

DETERMINING THE MOTIVATING FACTORS FOR THE GENERAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AMONGST TOURISTS TO SOUTH AFRICA

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—Abstract —

The remarkable growth in information technology has led businesses to appreciate the power and potential of online marketing, rather than merely focussing their promotional activities and goals on production and sales. Social media has proved to be one of the most effective forms of online marketing, seeing that it allows the business to respond to customer problems instantaneously, customers are amenable to marketing messages, and it assist businesses indirectly to find customers they did not know existed. There is a profound lack of research in the South African context with regard to identifying the motivating factors for the general use of social media. The purpose of this research article was two-fold: firstly to determine a demographic profile of social media users, and secondly to identify the main motivating factors for the general use of social media amongst tourists to South Africa. Research was conducted by means of distributing self-administered questionnaires at the O.R Tambo International airport, as the main target group was tourists. The completed questionnaires were used for the statistical analysis, which included factor analysis. The results indicated six factors motivating the general use of social media: content sharing, accessing information, connecting and communicating, personal attainment, ease of accessibility, and cost. It is imperative for organisations to understand the factors motivating users to engage in social media, as this will assist organisations to develop social media marketing strategies that will ensure the effective reach of their target markets. By understanding the motivating factors and developing marketing strategies accordingly, the development of sound long-term relationships between the organisation and the users could be established.

Key Words: *Social media, motivating factors, marketing, tourism, South Africa.*

JEL Classification: M31, Z32

1. INTRODUCTION

The Internet offers various interactive features, which have become a vital aspect in society at large. Social media is considered one of the most powerful and extremely popular interactive features the Internet offers. The fact that more than two thirds of the world's Internet populace are engaging in, interacting on and using social media sites are directly contributing to its popularity. Ultimately, the proliferation of social media and the use of the Internet have extensively changed the media landscape, as it has been known up until now (Badaway, 2009:220, Briones *et al.*, 2011:37; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:1). Social media can be defined as an online platform for users to interact with one another by means of generating and exchanging a variety of content, through different channels and/or applications (Mostert, 2015:46).

Social media has expeditiously evoked the attention of Internet users of all ages. The time spent on social media by internet users has also significantly impacted the overall internet growth (Milano *et al.*, 2011:2; Briones *et al.*, 2011:37; Al-Deen & Hendricks, 2012:xv; Lund, 2011:3). Social media boasts a number of benefits for both the organisation and the user in terms of interaction, communication and relationship building and can therefore be considered the most powerful tool to help businesses execute their current marketing strategies (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:260; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:435). However, it is of utmost importance for organisations to identify the motivating factors for the use of social media amongst their customers in order to determine how awareness of these factors can be utilised to ultimately escalate the marketing success and effectiveness of the organisation. The purpose of this study is to determine a demographic profile of social media users, as well as to determine the motivating factors for the general use of social media in order to assist tourism organisations utilising this knowledge to increase marketing effectiveness.

1.1 Social media and marketing

Social media is a growing phenomenon that forms part of the Internet revolution. It represents an universal source of information, and above and beyond that, it changes the tools and strategies businesses use to communicate with their consumers, reduce their marketing strategy costs, and enable their consumers to regulate the flow of information (Michaelidou *et al.*, 2011:1153; Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:260; Amaro *et al.*, 2016:2). The tendency exist for organisations to continuously search for novel methods to execute their marketing strategies in

terms of their products and services that eliminates the use of traditional advertising media. By considering their new-found needs in terms of marketing and the copious benefits that social media offer in this regard, it is clear that social media is the most exciting and invigorating alternative that currently exist (Lamb *et al.*, 2010:378; Dijkmans *et al.*, 2015:58; Hudson *et al.*, 2015:69).

The proliferation of social media has developed a circumstance where marketing progressed from a controlled environment where the spokespeople were predetermined, to an instance where there are several unappointed authors (such as customers, competitors, employees and other interested members) that are interacting by means of participatory conversations (Pitt & Berthon, 2011:182; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:434). This enables organisations to utilise social media for viral marketing purposes, ensuring that a great share of the market is reach at a fairly low cost (if any cost implied at all) regardless of their location (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:263).

1.2 The general use of social media

It is clear that social media boasts numerous benefits for organisations, but it also benefits the users that decide to engage on social media sites. These benefits range from several functional benefits (such as the opportunity to exchange information and easily access a great amount of relevant information needed), social benefits (where users can communicate with one another, build relationships and exchange ideas and opinions), and psychological and hedonic benefits (feeling a sense of belonging to a specific community, being able to express opinions and sharing in experiences) as identified by Parra-López *et al.* (2011:642) and Kang (2011:32).

Furthermore, social media allows users to organise around different motives through collaborating with each other, it guides users when entering an unfamiliar social environment, it provides the opportunity to access available social media sites at little to no cost, users can create and share their own content, and allows its users to respond to information that they have accessed and/or shared on social media sites (Miguens *et al.*, 2008:2; Briones *et al.*, 2011:38; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:641; Pitt & Berthon, 2011:182; Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:261; DeAndrea *et al.*, 2012:106; Leung *et al.*, 2013:4;). Joinson (2008:1030) has identified social connection (connecting with family/friends and people they are acquainted with), shared identities (communicating with likeminded people), photographs (viewing/sharing photos), social investigation, social networking surfing (social searching and social browsing) and status updates (seeing what people has posted)

as motivating factors for the general use of social media. However, Muntinga *et al.* (2011:26) categorised the motivating factors for the general use of social media, according to that of McQuail, in terms of entertainment (engaging on social media site for enjoyment, relaxation and pastime), integration and social interaction (social interaction, social identity and helping), personal identity (self-presentation, self-expression and self-assurance), information (for example searching for relevant information regarding products), remuneration (engaging for certain benefits and other rewards), and empowerment (feeling a sense of empowerment because they influenced the decision-making process of others through the information or content they have created and shared on social media).

By understanding the factors that motivate users to engage in social media, organisations can indirectly influence the users' behaviour and attitude towards the organisation by influencing their decision-making process.

1.3 Social media in the South African context

Social media also holds several benefits particularly for South African organisations. Table 1 indicates the most prominent social media in South Africa.

Table-1: Social Media usage in the South African Context

Social Media Site	Site Popularity Growth since 2014 (%)	Number of Users engaging on site
Facebook	8	13 million
Twitter	12	7.4 million
YouTube	15	8.28 million
Instagram	133	2.68 million

Source: <http://www.worldwideworx.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/SA-Social-Media-Landscape-2016-Executive-summary.pdf>

From table 1 it is evident that the growth in popularity of social media sites within the South African context since 2014 proves to be great. According to the number of active social media users, it is evident that social media can serve as an effective marketing tool for organisations operating in the South African context. The most popular social media sites prove to be Facebook (13 000 000 users) and YouTube (8 280 000 users) with Facebook indicating an 8% growth in site popularity and YouTube a 15% growth. It is also clear that Instagram showed the most potential for future growth with a 133% growth in popularity. By analysing table 1, it is evident that organisations should realise the opportunities that are created by the use of social media for online marketing in South Africa (Cant &

Van Heerden, 2013:452). However, before organisations can develop marketing strategies that include the effective use of social media, it is of utmost importance for these organisations to have very specific objectives and strategies if and when they plan to implement social media as marketing tool.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research purpose and design

The purpose of this study is two-fold: firstly to determine a demographic profile of social media users, and secondly to identify the main motivating factors for the general use of social media amongst tourists to South Africa. Identifying the social media sites the respondents participate on, as well as the time spent on each social media site per week are also reported as objectives flowing from the main purpose of this research. The research design was of a quantitative research nature. The role of the researcher remained partial to data collection and interpretation (positivism approach) of the collected data to ensure objectivity towards the study (Remenyi *et al.*, 1998:32; Collins, 2010:38). A descriptive research design will be followed for the empirical portion of the study (demographic profile, social media use and time spent description) and a factor analysis will be provided to identify and discuss the motivating factors for the general use of social media.

2.2 Study area and sample

Both national and international tourists to South Africa, at the O.R. Tambo International Airport, were identified as participants for this research. Due to the absence of a list of visitors to the airport, a stratified sampling method was deemed necessary. The stratification of the sample included the even distribution between national and international travellers, as well as even distribution between the arrival and departure halls of the O.R. Tambo International Airport. The O.R. Tambo International Airport was used for the study area, considering that it provided access to the most recent travellers, and with a number of 803 933 travelling to South Africa via the O.R. Tambo International Airport in 2013, it is considered the busiest airport in South Africa.

2.3 Research instrument and procedure method

Due to the nature of the research and the novelty attached to the type of data collected specifically collected in the South African context, a mixed method

approach was followed. This consisted of both qualitative and quantitative research. The absence of a suitable questionnaire resulted in the development of a new questionnaire, based on the literature review and data collected from the semi-structured interviews with the marketing managers of selected tourism organisations in South Africa. A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed by field workers, which resulted in 249 questionnaires used for data analysis, as these respondents indicated that they did participate in social media, and therefore completed the applicable sections of the questionnaire. The respondents had to indicate whether they actively participate in social media or not. From the 450 completed questionnaires, 249 respondents indicated that they were actively participating in social media. Thus, 55% of the respondents indicated that they did participate and utilise social media for some purpose. The applicable sections of the questionnaire focused on capturing data based on whether the respondent was an active social media user or not, the demographic variables (close-ended questions), as well as the opinions of the respondents regarding the general reasons (29 statements were analysed) for the use of social media. A 4-point Likert scale was used, where 1 was completely disagree and 4 was completely agree. Descriptive statistics were used to interpret and present a demographic profile of the respondents, and exploratory factor analysis was used to interpret the motivating factors for the use of social media for general purposes. Participation in this research study was completely voluntary and ensuring no names or relevant personal information were disclosed protected respondents' privacy and identity.

2.4 Data analysis

The data from the completed questionnaires were coded and captured in Microsoft Excel. The captured data was processed and analysed by making use of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences), Version 22.0 and reported on by means of descriptive analysis, frequency distribution and exploratory factor analysis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from this study will be discussed in this section. Table 2 serves as an indication of the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table-2: Demographical information of sample

Variable	Category	%
Type of traveller	International	56

Variable	Category	%
	Domestic	44
Gender	Male	63
	Female	37
Level of Education	Matric	32
	Diploma/Degree	32
	Professional	11
	Post-Graduate	11
	Other	14
Age	Younger than 20	1
	Between 21 and 30 years	10
	Between 31 and 40 years	22
	Between 41 and 50 years	29
	Between 51 and 60 years	39
Province	Gauteng	21
	Mpumalanga	4
	North-West	2
	Free-State	4
	Eastern Cape	7
	Western Cape	5
	Northern Cape	4
	KwaZulu-Natal	10
	Limpopo	8
Outside SA Borders	35	

Source: Author's own compilation

According to table 2 it is evident that a reasonably even number of international (56%) and national tourists (44%) participated in this survey. The respondents were mostly male (63%) and seem to be well educated, with most qualified either with matric (32%) or a diploma/degree (32%). They were mostly older with 39% between the ages of 51 and 60, and originated from outside South African borders (35%), mainly from the United States of America and Germany. The respondents who indicated that they are currently living in South Africa mainly resided in the Gauteng Province (21%). Table 3 represents a brief summary of the social media behaviour of the respondents in terms of the social media sites most used, as well as the site on which they spent the most time on average per week.

In the process of data collection, respondents had to indicate their use of a total number of 11 social media sites. However, for the purpose of this article table 3 only indicates the most popular sites according to the statistical analysis.

Table-3: The use of social media sites

Social media site	% of respondents participating on site	% of respondents indicating most time spent on site per week
Email	50	27
Facebook	49	31
YouTube	23	5
Twitter	22	6
LinkedIn	18	2
Instagram	14	4

Source: Author's own compilation

Table 3 indicates the different social media sites that the respondents currently participate in. It is clear that Email (50%) and Facebook (49%) are relatively evenly popular, with YouTube (23%) and Twitter (22%) following their popularity at a distance. Although Email seem to be the most popular social media used by these respondents (see Table 3), it is evident that the tourists spend most of their time per week on Facebook (31%) and a little less time on emails (27%). Tourists spend substantially less time in a week on Twitter (6%) and YouTube (5%). Table 4 indicates the average time spent on social media sites per week.

Table-4: Average time spent on social media sites per week

Time spent	%
0 – 1 Hour	21
2 – 3 Hours	32
4 - 5 Hours	23
More than 5 Hours	25

Source: Author's own compilation

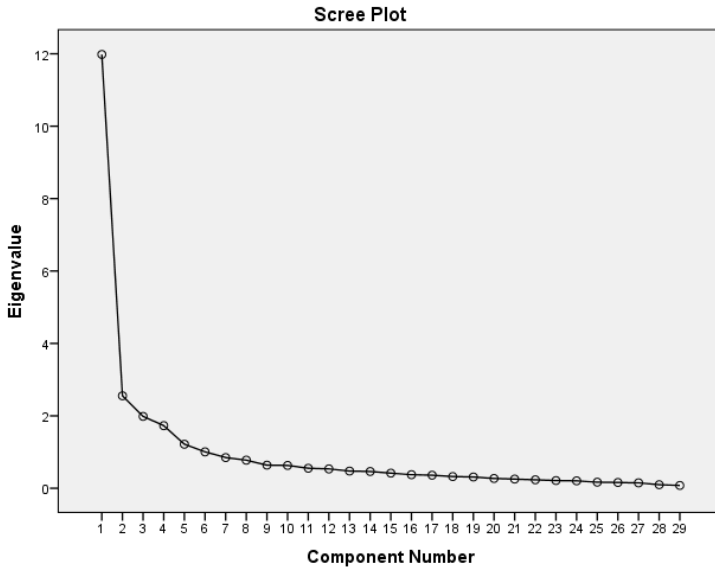
It is clear that most tourists participating in this research study spend between 2 and 3 hours per week on social media sites (32%). However, this number does not seem very significant due to a fairly small difference between the 32% and the 25% of tourists who spend more than 5 hours a week on social media and 23% spending between 4 and 5 hours a week on social media sites. It is clear that social media sites form part of respondents' every day lives, which has the potential to create ample opportunities for marketers.

The main focus of this research was to explore the motivating factors amongst these respondents (tourists) regarding the general use of social media. This was done by means of an exploratory factor analysis. For the purpose of the analysis,

the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and the Barlett test of sphericity were examined and used in order to determine the suitability of principal components analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure for the study of O.R Tambo International Airport to determine the general reasons for participation in social media was .917. In this case the measure is acceptable (Field, 2009:647). The Barlett test ($p < .00001$) was also found to be significant and therefore the reduction of data by means of the principal component would be justifiable (Pallant, 2005:172).

Six factors based on general reasons for using social media exist, on which a factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed. This method was used due to little correlations between the factors for general reasons for using social media. In order to determine the primary dimension of the respondents' general use of social media, a factor analysis was performed. Loadings of 0.45 were used for item inclusion and an eigenvalue of 1 was used for factor extraction criterion. This resulted in six factors for O.R. Tambo International Airport. The six factors represent 71% of the total variance (see figure 1). These factors were determined according to similar features. The six factors for O.R. Tambo International Airport were labelled as Content Sharing (Factor 1), Accessing Information (Factor 2), Connecting and Communicating (Factor 3), Personal Attainment (Factor 4), Ease of Accessibility (Factor 5), and Cost & Feedback (Factor 6). The eigenvalues for these factors ranged from 1.005 to 11.982.

In order to determine the reliability of the analysed data and to serve as a measure for internal consistency among the identified items, Cronbach's coefficients were examined for each factor. For the Cronbach Alpha's to be considered acceptable, the value should be above 0.7 (Field, 2009:675). The values for the first four factors were above 0.8, indicating very high levels of internal consistency and therefore reliability. Each factor was identified from categorised items based on a Likert scale in the questionnaire and the latter was used to calculate mean values for each factor in order to determine the level of importance for each factor.

Figure-1: Scree plot for factors representing the total variance

From the exploratory factor analysis, six factors were identified as motivators for the general use of social media. Table 5 provides the exploratory factor analysis for the general use of social media.

Table-5: Factor analysis for the general reason for the use of social media

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
Share information	.826					
Share content	.815					
Exchange content	.777					
Share opinion	.692					
Share experiences	.677					
Create own content	.668					
Comment on specific content	.664					
Share links to content	.649					
Share any content at any time	.631					
Get more information about unfamiliar/new environments		.782				
Get more information		.772				

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
on specific programs						
Get product tips		.762				
Learn more about organisations		.753				
Get product updates		.693				
Connect with others who have the same interests			.783			
Connect with like-minded people			.766			
Interact with others			.699			
Build/deepen relationships			.605			
Communicate with family/ friends/ colleagues			.601			
Participate in discussions			.534			
Engaging in video conferences			.463			
Can make money				.722		
Gain recognition from others				.655		
Participate in competitions				.487		
Promote a business or cause				.474		
Can easily access information					.911	
Can quickly access information					.897	
Can do it for free						.743
Share feedback about a specific organisation						.497
Cronbach's Alpha	.934	.901	.829	.814	-	-
Inter-Item Correlation Mean	.614	.643	.427	.523	-	-
Mean Values & Standard Deviation	2.96	2.77	3.09	2.54	3.18	2.77
	(±0.63)	(±0.77)	(±0.54)	(±0.75)	(±0.72)	(±0.73)

With regard to Factor 1 (mean value: 2.96), nine items were categorized due to similar characteristics, as indicated by the statistics of the analysed data. These items included their ability to create, share and exchange information and content, sharing opinions and experiences. These nine factors were categorised as Content Sharing (Factor 1). Tourists who are using social media generally do so to share different types of content when and where they want and need to. This agrees with the findings of Leung *et al.* (2013:4) and Evans (2010:16) who indicated that users engage in social media due to the fact that it enables them to create and share their own content. It is of utmost importance that tourism organisations realise that tourists can greatly contribute to the awareness of the organisation by means of online content sharing that is not necessarily generated and distributed primarily and directly by the organization. This will contribute to online word-of-mouth, which serves to be one of the most effective means of marketing.

Factor 2 yielded a mean value of 2.77 and consists of five items. These five items included the use of social media to gather information about unfamiliar/new environments and specific programmes offered by the organisation, getting tips on products, learn more about the organization, and to get specific product updates. The items were categorised as Accessing Information (Factor 2). Previous research conducted indicated that users are utilising social media by finding, creating, modifying and sharing information sourced and accessed on the internet (Pitt & Berthon, 2011:183). Thus, it is clear that the accessing of information remains motivating factor for the use of social media. Tourism organisations can use social media to make specific information available to tourists with regard to the tourism organisation, which will assist them in their decision-making process. The tourists can then access information at any time when/if they want and need to and share this content with other tourists on social media sites (see Factor 1).

Seven items were categorised to form Factor 3. The seven items for Factor 3 included connecting with others who has the same interests and like-minded people, interacting with people, communicating with family/friends/colleagues, and participating in discussions. Factor 3 was labelled Connecting & Communicating. From table 5 it is clear that connecting and communicating were identified as an important motivating factor (second-highest mean value: 3.09). Briones *et al.* (2011:38) and Parra-López *et al.* (2011:641) argued that social media allows users to organise around different motives through collaborating with each other. Thus, by ensuring that the social media site of the tourism organisation enables and empowers users to connect and communicate with other

users, it will motivate the users to interact on the social media site and by doing so developing an online community where users contribute to effective word-of-mouth marketing and promotion of the tourism organisation.

Factor 4 consisted of four items, which included the use of social media to make money, gain recognition from others, promote a business or cause, and participate in competitions. This factor was labelled Personal Attainment (Factor 4) and was identified as the least important factor (mean value 2.54). Thus, of all the factors identified, the respondents felt that attaining some personal aspects from the use of social media had the lowest impact in terms of motivating them to engage.

With regard to Factor 5 and Factor 6, only two items per factor were categorised. The items for Factor 5 included the use of social media because it allows users to easily and quickly access information were categorised as Factor 5 (Ease of Accessibility). Even though only two items were categorised per factor, it is clear that in the case of Factor 5 (Ease of Accessibility) both these items loaded very high, and this factor also yielded the highest mean value (3.18) and are therefore considered the most important motivating factor for the general use of social media. Miguens *et al.* (2008:2), Parra-López *et al.* (2011:642) and Pitt and Berthon (2011:182) stated that social media empowers users to easily access information and at the same time be able to willingly share content. This ultimately leads to influencing their decision-making process. Therefore, by ensuring that the social media site is easily accessible, the tourism organisation might indirectly influence the decisions of the users, seeing that they have a positive experience when using the social media site.

The items for Factor 6 (Cost & Feedback) included the use of social media because it is free and for the purpose of giving feedback about a specific organization. As in the case of Factor 5, only two items loaded, however the mean value (2.77) indicates that the respondents viewed cost and accessing information (Factor 2) as equally important. Thus, it is clear that respondents feel that social media sites and the content made available on these site should not only be easily accessible, but it should also be free of charge. This make sense if one considers the fact that Kirtiş and Karahan (2011:261) also indicated that users are motivated to use social media based on the fact that they can access most of the available social media sites at no cost.

4. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research article was two-fold: firstly to determine a demographic profile of social media users, and secondly to identify the main motivating factors for the general use of social media amongst tourists to South Africa. The factors include Content Sharing, Accessing Information, Connecting and Communicating, Personal Attainment, Ease of Accessibility, and Cost & Feedback, with Ease of Accessibility yielding the highest mean value. These results confirmed aspects identified with previous research conducted (Briones *et al.*, 2011:38; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:641; Miguens *et al.*, 2008:2; Pitt and Berthon, 2011:182; DeAndrea *et al.*, 2012:106; Leung *et al.*, 2013:4; Joinson, 2008:1030; Muntinga *et al.*, 2011:26). This study concludes that tourism organisations should gain awareness of the factors motivating users to engage in social media as this can enable them to reach a great share of an existing as well as potential market at little to no cost, influence their decision-making process, and by doing so indirectly influence the behaviour and attitude regarding the organisation in a positive manner. However, before tourism organisations can utilise their newly found knowledge regarding the motivating factors for the use of social media in order to develop successful social media marketing strategies, it is imperative for these organisations to develop very specific goals and objectives for the use of social media as marketing tool. Future research studies can be conducted to determine the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies based specifically on the motivating factors identified in this study to further identify challenges with regard to customised social media marketing, as well as opportunities further arising from these customised strategies.

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