

Online social media in hospitality and tourism: part 2

Welcome to the special issue of the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*. This second special issue is a continuation of the first one that was published in Volume 8, Issue 1 entitled "Online Social Media in Hospitality and Tourism". This issue includes nine articles selected for publication.

The first article by Pooja Choudhary and Amit Gangotia examines the relationship between young travelers' information-sharing behavior on social networking sites (SSN) and their gender. Overall, the results indicate that male travelers are more active on SSN for travel information share compared to their female counterparts.

The second article by Mina Balouchi, Yuhanis Abdul Aziz, Tahmoures Hasangholipour, Amir Khanlari, Azmawani Abd Rahman, Raja Nerina Raja-Yusof investigates factors affecting Iranian tourists' behavioral intention to use consumer-generated content (CGC) websites for travel planning. Data collected from 211 respondents demonstrates that perceived source credibility, perceived enjoyment and perceived ease of use are the predictors of Iranian tourists' intention to use CGC websites for travel planning.

The third article by Chuhan (Renee) Wang and Marketa Kubickova examines factors affecting the engagement metrics of hotel Facebook pages. The study utilizes secondary data from the Facebook page of a 147-room hotel in Northeast America. A total of 181 observations reflecting primary Facebook metrics are adopted via Facebook Insights between January 2014 and June 2014. The study results indicate that the number of daily-engaged users positively affects the number of daily people talking about the page (eWOM) and the number of engaged users differs significantly by external factors including time-of-day, day-of-week, age, gender and distance.

The fourth article by Jane F. Bokunewicz and Jason Shulman identifies the categories of influencers that have the greatest reach by utilizing a network analysis of 14 destination marketing organizations (DMO). The study findings illustrate that media, promotional accounts and those of individuals are determined to be influential by each metric considered. In addition, stakeholders such as hotels and restaurants occupy positions of low importance in the networks and generally do not capitalize on opportunities provided by the DMOs.

The fifth article by Maria I. Simeon, Piera Buonincontri, Fernando Cinquegrani and Assunta Martone analyzes online reviews to explore the experiences of tourists related to cultural attractions and identifies similarities and differences between cultural attractions and tourists' preferences. Content analysis is applied to 12,592 online reviews posted on TripAdvisor by tourists who visited 58 cultural attractions of Naples (Italy) between 2011 and 2014. The study results reveal five critical components of tourists' experience related to cultural attractions including wonder, authenticity, relaxation, discovery and knowledge.

The sixth article by Xi Y. Leung, Billy Bai, Mehmet Erdem develops a typology of social media messages to compare the effectiveness of different message strategies. Applying both Correspondence Analysis and Multivariate Analysis of Variance, the study compares message strategy across hotel scale levels and explores the effectiveness of different message strategies. A typology of four-type message format and six-type message content are developed. The study results reveal that the picture message is the best message format. In addition, product, brand and involvement messages are shown more effective than information, reward and promotion messages. Finally, promotion message was the least effective message content type.



The seventh article by Stefan Koch and Franziska Tritscher analyzes factors affecting adoption of an application called “social seating” which is launched by some airlines and independent providers. The data collected from 194 respondents demonstrated that perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, perceived privacy and data security significantly influence the adoption of social seating.

The eighth article by Monica B. Fine, John Girona and Maria Petrescu investigates the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, service quality and age on consumers’ electronic word-of-mouth communication behaviors. A panel of 204 travelers is surveyed regarding their hotel travel experiences, propensity to write online reviews, preferred review-writing platform, motivations for writing reviews and impressions of service quality. The study findings reveal that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, service reliability and service tangibility significantly influence travelers’ eWOM behavior. In addition, the study results indicate that prosumers’ engagement in eWOM about their hospitality experience differs according to their preferred review platform.

Finally, the ninth article by Bahar Yasin, Fakhri Baghirov and Ye Zhang aims to identify the most popular travel information sources used among tourists and investigates how travel information selection differs across travel experience and gender. The results demonstrate that past travel experience, travel agent, travel websites and hotel websites are generally the most frequently used travel information sources in destination selection due to convenience and reliability. In addition, first timers prefer to use external information sources such as Facebook, guidebooks, travel agents and newspapers to gather information about destinations, whereas repeat visitors prefer to use internal information sources such as friends’ suggestions and past travel experience. Lastly, female visitors rely more on internal information sources such as friends’ suggestions and past travel experience and male tourists prefer to use external information sources like Facebook, Television, blog, travel agents, newspaper and guidebooks in choosing Turkey as a destination.

In closing, I would like to, again, thank the Editor in chief, Dr Cihan Cobanoglu, and Assistant Editor, Dr Katerina Berezina, for their help and support for producing this second special issue on Online Social Media in Hospitality and Tourism. I would also like to thank the reviewers for their valuable feedbacks. I hope the studies included in this special issue will provide new insights and generate new ideas for future research in the context of hospitality and tourism.

Ahmet B. Ozturk

*Rosen College of Hospitality Management, University of Central Florida, Orlando,
Florida, USA*