability. In this study, inserting capital through accommodations, local shops/restaurants, etc. can have a great impact on the growth of economic sustainability in local destinations. Environmental sustainability in this study shows nature appreciation, environmental-friendly materials, and environmental transportation. In addition, most of the YouTube travel vloggers considered environmental sustainability while selecting a certain destination here in

the Philippines. Lastly, Social sustainability tackles more on the cultural and historical aspects, independent/self-discovery traveling, and promoting encounters with locals in a local destination.

This study seeks to find out how to improve awareness, understanding, and acknowledgment of sustainable travel using an online platform YouTube and it shows that having a sustainable content vlog is not the usual thing that YouTube content creators use. Based on the 50 travel vlogs coming from 5 YouTube travel vloggers which were selected, there was no direct approach when it comes to sustainability aspects, but some of them mentioned certain pillars of sustainability. The videos that are chosen to be part of this study were a travel vlog here in the Philippines that has a minimum of 100k viewers during the pandemic period/new normal.

**Economic Sustainability** – Economic sustainable traveling in this research is explained as an encouraging aspect where the tourist can easily insert capital in a local destination. The codes used in this pillar mainly refer to local tourism establishments and opportunities. Foreign YouTube travel vloggers commonly talk about the accommodation they booked for their trip. In these parts of the video, they likely discuss room types, prices, as well as tips where their audience may book a room. Some travel influencers like Vloggers 1 and 3 were residing in the country so they did not have to stay at hotels. The results from this sustainable pillar strongly imply that Vlogger 3 is most unlikely to have consistency in supporting a community. It is important to note that Vlogger 4 provided a recommendation for staying at resorts that help support locals. This is an exact example sufficing the definition of an ‘economic sustainability practice’ in this study. For business opportunities, the findings confirm that there were only a few influencers who delivered direct messages pertaining to resources that have the potential for local businesses. This clearly exposes that in sustainable travel vlogs, influencers must highlight the importance of contributing to the local economy, most especially to a certain destination.

- Accommodation, [3:43.8-4:25.2] “you can come to visit there are two resorts here and a lot of homestays to help support the locals” (Vlogger 4, 2020).
- Business Opportunity, [0:57.2-1:05.5] “the meat is been soaking overnight this is gonna be a lechon baka very soon” (Vlogger 1, 2020), [6:46.1-6:59.1] “this is the rope swing, PHP 20 entrance fee starting Saturday, this isn’t officially open yet” (Vlogger 4, 2020).
- Local Vendors, Shops, and Restaurants, [0:00.0-0:06.3] “this is a billion-dollar view for the piece of coffee” (Vlogger 5, 2020), [6:34.0-6:50.6] “the hike starts here at satellite market, Sitio Ling Aba Barangay San Miguel” (Vlogger 4, 2020).
- Quality of Work, [14:33.4 - 14:49.0] “this guy here is a true legend he took my hand, and I was just swimming with him and the whale sharks, and that was magical, the best experience in my whole life, thank you kuya, best dive ever” (Vlogger 5, 2020).
- Regeneration and Reconstruction, [15:47.5 - 15:55.4] “we are looking at ways to support local livelihoods here...” (Vlogger 1, 2020), [6:46.1 - 6:59.1] “this is the rope swing, PHP 20 entrance fee starting Saturday, this isn’t officially open yet” (Vlogger 4, 2020)
- Transportation, [0:40.1 - 1:02.5] “It was like 4-5 hours by car with Nakky in the back but he was actually pretty good, and then like another hour on Super Shuttle, so shoutout to Super Shuttle for getting us here safely, thank you Super Shuttle, we love you. You can just drive your car right onto the ship and just chill” (Vlogger 4, 2021), [2:11.5 - 2:23.5] “that’s our ride guys, wow what a car, that’s an impressive look at this car! Whooo” (Vlogger 3, 2021), [4:27.8 - 4:51.9] “wow it’s so nice, look at this speedboat, okay quick boat tour it’s just Lizzy and I. It’s awesome, it has padded seats that are so comfortable” (Vlogger 2, 2021)

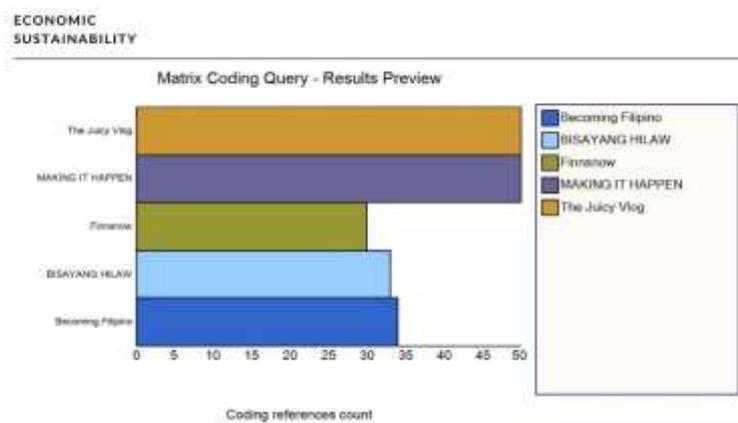


Figure 2. Matrix Coding of Economic Sustainability

**Environmental Sustainability** – This implies the personal experience from a specific YouTube traveler. The goal of this study was to find travel videos that focus on travel alternatives which employ sustainable practices at Philippine destinations. The promotion of the use of environmental-friendly materials was evident from the results of two foreign YouTube channels wherein the river they visited was mentioned to be very sustainable for they encourage using reusable materials. However, they lack consistency upon featuring tourist spots that definitely support sustainability. In terms of nature appreciation, a white-sand tourist spot in Manila was

visited by Vlogger 2 in the preliminary point of watching videos from foreign YouTube channels. Rather than stimulating a better knowledge that dolomite sand is ecological damage and poses hazards on people's health, they mentioned positive feedback like it was "a cool experience", "it's super nice", and "this is insane" implying their promotion on merely the aesthetic aspects of the attraction. It is interesting that there are vloggers who recommend riding a carabao cart, bicycle, and wooden scooters, most especially walking as a better mode of transportation while on a trip. This is a good standard of an ideal sustainable option while traveling. Vlogger 1, one of the foreign travel influencers, has great results in this pillar for he demonstrated consistency on environmental sustainability in his videos.

- Environmental-friendly materials, [4:00.4 - 4:08.8] "Just a bamboo bridge between the Nipa" (Vlogger 4, 2021), [5:01.0 - 5:15.5] "So I'm getting very sustainable vibes from Bojo River which is awesome, shoutout to them for the reusable straws, comes in this thingy, this place is very sustainable (Vlogger 4, 2021), [11:36.6 - 12:23.5] "this one is made out of mahogany" (Vlogger 1, 2020).
- Nature Appreciation, [3:52.2 - 3:57.3] "were on this table outside right on the beach" (Vlogger 2, 2021), [2:44.8 - 2:54.7] "what a view!" (Vlogger 3, 2021), [9:07.6 - 9:23.3] "We arrived to Hermit's Cove, and its white sand more like shells, but really nice" (Vlogger 4, 2021). Nowadays,
- Transportation, [2:45.4 - 2:58.4] "Oh my goodness, they are well fed" (Vlogger 3, 2021), [1:55.9 - 3:20.0] "I really like this ride" (Vlogger 5, 2020).
- Wildlife [8:35.4 - 8:45.8] "we can see corals from beneath us (Vlogger 4, 2021)

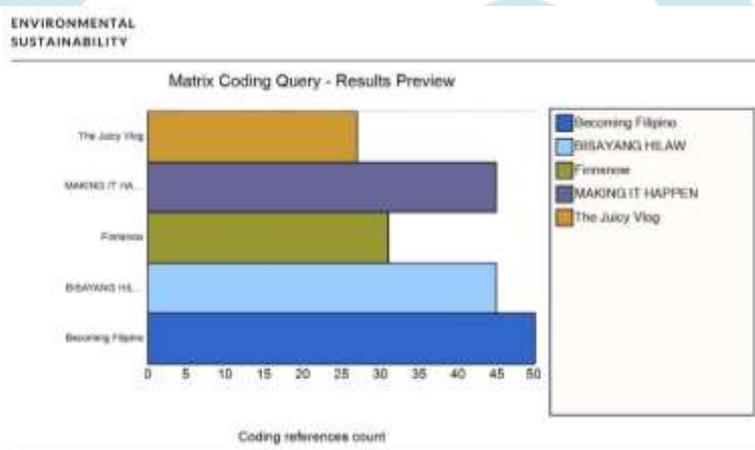


Figure 3. Matrix Coding of Environmental Sustainability

**Social Sustainability** – This pillar was the most complex of the three pillars of sustainability. During the coding process, a promising finding from this pillar of sustainability was that Vlogger 1 was certainly engaging with every local he sees while filming his vlog. Given the fact that he already lives in the Philippines, he knows how to speak Filipino dialect, hence having more possibility to be able to interact. On the other hand, the travel influencer named Vlogger 2 communicates with local communities the least in all of their travel vlogs. This idea is further supported by the finding that they only focus on talking to one another and speaking with locals is not part of their interest when travelling. The implications of these findings expose that they lack in promoting social sustainability. Foreign YouTube influencers are a big part of addressing sustainability and they must be aware of their ability to explain its advantages to communities as advocates of sustainable traveling.

- Cultural/Historical aspects, [6:36.3 - 6:50.5] "laundry, see even here in Cebu in the mountains is very primitive, basic, simple life" (Vlogger 3 2021), [5:41.1 - 5:50.9] "that is old school, and its literally slanted" (Vlogger 1, 2020).
- Dialect, [6:33.2 - 6:49.1] "maayong hapon" (Vlogger 4, 2021), [7:27.4 - 7:32.4] "salamat kaayo, Amping (Take Care) (Vlogger 1, 2021).
- Independent traveling or Self-discovery, [9:49.9 - 10:09.0] "something that brings people together it's of course super positive things and then if there are natural disasters everybody drops everything and become as one". (Vlogger 3, 2021),
- Interaction with Locals, [4:14.7 - 4:33.2] "here at the airport they're so friendly" (Vlogger 5, 2021), [3:56.5 - 4:09.7] "do you speak Ilonggo here or Bisaya?" (Vlogger 3, 2022).

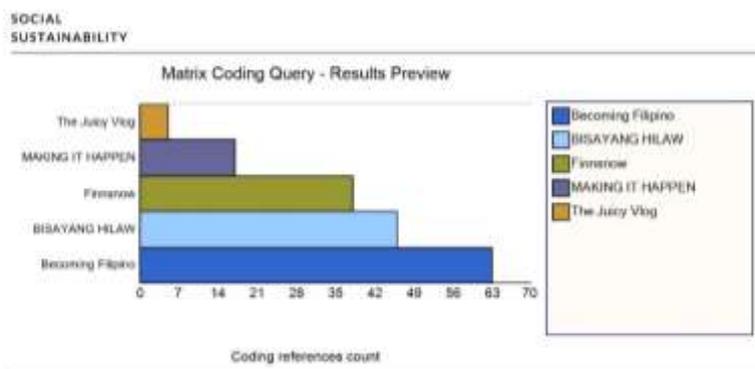


Figure 4. Matrix Coding of Social Sustainability

The researchers examined that out of five foreign YouTube content creators, three do not seem to have interest in promoting consistent sustainable travel in their vlog uploads within the pandemic period to the current day. This idea was further supported by finding that all vlogs selected in this research were more of a summary on the activities involved and food consumed, hence the mentality of sustainable traveling is vague. The glamorous part of traveling on social media is expected among travel influencers. This ought to be the reality for travel influencers who display an appealing content of sharing best experiences, dining at fancy restaurants, sipping drinks on the beach, and staying at a luxurious hotel. Social media users get attracted to these kinds of travel videos, thus giving a reason for them to be a subscriber (Chu, 2019). The main objective of a YouTube influencer is the expansion of their channel so they must captivate their audience wherein their influence must pique the interest of viewers in sustainable traveling. It is worth discussing if travel vloggers avoid a sustainable form of traveling due to the fact that most social media users often find it dull. Despite this, in foreign YouTube travel vlogs, consistent sustainable travel is rarely covered.

#### Addressing the Gap

Aforementioned sustainable tourism is a relatively new academic term and social media has been underutilized for the promotion of sustainability. Increased research should be invested, and this research contributes to the literature gap by answering how YouTube travel vlogs discuss sustainable travel. (Chu, 2020). During the literature review, it became evident that there has been little research done on YouTube, particularly on the link between YouTube Vlogging and its sustainable travel content. Prior studies commonly explored user-generated video content using the YouTube platform (Trinh & Nguyen, 2019; Liang, 2020), leaving sustainable travel a fertile area for conducting academic research. In addition (Shen, Sotiriadis & Zhou, 2020) mentioned that some literature explores social media perceptions in tourism but lacks any elements of sustainable travel. Hence, this study discusses sustainable travel content in the context of the three pillars of sustainability, namely, Economic, Environmental and Social Sustainability through the platform YouTube. Although understanding travel behaviors is not the purpose of this study, it is still important to understand how sustainable travel is addressed online, particularly on social media platforms, it is however aimed to fill the gaps by emphasizing the sustainability aspects shown through YouTube vlogs and analyzing and categorizing their content.

Foreigner YouTube travel vloggers who have content on the Philippines were the subject of limited research. Among the exceptions, Peralta (2020) researched the branding of the Philippines on non-Filipino producers' vacation vlogs, which featured areas such as Compostela Valley, Romblon, Palawan, Bohol, Dumaguete, Cebu, and Siargao. Furthermore, the study ignored the lack of long-term content creation efforts as well as the growing culture of YouTube travel vloggers. As such, this research aimed to use foreign YouTube travel vloggers focusing on the long-term viability of YouTube vloggers' travel content. Authenticity and credibility are essential qualities in the selection of the 5 travel vloggers with a significant number of views to ensure perceived reliability. Through the use of YouTube vlogs, this study dealt with the awareness, comprehension, and acknowledgment of social media influencers' sustainable content, specifically in the Philippines.

The findings of this study begin to lay out how sustainable travel is now addressed on the internet, as well as how it could be enhanced. Sustainable travel messages are latent and indirect (Chu, 2020). Undeniably, sustainable travel vloggers set in the Philippines barely talk about the different ways to encourage sustainability in their travel content. Upon analysis, however, findings show otherwise. Sustainability in travel vlogs from these 5 channels are shown both implied and expressed which are identified by the three pillars of sustainability. In addition, previous literature shows little regarding social media. Yet social media sites are perceived as the most important channel for searching travel information (Sun, Law & Luk, 2018). Thus, this research is conducted to help fill a gap of under-researched aspects of sustainable travel content produced on YouTube by Foreign vloggers in the Philippines.

Sustainability in travel content in the context of the three pillars of sustainability is the focus of this research. Namely, economic, environmental, and social sustainability. Aspects like Local businesses, use of local dialect, and of environmental-friendly materials are taken into consideration for the analysis of the content. For example, whenever a vlogger is featuring solar power technology whilst traveling to a specified destination then it would fall into the category of Environmental Sustainability pillar. Similarly, whenever the vlogger interacts with locals and talks about the culture and history of their hometown, this would be categorized under the Social Sustainability pillar. Analysis of such can provide an understanding of how vloggers can affect their audiences' decision-

making when it comes to their sustainable content travel vlogs. As sustainability is core to their (viewers) belief system and values, this could explain their higher levels of perception (Chu, 2020). However, an underlying limitation of this research is the lack of a criteria to consider for a “sustainable audience”, which further proves the need for more studies to be conducted in these areas. With this paper, the YouTube audience can be more susceptible to opt for sustainable travel practices seen in the YouTube content of the vloggers. Arguably the public learns over time. It is believed that the public should be more susceptible to framing in the early stages of exposure to an issue like sustainable travel (Chong & Druckman, 2007) as cited by (Chu, 2020).

Finally, as mentioned earlier, the findings are both identified and classified under the three pillars of sustainability. The theoretical framework used for this. is The TBL Travel Content Diagram which shows how YouTube vloggers directly affect the triple bottom line of sustainability from their travel content. Because the focus of this research is to use content analysis to better understand the sustainable travel content produced by vloggers on YouTube, it's critical to recognize whether the content has sustainable travel elements, whether economically, environmentally, or socially. This paper considered the Three Pillars of Sustainability from The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the creation of its theoretical framework.

### **Limitations**

Although the present results clearly support that foreign YouTube travel influencers lack consistency in being a sustainable vlogger, it is necessary to acknowledge a number of potential limitations. The first limitation concerns that there are constraints on time wherein further investigations into the video content was not allowed. With more time, the researchers could have explored more videos and gathered an increased amount of data. A second potential limitation is that the videos chosen in this study are only from the year when the pandemic started until the year 2022. It will be important that future research would investigate the succeeding years regarding the efforts of foreign YouTube travel influencers on creating content on traveling sustainably. The third apparent limitation this paper has is the focus only on ‘foreign YouTube travel vloggers’ in the Philippines. It is possible that there are underlying differences when it comes to sustainable ideologies depending on what one's home country is. Although the present research cannot rule out these explanations, it seems useful to point out issues that may support or conflict with our results. Another limitation of this research is the focus on the analysis of the YouTube sustainable travel content from the researchers' perspective. Besides our own interpretation of the data, further research would benefit if the mind process of the content creator as taken into consideration for more data on the preparation, production, and execution of their sustainable travel content. Finally, a limitation of this research paper is the number of chosen vloggers that this study included. We feel that further research examining more numbers of vloggers would shed light on possible new data that might be significant to both previous and future studies with regards to sustainable travel content on YouTube.

### **V. CONCLUSION**

The content of foreign YouTube travel vloggers in the Philippines had yet to meet all the pillars of sustainability. In the travel vlogs, foreign YouTube influencers inconsistently promote sustainable traveling. They indirectly make content and support practicing economic, social, and environmental sustainability while taking a trip. Previous literature discovered upon conducting this research explores the branding of the Philippines as featured by international YouTube vloggers, user-generated content in social media and tourism, and influencer marketing, however, travel and sustainability are only briefly examined from the perspective of the tourism industry. As explained in the literature, it was well-argued how influencers on social media gain attention hence they greatly contribute to user engagement, most especially the effectiveness of their reach. They have the capability to increase conversations for their content can be widely seen by everyone on the internet. Moreover, people can see more content through suggestions and search results, and this is the reason why influence grows dramatically. This study reveals a gap about the sustainable travel coverage of content creators in their YouTube travel vlogs. Future studies must concentrate on convincing YouTube content creators to publish videos making a huge influence on sustainable travel. YouTube travel vlogging boosts the emergence of more opportunities to conduct research on (Chu, 2020, as cited in Griffith & Papacharissi, 2010). The publication of travel vlogs on YouTube might be of great help to tourist attractions and travel vloggers in creating more focused and successful content and becoming advocates of sustainable traveling. This might help businesses/destinations, as well as social media influencers, create more focused and successful content.

This study aims to discover ways to increase awareness, understanding, and recognition of sustainable travel through the use of an online platform called YouTube, and it demonstrates that having a sustainable content vlog is not something that most YouTube content creators do. According to the researchers, three of five international YouTube content makers do not appear to be interested in promoting constant sustainable travel in their vlog uploads from the pandemic time to the present day. This should be the case for travel influencers that exhibit engaging material such as sharing excellent experiences, dining at upscale restaurants, drinking cocktails on the beach, and staying at a deluxe hotel. Social media users are drawn to this kind of trip video, providing them with a reason to subscribe. It is worth debating if travel vloggers were sustainable forms of travel since most social media followers find them boring. This is a good eye-opening since there are a lot of people who considered starting YouTube vlogging since the pandemic started. Now that everything is slowly getting back to normal, and everyone misses travel that is why most of them wanted to document their travel to share with others in a form of vlogging. It can be also fascinating how these YouTube travel content vlogs affect not just the millennials but also the older generations to travel since they can be considered retirement, maybe roaming the globe, a new market for high-end, high-spending vacationers. As mentioned, not all the 5 chosen YouTube travel vloggers show consistent travel content about the three pillars of sustainability which are economic, environmental, and social. Future studies can also seek benefits when it comes to the local destinations for a reason that it can be a great way to promote a place, and for the content

creator itself. The goal of this study is not to understand travel behaviors, it is important to understand how sustainable travel is shown on an online platform since nowadays, (Chu, 2019). YouTube is one of the fastest learning tools.

This research tackles the lack of discussion among sustainability of foreign YouTube vloggers and their content through thorough analysis. During one of the searches, difficulty was encountered when limited travel content appeared. Sustainability in traveling is a concept some travelers are aware of. Now that media is a continuing source of travel information, especially for millennials, it is necessary that more studies regarding travel content produced online be focused upon and studied further. Opportunities for future studies should focus on sustainable travel content produced during and possibly post-pandemic from the COVID-19 Virus. Impacts from the pandemic possibly affected the vlogger and their produced content therefore resulting to different findings. The perception part of the content creators should also be studied to bring focus in their mind process in the creation of their content. It will be interesting how the production of their content is done, from preparation to feedback. This will also be an avenue to get to know if the creators are actually practicing sustainable travelling. Finally, future research will be a benefit to consider other social media platforms for short-form content making. i.e., TikTok, Instagram Reels, Facebook Reels. With the amount of possible audience from these platforms may have different and varying outlooks of sustainable traveling. Like any other, future studies should tackle sustainable travel content messages for it seems that there is minimal light is shine upon these kinds of topic.

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