Tourism Marketing: The Influences of Social Media to the Tourist Destination

Mariae K. Arreza*

College of Arts and Sciences, Cebu Normal University, Cebu, 6000 Philippines

A b s t r a c t

Social media platforms have evolved into valuable resources for tourists in gathering information about travel destinations and tourists have considered them in their travel decisions. Although with the progression, there is a lack of literature that concentrates on social media influence, primarily based on the social media brand and tourist profile in terms of the type of tourist and generation profile or criteria. In response to the gaps, this paper is centered on the following aims: Determine the tourists' profile based on generation criteria and tourist type; Determine which social media platform tourists primarily base their travel decision; Determine social media platform tourists use to find more information about the destination; Gauge the level of influence social media has on the tourists' decision where to travel; Test the significant relationship between the tourists' generation profile and the level of influence social media has on the tourists' decision of where to travel; and Test the significant difference between the foreign and domestic tourist responses on the level of influence social media has on their decision where to travel. This descriptive-correlational study was conducted in Siargao, a first-class international surfing destination in the Philippines. This study garnered 279 participants. It was found that Generations X and Y are influenced by Facebook in their travel decisions, while Instagram influences Generation Z tourists. The study also revealed that tourists use YouTube to learn more about travel destinations. In testing the hypotheses, non-parametric tests were used. The study showed no significant relationship between tourists' generation profiles and the level of influence social media has on their travel decisions. However, Social media influence between foreign and domestic tourists is highly significant.

Introduction

Technology in the tourism industry has paved the way for the upgrade and growth of travel 2.0, which has significantly enhanced social media's role in our everyday lives, such as how social media has progressed and its vitality as a source of information communication. In addition, this web upgrade formed new knowledgeable customers and have expedient access to consume travel and tourism product experiences. Consumers have changed their shopping habits and use various digital platforms to complete their purchasing journey (Schroeder & Pennington-Gray, 2014). Internet connectivity has significantly impacted people, organizations, communication, and operations—this progression aids

* Corresponding Author
e-mail: mariae_arreza@outlook.com

in extending internet utilization in the future. The changing tourism industry is undertaking a conversion from business to the customer to peer-to-peer business and communication. There is a presence of traveler communities, both offline and online, on various social media platforms. These communities are fashioned by people who have shared interests. This leads the industry to alter its marketing communication. The dependability of the content posted on these social media platforms augments its strength. Travelers benefit from utilizing the social media platform for its content because it postulates varying information that travelers need about destinations and tourism products (Dwityas & Briandana, 2017).

Social media is a type of online media that allows users to provide feedback, create discussions, add ideas and information. Social media has become an imperative tactic in advertising resources. It is incontestable that internet technology rules this age, and social media are speedily becoming a part of many people's daily lives (Berhanu & Raj, 2020). Over the years, social media has grown steadily, and it is viewed as a new prospect to use for several specific purposes, including decision-making (Gilani, Salimia, Jouyandeh, Tavasoli, & Wong, 2019). The term "social media" denotes websites that enable relationships among users from numerous backgrounds, ensuing in a complex social structure. Consumer demands and decision-making are swayed by user-produced content (Gilani, Salimia, Jouyandeh, Tavasoli, & Wong, 2019). Social media has a significant impression on the tourism and hospitality industry and its distribution (Schroeder & Pennington-Gray, 2014). Content shared on social media, especially by persons with a good reputation, can significantly impact trip planning and the final decisions of tourists (Manyevere & Kruger, 2019).

Companies that engage with clients on a coherent basis through social media can find that such engagement can strengthen brand identity and durability. This is confirmed through the evidence that is beginning to manifest in different ways (Hudson & Thal, 2013). The internet revolutionized tourism marketing rules, and many traditional marketing methods have become archaic due to this technology. Digital marketing is an essential factor for those who desire to thrive in tourism and hospitality businesses. At present, consumers on the internet can communicate with other users and their best-loved brands. Because of this, prospects for a new partnership between stakeholders have arisen. To prosper in the tourism industry, tourism operators must

understand digital marketing and leverage the potentials of digital media and mobile technology. Customers are profoundly influenced by the element of confidence when searching for relevant information in the digital world (Magano & Cunha, 2020).

Tourists acquire information before deciding to purchase travel-related items to reduce the risk associated with buying tourism services, which stems from the experimental nature of most tourism product purchases. Tourists rely heavily on information from others to decrease the risk and uncertainty associated with purchasing travel-related products. It is often assumed that information shared by other tourists on social media platforms is equivalent to offline recommendations from friends, family, and other travelers. Tourists typically seek out the opinions and advice of other experienced tourists during buying and selections. Therefore, online platforms can create significant changes in tourists' behavior. Because the way social media content is displayed, particularly in photographs and experiences, frequently increases curiosity. Social networks are increasingly becoming critical sources of information for travelers. It is valuable to tourists in holiday planning procedures since they allow people to see or read about other visitors' experiences (Manyevere & Kruger, 2019).

Digital marketing opportunities are in social media, mobile, and content marketing powered by technology users, such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram subscribers. Customers also benefit from digital marketing in various ways, including access to relevant product information (Mkwizu, 2019). Social media marketing efforts have improved sales and improved customer loyalty. In business, success is reliant on understanding the consumers. Today, consumer-generated media has a wide variety of new and growing online information channels generated, fashioned, initiated, shared, and utilized by consumers to educate one another about brands, products, and other issues. The tourists' travel decisions are intensely influenced by social media, commonly recognized as significant information sources. Social media platforms have challenged traditional ideas about the buying process (Liu Mehraliyev, Liu, & Schuckert, 2019). Relationships with brands are typically grounded on using the product or service after purchase (Hudson & Thal, 2013). One of the most significant factors that tourists deliberate when planning a trip to a particular location is the legitimacy of information sources. Trust is imperative for online

tourism marketing because it intensifies the desire to purchase (Berhanu & Raj, 2020).

Even though digital marketing in the tourism industry is widespread, there is limited accessible literature that focuses on the social media influence, especially in discovering the influence of social media according to what social media brand and based on the tourist profile in terms of tourist type and generation criteria or profile. The study was conducted to respond to the gap. The outcome of this research contributes to the tourism industry in further understanding social media's influence on tourists and strengthen the social media marketing presence and visibility of the island of Siargao, leading to its economic growth. This study also intends to serve as a guide for the local tourism government in Siargao to better understand their visitors by using the findings of this research to identify social media marketing opportunities. In adapting modern marketing strategies and repositioning their objectives by strengthening their online presence.

Siargao is the Philippines' surfing capital and an international surfing destination. In 2019, Tourist arrivals in Siargao had grown by 32.85% (Lopez, 2020). Further, the objectives of the study are the following: (a) Determine the respondents' profile based on generation criteria and tourist type (b) Determine which social media platform respondents primarily base their travel decision; (c) Determine social media platform respondents' usage to find more information about the destination; (d) Gauge the level of influence social media has on the respondents' decision where to travel; (e) Test the significant relationship between the respondents' generation profile and the level of influence social media has on the respondents' decision where to travel, and (f) Test the significant difference between the foreign and domestic tourist responses on the level of influence social media has on their decision where to travel.

Objectives

1. To determine the respondents' profile based on generation criteria and tourist type.

2. To determine which social media platform respondents primarily base their travel decision.

3. To determine social media platform respondents' usage to find more information about the destination.

4. To gauge the level of influence social media has on the respondents' decision where to travel.

5. To test the significant relationship between the respondents' generation profile and the level of influence social media has on the respondents' decision where to travel

6. To test the significant difference between the foreign and domestic tourist responses on the level of influence social media has on their decision where to travel.

Conceptual framework

Technology in the tourism industry has paved the way for the upgrade and growth of travel 2.0, which has significantly enhanced social media's role in our everyday lives, such as how social media has progressed and its vitality as a source of information communication. In addition, this web upgrade formed new knowledgeable customers and have expedient access to consume travel and tourism product experiences. Consumers have changed their shopping habits and use various digital platforms to complete their purchasing journey (Schroeder & Pennington-Gray, 2014). Internet connectivity has significantly impacted people, organizations, communication, and operations—this progression aids in extending internet utilization in the future. The changing tourism industry is undertaking a conversion from business to the customer to peer-to-peer business and communication. There is a presence of traveler communities, both offline and online, on various social media platforms. These communities are fashioned by people who have shared interests. This leads the industry to alter its marketing communication. The dependability of the content posted on these social media platforms augments its strength. Travelers benefit from utilizing the social media platform for its content because it postulates varying information that travelers need about destinations and tourism products (Dwityas & Briandana, 2017).

Research methodology

Adult Tourists from Cloud 9, Barangay Catangan, General Luna, Siargao, participated in the study. Prior to the conduct of the study, a permit was obtained from the area in charge, allowing the researcher to formally carry out the research. The venue was chosen since it is considered a high- traffic area for tourists who wish to try surfing or see various surfing-related events. It enabled the researcher to approach tourists during the festival timeline and invite them to participate in the study. The participants were given questionnaire and signed a consent of voluntary participation.

The convenience sample size for this study was 279 people (Foreign Tourists - 146; Domestic Tourists - 133). This research has 54 Generation X respondents, 121 Generation Y respondents, and 104 Generation Z respondents. Furthermore, the researcher used the following criteria in the selection of participants: (a) the respondent must be at least 18 years old; (b) the respondent must belong to one of the following generations: Generation X, Generation Y, or Generation Z; and (c) the respondent must have access to and use social media in the selection of a travel destination. The researcher utilized the convenience sampling technique, considering that based on the defined characteristics of the participants, there is no definite account as to the number of participants qualified for sampling. However, the researcher took the sample from two sets of tourists who were conveniently available around the location to which the study was done. The researcher wants to ensure that there is some control over representation concerns when employing convenience sampling. The criteria for classifying the Generational profile differences are based on the respondents' year of birth and assured whether they fit the specified generation criteria.

This descriptive-correlational type of study utilized a researcher-made survey instrument verified by five tourism university professors. For the descriptive part, the researcher measured the influence level of social media in tourist travel decisions. The questionnaire's statements applied a Likert scale level of interest response anchor to calculate .79 intervals. The following designates (5) as extremely influential, (4) as very influential, (3) as influential, (2) as slightly influential; (1) as not at all influential.

For the correlational part, the researcher compared the relationship between the generations and the influence of social media to travel decisions, additionally the researcher tested groups to check differences on the

level of influence of social media between foreign and local tourists. In treating the data, A licensed statistical software program Statplus by AnalystSoft was used. This provided results in testing the hypotheses of non-parametric tests of Kendall tau b and Wald-Wolfowitz Runs test.

Results

Table 1 The respondents' profile based on generation criteria and tourist type

Generation criteria	Number (Percentage) of foreign tourist respondents	Number (Percentage) of domestic tourist respondents
Generation X	28 (51.85%)	26 (48.15%)
Generation Y	77 (63.64%)	44 (36.36%)
Generation Z	41 (39.42%)	63 (60.58%)
Total	**146 (100%)**	**133 (100%)**

Table 1 shows the generation profile of the respondents. The study attained 54 responses from Generation X, 121 responses from Generation Y, and 104 responses from Generation Z. The distribution of the number of respondents could be caused by Siargao attracting the younger generation; it is highlighted as a surfing destination. It is noticeable on the island of Siargao that younger tourists are more evident.

Table 2 shows the answers of Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z. The respondents were informed to select one social media platform for both of the statements indicated in table 2. In the first statement, "The social media platform tourist based their travel decision." The popular choice among the Generations X and Y respondents is Facebook. Meanwhile, the majority of Generation Z respondents prefer Instagram as their primary base for their travel decisions. It can be because Facebook was launched in 2004 and has become popular worldwide around the year 2008. Werenowska & Rzepka (2020); Badowska & Delińska (2018) have discovered in their studies that Generation Y utilizes

Table 2 Respondents' categorized answers based on their social media use

Statements	Generation X			Generation Y			Generation Z		
	Number (Percentage)			Number (Percentage)			Number (Percentage)		
	Instagram	Youtube	Facebook	Instagram	Youtube	Facebook	Instagram	Youtube	Facebook
The social media platform tourist based their travel decision.	4 (7.40%)	12 (22.22%)	38 (70.37%)	22 (18.18%)	29 (23.96%)	70 (57.85%)	76 (73.07%)	20 (19.23%)	8 (7.69%)
The social media platform tourist utilized to find more information about the destination	13 (24.07%)	26 (48.14%)	15 (27.77%)	2 (1.65%)	103 (85.12%)	16 (13.22%)	38 (36.53%)	43 (41.34%)	23 (22.11%)

Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram and is the most popular social media channels to learn about a holiday destination. The respondents of Generation Y uses YouTube and Instagram as platforms that provide rapid and easy access to exciting content. In connection, Facebook was one of the first social media brands introduced to Generation X and Y. Some Generation Z respondents may be too young to use Facebook. The launch of Instagram was about ten years ago in 2010, so it is newer than Facebook and could have appealed to a much younger generation.

According to Cahyanto, Pennington-Gray, Mandala, & Schroeder (2016), social media has the foremost effect on travel planning, especially in terms of the travelers' quest for knowledge and post-travel experiences sharing. Cahyanto, Pennington-Gray, Mandala, & Schroeder (2016) note that future travelers use Facebook and are likely to post their stories online. Facebook's platform and popularity allow users to collaborate, upload pictures quickly, and provide tips and recommendations for travel plans.

The second statement's response, *"The social media platform tourist utilized to find more information about the destination."* shows that most respondents selected YouTube. This could be due to YouTube being one of the primary sources of online information (Reino & Hay, 2011).

According to Berhanu & Raj (2020), visitors have a positive attitude toward social media outlets' trustworthiness for travel information. Tourists between 18 and 35 have a higher level of positive views of travel information sources' trustworthiness on social media platforms. The younger generation is more likely to use digital networks, such as travel 2.0 apps. With the advent of technology, the tourism industry has become highly competitive. It has never been simpler for a tourist marketer to advertise a destination to potential tourists. Social media affects travel motivation and tourist destination image; these have been made sure and highlighted by travel marketers' social media as a destination promotion platform.

Furthermore, according to Nag & Gilitwala (2021), common social media channels are utilized to search for destination images. These platforms can be used to communicate the promotion to potential tourists. The key factor that connects social media, motivation, and travel intention is the destination image. Marketers should concentrate on how to create and sustain a positive destination image.

Table 3 The level of influence social media has on the respondents' decision of where to travel results presented according to Generational Profile

Level of influence (Verbal description) responses based on generation profile			
	Generation X	Generation Y	Generation Z
Rate the level of influence social media have on your decision where to travel	4.75 (extremely influential)	4.19 (very influential)	4.60 (extremely influential)

General weighted mean 4.51 (extremely influential)

The statement in table 3 answers the study's questions. The responses of Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z are varied. Generation X attained the highest mean among the group, followed by Generation Z and Generation Y.

According to the study's findings by Javed, Tučková, & Jibril (2020), social media outlets are critical in today's world and significantly affect tourists' behavioral intentions and actual conduct. This effect on tourist behavior contributes to the selection of particular destinations and travel- related decisions. On the one hand, a quest for tourist information significantly impacts behavioral intention but not actual actions. On the other hand, tourism promotion through social media has a significant impact on tourists' actual conduct, showing that businesses cannot expand and gain their fair share without a social media presence and promotion.

Table 4 Social media's level of influence on the respondents' decision of where to travel results presented according to the type of tourist.

Level of influence (Verbal description) responses based on the type of tourist		
	Foreign	Domestic
Rate the level of influence social media on your decision where to travel.	4.39 (extremely influential)	4.53 (extremely influential)

General weighted mean 4.46 (extremely influential)

Table 4 shows the categorized responses according to the type of tourist profile. Although the level of influence results is both verbally described as extremely influential. The domestic tourist response is higher compared to the foreign tourist responses. According to the study of Shtern, Hill, & Chan (2019), Filipino social media audiences are extremely heavy users of social media and are highly engaged in communicating through social media platforms. Inexpensive smartphones and different internet data plans have made the internet more accessible to Filipino

audiences, thus amplifying social media platforms' popularity.

There might be an unexplored link between the tourist generation profile or criteria and their level of influence. This is the essential aspect of the foundation for testing hypotheses, as it is also necessary to determine whether the type of tourist makes a difference in their response.

Table 5 Results of the Kendall Tau-b test

Kendall Tau-b		Generation criteria	Scale responses
Generation criteria	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.008
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.877
	N	279	279
Scale responses	Correlation coefficient	.008	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.877	.
	N	279	279

In testing the H_{01}, there is no significant relationship between the respondent's generation profile and the level of influence that social media has on their decision to travel; Kendall tau b test was used since data satisfies the assumptions of using such test. As shown in table 5, A

Kendall's tau-b correlation was run to test the relationship between the respondents' generation profile and the level of influence social media has on their decision of where to travel. Based on the results, there was no correlation between the respondents' generation profile and the level of influence social media has on their decision of where to travel. The results is not significant (τ_b = .008, p = .877). Therefore, H_{01} is accepted.

Table 6 Results of the Wald-Wolfowitz Runs Test

Wald-Wolfowitz Runs Test			
Runs count R	4	Z	8.12570
p-value	0.00000		

Table 6 Results of the Wald-Wolfowitz Runs Test In testing the H_{02}, there is no significant difference between the responses of foreign and domestic tourists' level of influence social media has on their decision where to travel.

A non-parametric Wald Wolfowitz run test was used since it satisfies all the assumptions of using the test. The results are shown in Table 6, and this exposed the difference between domestic and foreign responses is highly significant (p = 0.0000). Therefore, H_{02} is rejected because domestic tourists have a much higher

influence result than foreign tourists.

The influence of social media platforms on tourists' travel decisions is extremely high. The results can be used as a reference for tourism business operators and the local government unit of Siargao to create an effective and cost-efficient tourism marketing tool. Their marketing strengths should be established on the use of social media platforms. In this study, Generations X, Y, Z are taking advantage of the digital age and communication, especially consuming content in social media that promotes, develops, and interprets specific travel experiences. The development of the information age has a considerable bearing on tourist demand and plans.

It's crucial to remember that valuing social media presence is necessary because tourist destinations compete with other destinations in the Philippines and internationally. It's also critical to pay more attention to the social media platforms identified in the study.

This research provides an understanding of the level of interest tourists have in their travel decision. There are inevitable restrictions that arise from the study's nature. Social media's implication and influence could have been better comprehended if more independent variables were added, such as educational attainment and employment status. Future research may increase the sample size, venture into different areas to better represent the overall population. It may also add an exploration of the tourist frequency of social media use and destination marketing strategy according to different generation criteria. A more wide-ranging data may provide more specific results. The findings of this study can be replicated in other tourist destinations.

Conclusion

Social media is a digital medium that provides different resources and information to travelers, especially in their travel decisions. The private and government stakeholders should fully utilize social media as these promising platforms can be considered a marketing engagement method. It is inextricably linked to tourist decision-making where to travel. Generation X and Generation Y are influenced by their travel decisions through Facebook, and Instagram influences generation Z tourists. Tourists access YouTube for more information about travel destinations. The study discovers no significant relationship between tourist generation profile and the level of influence that social media has on their decision to travel. The difference

between the foreign and domestic tourist responses on the level of influence that social media has on their decision to travel is highly significant.

References

Badowska, S., & Delińska, L. (2018). Smartphone as a device supporting the interpenetrating of offline and online processes in shopping-empirical research among the Y generation. *Zarządzanie i Finanse, 16*(3, cz. 3), 7-23.

Berhanu, K., & Raj, S. (2020). The trustworthiness of travel and tourism information sources of social media: perspectives of international tourists visiting Ethiopia. *Heliyon, 6*(3), 122-132

Cahyanto, I., Pennington-Gray, L., Mandala, L., & Schroeder, A. (2016). The Effects of Social Media Usage on Travel Information Searching and Travel Experience Sharing. *Travel and Tourism Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally,* 1-8.

Dwityas, N., & Briandana, R. (2017). Social Media in Travel Decision Making Process. *International Journal Of Humanities And Social Science, 7*(7). 291-292

Gilani, E., Salimia, D., Jouyandeh, M., Tavasoli, K., & Wong, W. (2019). A trend study on the impact of social media in decision making. *International Journal Of Data And Network Science, 3*(2009), 201-222.

Hudson, S., & Thal, K. (2013). The Impact of Social Media on the Consumer Decision Process: Implications for Tourism Marketing. *Journal Of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 30*(1-2), 156- 160.

Javed, M., Tučková, Z., & Jibril, A. (2020). The Role of Social Media on Tourists' Behavior: An Empirical Analysis of Millennials from the Czech Republic. *Sustainability, 12*(18), 7735.

Liu, X., Mehraliyev, F., Liu, C., & Schuckert, M. (2019). The roles of social media in tourists' choices of travel components. *Tourist Studies, 20*(1), 27-48.

Lopez, A. (2020, January 23). *Tourist arrivals in Siargao, Dinagat islands up in 2019.* Philippine: News Agency.

Magano, J., & Cunha, M. N. (2020). Digital marketing impact on tourism in Portugal: A quantitative study. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 9*(1), 1-19.

Manyevere, R. M., & Kruger, M. (2019). The role of social media sites in trip planning and destination decision-making processes. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 8*(5), 1-10.

Mkwizu, K. H. (2019). Digital marketing and tourism: opportunities for Africa. *International Hospitality Review, 34*(1), 5-12.

Nag, A., & Gilitwala, B. (2021). Social Media And Its Influence On Travel Motivation And Destination's Image Formation. *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research, 8*(12), 102-106

Reino, S., & Hay, B. (2011). The use of YouTube as a tourism marketing tool. In *Proceedings of the 42nd Annual Travel & Tourism Research Association Conference, London, Ontario, Canada.* Travel & Tourism Research Association.

Schroeder, A., & Pennington-Gray, L. (2014). The Role of Social Media in International Tourist's Decision Making. *Journal of Travel Research, 54*(5), 584-595.

Shtern, J., Hill, S., & Chan, D. (2019). Social Media Influence: Performative Authenticity and the Relational Work of Audience Commodification in the Philippines. *International Journal of Communication, 13,* 1939-1958. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/9615/2634

Werenowska, A., & Rzepka, M. (2020). The Role of Social Media in Generation Y Travel Decision-Making Process (Case Study in Poland). *Information, 11*(8), 396.