

# ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF FILIPINO YOUTUBE VLOGGERS TO VISIT BORACAY AMID OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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**Abstract:** YouTube Vloggers are one of the most influential people in the market nowadays. But are these vloggers being still effective to encourage people at these trying times? This study encompasses the gap wherein among the four AIDA indicators, which is the most influential motion that can tell of how it can determine the influence of Filipino YouTube vloggers to visit Boracay amid of coronavirus 2019 pandemic. AIDA model is the conceptual framework that also stands as an indicator of this study. This is qualitative research that sampling method is purposive sampling in form of non-probability and the data gathering tool that was used is Qualitative Data Analysis Miner Lite. The validation that applied to this study is interpretive validity that deals with interpreting the meaning of comments from the viewers in the eight said vlogs. After watching the vlog, viewers become interested to go to Boracay amid of COVID-19 pandemic, among other AIDA indicators is the most influential motion that is based on the number of comments in the eight most viewed vlogs that this study examined. These Filipino YouTube vloggers changed viewer's mindset on how they see traveling during a pandemic, these vlogs are informative and aesthetic that gave impact to their viewers to encourage them to visit Boracay at these trying times and this will be a big help to leisure tourism, Aklan tourism, and the local and country's economy.

**Keywords:** YouTube Vloggers, AIDA indicators, COVID-19 pandemic, country's economy.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 or coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic deliberately affects the tourism industry. Considering the restrictions and protocols imposed to control the spread of the virus, leisure tourism put on hold for local and international travelers. Travelers who want to travel during the pandemic, need to follow procedures and requirements that need in a specific tourist destination. Every destination in the Philippines has its own set of requirements for domestic travelers mandated by the Local Government Unit (LGU) that governs the city or province (Guide to the Philippines 2020).

It was the first day of October 2020 resort island of Boracay reopened amid a virus threat to welcome visitors under general community quarantine to boost the country's economy. Only thirty-five people visited the island on the first day of reopening and on the following day, it was down to only 13 tourists. According to the local government, "with the few people that visit the island, the beach was quiet and largely empty" (Kyodo 2020). Traveling during a pandemic can be challenging and demanding because of the restrictions, protocols, and requirements imposed.

The researchers selected this topic because it is very timely to talk about situations about travel amid of virus threat that heavily affects the tourism industry. Boracay is the chosen tourist destination because aside from the beauty of this island and pristine white sand, it is one of the most famous tourist spots in the Philippines and there are a lot of local businesses and stores affected due to being closed for months because of COVID-19 (Yanez, 2019). YouTube is the chosen avenue because of the power of vlogging. Given the fact that society wants to watch now than to read. It is a great avenue to showcase something that may influence others because there are lot of benefits of working with vloggers. (Thornquist, 2018) The importance of undertaking this study is to give benefits to leisure tourism and the Philippines economy by assessing the influence of Filipino YouTube vloggers that will help to know if that will be encouraging for people to

travel in Boracay amidst of pandemic. Wherein how do Filipino YouTube vloggers will help to increase the number of tourist arrivals in Boracay amid of COVID-19 pandemic.

It is also said in a recent study that government encourages people to visit Boracay to boost the country's economy (Romero, 2020). Having said that, this come to the statement of the problem of this study, how do YouTube vloggers contribute to influence people by having viewers being aware, interested, have desire and take an action to visit Boracay? and which among these indicators are the most influential? Are these vlogs effective to have an impact to encourage the viewers to go to Boracay considering new normal situations?

A lot of people on the internet refer to themselves as vloggers. This is widely known to YouTube or also known as "YouTubers". They refer to themselves as a vlogger since they edit, create, visualize, and post their medium through videos based on the subject they want to share. Therefore, a vlogger is someone who produces, disseminates, and promotes content that it's either for their subject or other folk's brand. Employing a vlogger to promote your brand will ease your mind. Their ideas and hard work creating content make them skillful with their medium and you will never go wrong with an expert. (Bhasin, 2020). This makes sense to support the idea of how effective YouTube vloggers in promoting something.

The results of this study will be of notable benefit to the following, Department of Tourism. This study will help by assessing the impact of YouTube vloggers to encourage, promote and develop tourism that will succor the main goal of DOT in helping the economy to produce foreign currency and employment. Aklan Tourism. The result of this study will help to examine the data of several tourists who visit Boracay amid COVID-19. Nevertheless, with proven support, this will help the province of Aklan increase its wealth and economy that will also give awareness to the closed local stores located in Boracay to reopen and can get ready to welcome tourists soon.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL/THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The tourism and hospitality industry capitalize on visitation trends and decision-makers make significant efforts to draw tourists to sustain the sector and boost the industry's multiplier impact. The border closures, travel bans, events cancellation, strict protocols, quarantine travel requirements, and fear of spread, have placed utmost challenges on tourism and hospitality sectors. These factors make it difficult to attract tourists to visit travel destinations. (Kaushal & Srivastava, 2020). Hence, this falls to the question, how to encourage people to travel considering these factors due to the COVID-19 pandemic that affect their decision-making to visit one place amid of pandemic.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021), travel if you must, make sure to follow protocols and new normal travel requirements. It says in the study that traveling enlarges the possibility of getting and spreading the virus COVID-19. You need to get tested before and after travel and observe your health conditions. "Whenever you travel, even before the coronavirus, you run the risk of encountering new infections," said Dr. Michael Ben-Aderet an infectious disease specialist. As reported by Cedars-Sinai, (2020) there's a big positive impact when you go to travel and that is a fact but with what is happening right now, travel is much more challenging. Based on this research by societal learning in epidemics, that made modeling study shows that additional travel restrictions up to 90% have only a limited impact unless combined with prevention strategies and behavioral improvements that can promote a major reduction in the transmission of diseases. (Drake, Chew & Ma, 2020). With this advice and information, is it still fine to encourage people to travel?

On the other side of the coin, looking at sustainable tourism considering the economic viewpoint wherein tourism is the most favorable that brings employment, profit, and foreign exchange. (Palafox, 2018). This will greatly help the Gross Domestic Product of the Philippines and boost the country's economy, especially at these trying times. "With the pandemic causing a worldwide economic slowdown, governments are still searching for ways to help bolster the economies of their nations". (Mountford, 2020). What should the government do to boost travel and tourism without the fear of a recurring pandemic?

That is how the effectiveness of YouTube vloggers enter their culture is virtual when it comes to promoting something. It said in one of the related studies that YouTube is absolutely a great platform for people that markets the presentation and evaluation of the products they buy and its notable tool to communicate with other people by way of commenting. (Cen, 2015). The video or vlog viewers are highly tangled in watching life updates and travel experiences of Filipino YouTube vloggers in the Philippines. The vlogs made by the YouTube vloggers become a popular appearance as to date format for sharing thoughts, experiences, feelings, and ideas that connect to particular events. (Molyneaux, O'Donnell, & Gibson,

2013). This favored the idea that vlogs made by YouTube vloggers are in demand and the best avenue to look for information when it comes to a travel destination.

The researchers made a framework inspired by the concept of the acronym AIDA model that stands for Awareness, Interest, Desire, and Action as the study's framework by advertising pioneer E. St. Elmo Lewis. This model presents the steps of a customer that goes through a process before deciding to buy a product or service. This often uses in digital marketing, sales strategies, and campaigns that greatly utilize to influence people to purchase something. Researchers come up with this conceptual framework to support the process of analyzing the comments in the vlogs of Filipino YouTube vloggers. This model proposed by Lewis says that Awareness leads to Interest, which guides to Desire and eventually, Action.

The process of AIDA model that Awareness will act as viewer being knowledgeable about the new normal situations and this will lead to Interest wherein it will show if the viewer attracts and want to visit Boracay knowing the information needed after watching the vlog that will lead to Desire and make a plan to go there then this will lead to the last process which is Action that viewer's comment that will show they will book and take an action to go there. This will be the process to assess the goal of this study.

Furthermore, to explain the use and effectivity of the AIDA model as the study's theoretical framework, this will use as a guide to complete the process of content analysis of the study. This will be the basis to determine how effective vlogs of Filipino YouTube vloggers when it comes to influencing other people to visit Boracay amid of COVID-19 pandemic. The process of this theoretical framework will direct to assess the comments of viewers in every vlog from eight Filipino YouTube vloggers regarding travel in Boracay amid of COVID-19 pandemic taken in November, December 2020, and January 2021. Using the given number of tourist arrivals in Boracay from these months will help to connect from the month of the vlogs taken and will use to assess the influence of these Filipino YouTube vloggers based on the comments of viewers.

The objective and sense of this topic are what make this study unique. Given the fact that this topic is very timely to talk about, what makes this study distinctive is the goal of what this study is trying to assess. This paper will help not only the leisure tourism industry but also to country's economy that makes this study more extraordinary.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The research design of this study is qualitative research wherein it focuses on analyzing comments of the viewers from the eight most viewed vlogs. These vlogs have the greatest number of views regarding Boracay in new normal. Researchers focus on these eight vloggers because this also has a lot of comments that will give a big impact to this study. The objective of this study is to assess if the Filipino YouTube vloggers are influential and can encourage people to visit Boracay amid of COVID-19 pandemic considering new normal situations. The chosen research design is the best way to gain an understanding of the given objective of this study that will examine and analyze the comments of the viewers.

The sampling method of this study is purposive sampling which researchers rely on the selective or subjective way in choosing population in form of non-probability sampling. The researchers chose secondary data that will help to support the study that the data collection came from the comments of the viewers in eight vlogs. The selection process is based on the number of views that researchers sort out are the most viewed vlogs and the most informative about the new normal situations in Boracay. To make the data collection credible, researchers picked only the viewer's comments in each of the eight most viewed vlogs following the AIDA theory process as mentioned above and will act as a guide to determine the goal and research problem to make this study admissible.

The data analysis method that the researchers are using is content analysis. The data collection method is observation. This method will use for the researchers to assess comments by means of observing and will select comments based on the AIDA process and the data collection tool that is going to use is Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) Miner Lite. It is exactly eight most viewed vlogs regarding Boracay in new normal from the given Filipino YouTube vloggers that researchers picked, and it will focus on the comment section that will only correlates to AIDA indicator, having an exception of unnecessary statements that will not fall to the concept of AIDA. This will also connect to the number of tourist arrivals in Boracay in the month of November and December of 2020 and January of 2021. This will help the researchers to know if these vlogs from Filipino YouTube vloggers are effective when it comes to influencing people to visit Boracay amid of COVID-19 pandemic.

The researchers gathered the data using a laptop, internet, and notepad. The researchers focus on the comment section on YouTube that is informative and related to the AIDA. Observing it by following the research ethics to make the data valid

and valuable. Researchers assigned each other a task to get the data and divided each vlog into every one of them. Researchers made sure to repeat it twice in observing and gathering the data. For the data to attain sharpness and concentration. They scheduled getting the data on weekdays and once it's collected, they input the records of data in the QDA Miner Lite Tool. Researchers found this tool quite easy and functional to use when it comes to analyzing the data that will support this study.

After collecting the data and putting it in Microsoft word, researchers encode these data in the QDA Miner Tool by separating each factor as their code in each category as Awareness, Interest, Desire, and Action. The validation that applied to this study is interpretive validity that deals with interpreting the meaning of comments from the viewers in the eight said vlogs. The researchers were able to come up with the process by assessing the meaning of the comments gathered in this study and also by evaluating it to what is the intention and commenter are trying to say. In every comment, researchers were able to conduct and categorized it by a word clue that will label to what in AIDA the specific comment will designate.

They were also able to consider the evaluation of emotions and choice of words of these comments that will help to determine where it will classify to. Researchers gathered the comments by not having informed consent for it. For them, it isn't relevant to have a consent form since this is public comments or sources that everyone has free access to get. However, researchers were able to observe this ethical consideration and that is respect for potential and enrolled participants.

Nonetheless, researchers didn't get other private information of the viewers like name or username and will still keep their private information confidential. They observe other ethical protocols that are relevant to this study. One of these is the fair subject selection that researchers made sure to select participants equitably that doesn't need to limit the gender of the viewers. Also, this undergoes an independent review guided by the thesis advisor before researchers come up with the whole idea of the study.

#### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Coding Analysis of Aida Indicators

Table 2. The Summary of Boracay Domestic Visitors Arrivals

A discussion of the findings of the study is presented in table one. The total of viewers that gathered is 247 comments of the viewers from the eight most viewed vlogs and it is selected by picking the comments that will only fall in any of the indicators which are AIDA from the said time. After watching one of these eight most viewed vlogs, most of the viewers based on their comments are interested to go to Boracay amid of COVID-19 pandemic. This shows that these eight most viewed vlogs captivate the viewers to have the interest to go to Boracay considering the situations and after knowing the requirements needed. Also, followed by the next highest number of percentages, after watching the vlog, viewers had a desire to plan to go to Boracay and wanting to book a ticket to go there amid pandemics.

AIDA	COUNT%	CODES
Awareness	52	21.1%
Interest	94	38.1%
Desire	62	24.7%
Action	40	16.2%
Total Numbers of Viewers Gathered: 247		

The data also shows that 52 of the viewers were able to be aware and knowledgeable about the situations, requirements, and things that need to consider if they will want to go to Boracay amid of COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the least percentage is Action wherein 16.2% of the viewers will book and take an action to go to Boracay after watching the vlog.

Based from the findings of domestic tourist arrivals in table two, from Aklan Provincial Tourism Office, the people who go to Boracay in the months of November, December 2020 and January 2021 amid COVID-19 pandemic, are noticeably increasing. This data shows that the highest number of tourist arrivals in Boracay in times of pandemic 2020 is in the month of December. And the in the eight most viewed vlogs that examine in this study, six of those vlogs taken in the month of November and December 2020. Having said that, this exhibit the impact of these vlogs to encourage people to go to Boracay considering new normal situations.

MONTH	NUMBER OF ARRIVALS
November 2020	4,154
December 2020	15,307
January 2021	11,898
Total	31,359

## 5. CONCLUSION

After the discussion of the findings, it's visible in the data of indicators that YouTube Vloggers endow and helps in projecting to influence people to visit Boracay. Most of the viewers are interested considering the needed requirements and new normal situations. Among these four indicators, people that are interested to visit there are the most influential. These eight most viewed vlogs can consider as an effective encouragement to the viewers based on the data in a number of tourist arrivals in the said months, the highest number of domestic visitors is in the month of December that helps to correlate the effectiveness of this study where in fact most of these vlogs are taken in November and December of 2020.

In the final analysis, most of the viewers are interested to visit Boracay among of just being aware, had a desire to go there, and will take an action. This study shows that being interested to go there by watching the vlog is the most influential to go to Boracay amid of COVID-19 pandemic. This is verifiable because most of these viewer's comment convinced by the vlogs wherein what they are trying to say is that they have the interest to go there after watching the vlog. These vlogs changed viewer's mindset on how they see traveling during a pandemic. These eight most viewed vlogs competent to not just flaunt the beauty of Boracay but given the fact that they were able to make their vlogs informative and set the expectations to people for them to feel comfortable in considering traveling during a pandemic.

Given the result, researchers come up with the conclusion that vlogs are one of the most effective ways to encourage people to visit Boracay or to travel at these trying times. This will give great benefit to leisure tourism, local vendors, and stores in Aklan, and also boost the Philippines country's economy at these trying times. Filipino YouTube Vloggers can be an asset to increase the number of visitor arrivals in Boracay. The Aklan Provincial Tourism can come up with the plan of developing the strategies by correlating to these vloggers on how they can promote Boracay and local stores there that will give so much interest to people for them to visit this beautiful island amid of COVID-19 pandemic.

This study is limited to viewer's comments in the month of November, December of 2020, and January of 2021 after the enhanced community quarantine was lifted. It is also limited to the eight most viewed vlogs taken in the said months. It is suggested to expand the number of comments by adding more vlogs and selecting comments from different months that will examine the study and use content analysis for treating the data. Moreover, it is recommended to use the same indicators which is AIDA in determining the most influential motion among awareness, interest, desire, and action when it comes to the influence of Filipino YouTube Vloggers to visit Boracay amid of COVID-19 pandemic.

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