



## Contribution of Social Media Platforms in Tourism Promotion

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### Abstract

This study sought to identify the role of social media platforms in tourism marketing and promotion. It was also to evaluate the extent to which social media platforms used to the purpose of tourism promotion in Libya, evaluate they're contributing to promoting tourism sites in Libya, and to evaluate their extent to which they succeeded in promoting tourism sites in Libya. The convenience sampling method was used in this study where the data was obtained from 120 respondents by using a questionnaire. The study concludes that social media platforms play a very sensitive and important role in the effectiveness of tourism marketing and promotion among all users of these media. Additionally, social media platforms have the ability to provide users with accurate and confident information about their destinations which helped them to make accurate decisions about their destinations and tourism sites that they thinking to travel to or visit. Moreover, the users of these platforms mentioned that since these platforms were available to the end-users it was characterized with their ease of use and provide the users of the ability to share and post their experiences and perspectives regarding the sites they visited. This will facilitate the opportunity for tourism destinations to share, marketing, and promoting their contents with their customers effectively and efficiently.

**Keywords** Social Media Platforms, Tourism Marketing, Tourism Promotion, Libya.

### INTRODUCTION

Social media sites in the internet today are used more frequently than the physical participation of individuals in a communication. Some of the popular social media sites are the Facebook, Twitter, Linked in, Instagram and YouTube (ISM, 2014). It is clear that the communication process over the social media platforms are very rapid and the spread of information and news is faster than any other internet channels. These platforms removed the need to interact physically to understand the actual situation to the destination or the area they wish to travel for. Through social media platforms, it's possible nowadays to Electronic-Word of mouth references. Moreover; reaching the visual impact of the destination on social media platforms is very possible. This makes the process of decision making is more flexible and easier and allows the users to be able to take the right decision regarding the best travel offer for the area or the destination they wish to visit (Mintel, 2013). Previous findings have shown that about 74% of the tourists write comments, reviews, and their experience on the platforms that promote these destinations. 98% of tourists have mentioned that the views and comments on the Trip Advisor on social media platforms are very accurate and provide the following travellers with the accurate and reliable information about the destination they wish to travel for. Other findings have shown that about 35% of travellers don't book any hotel unless they see reviews, comments, or old tourists experience on social media



platforms. Other study findings have shown that about 70% of the global tourists that the information and reviews that available on social media platforms about the destination they wish to travel for considering as among the most trusted information. Other studies have shown that about 52% of tourists have mentioned that about one-third of actual tourist cost has been saved after the revolution of social media platforms. The old advertising methods are no longer sufficient (Thomas and Joe, 2014). The development of web 2.0 and social media platforms have pushed the growth of user generated content in the past years (Riegner, 2007). Social media platforms enable users to share opinions through blogging, social networks, photo, and video sharing, etc. (Mayfield, 2008). With these tools and applications, users can search, share and contribute to a huge variety of content in a collaborative manner and can consequently influence the other web users, for that reason, one of the objectives of this dissertation is to evaluate the role of social media platforms in tourism promotion.

### **Background of the Study**

The tourism sector is based mainly on using the information and therefore, it is very important to understand all changes and updates in the technology that impact using and distribution of tourism-related information (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010). Nowadays, social media platforms able to provide tourists with different information and knowledge which can be leaving a positive or negative impression on tourists (Subramani and Rajagopalan, 2003) and other study findings have shown that customers always trust and believe in the information that comes from personal sources more than the commercial sources (Hu and Wei, 2013).

Lim (2010), stated that the tourism consumer consulted to the family members, friends and acquaintances on the networking sites when taking an independent decision on purchasing goods and services and this process led to a unique promotion for the hotel managements. Taking into account the purposes of use of internet, in the first three months of 2014, the individuals using internet, joined by 78.8 % to the social networking, followed by 74.2 % with online news, newspapers and magazines, 67.2 % with searching for information on goods and services, 58.7 % with downloading or streaming games, music, film, image, 53.9 % e-mail sending and receiving. As of 2014, the most known and used social media sites are sites as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn

### **The Research Questions**

This study seeks to generate answers to the following questions:

RQ1: What is the extent to which social media platforms used to the purpose of tourism promotion in Libya?

RQ2: How are social media platforms contributing to promoting tourism sites in Libya?

RQ3: What is the extent to which social media platforms succeeded in promoting tourism sites in Libya?

Reasons for Selecting this Study The researcher chose this topic due to the following reasons:

- ✓ The need to study this topic deeply and cover all related aspects.
- ✓ The high attention to social media platforms from all people around the world.



- ✓ The lack of studies that covered this topic at the level of Libya.
- ✓ Shed light on the tourism sites in Libya.
- ✓ The attention to modern technology tools and their effective role in tourism promotion.

### Scope of the Study

The main scopes of this study are as follow:

- ✓ This study is carried during the academic year 2018/2019.
- ✓ The study sample is Libyan university students who were conveniently selected for this purpose.
- ✓ This study was carried during the summer term 2018/2019.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media has been discovered to have a positive impact on the tourism, it provides so much benefit, which is still making advancement providing increase and expanding profit margins of diverse tourist firms. Although, many social media marketers are facing difficult with ensuring that services rendered yield profits to the business ventures. Many businesses irrespective of the fact that they use social media platforms to promote their business, many of them still run at a loss in the business. In other wards the difficult factor is quantifying to what extent social media marketing has an effect on business, be it profitable or non-profitable, understanding social media implication on the branding of the company, what measures can individual observe in order to take full advantage of the benefits social media gives. (Sterne, 2010)

Much importance and study has been given study on tourism, the reason being that as times goes major advancement have discovered in this sector, (Sterne,2010). The major importance of tourism, includes the provision of food, drink and housing a conducive surrounding far from the normal home. Decades ago, tourism had not been recognizing as a commercial sector, as this sector expands and investment were made. The tourism sector was believed to have great prospects from a cyber-optic point of view. Tourism sector has taken advantage of the impalpable nature of social media with the ability of carry out transaction. Purchasing goods such travel tickets, airtime, data, making easy to have access at any point and at any time in the world and the charges for day-day updates are relatively little. Amersdorffer et al, (2012), emphasis on the relationship between tourism and social media marketing, discussing the effect social media will have tourism as they work hand in hand. Rauch (2014) discussed the developments in tourism and proposed in the 2014 is social media and telecommunication network should be kept into consideration, watchfully observing the unique ways of maximizing the importance social media through mobile application will be enormously influential in convincing tourist to explore various area in the world. Social media has been defined by many authors with different perspectives. It was classified as the seller interpretation using such a free tool to expand or draw out there thought and design of their products, Levinson and Gibson. Solis defined social media as a technological medium where many people and many things are displayed. Rauch (2014) discusses the need to study social media and its' effect on tourism efficiently impacting on



the organizational target and if has a negative effect on effectiveness branding, a podium for descanting of media; the online equipment that enable discussions; interactions between families, earls and friends; association; the redeployment of power; a demand for taming personalities and listeners, and the tiers that bonds them together; empathetic. The democratization of evidence, converting people into producers; it is the change from a televising equipment to a distribution of news worldwide.

## **Social Media**

Influence to Shareholders Vision In this present day and time, there are about 1.5 billion individuals that daily make use of the internet, entrepreneur needs to ensure that their servers send information or daily update to various social media podiums due to the amount of people that are frequently online, also take into attention the merits and demerits of social medium marketing The most effective means to start up an online marketing strategy is mainly by establishing the objective and goals of the organization, have a good knowledge of the customer and what they would expect in terms of branding. Raphael, (2013) emphasized that by carefully calculation 10 should be put in place to measure the effectiveness of all used social media platforms, measure to increase awareness such giving incentives to consistent fans are necessary Online marketing strategies have to be attractive to accomplish greater integrity for any product, but it will also acme the intent of the brand showcasing marketing offer is unpredictable with the genuine service obtainable. Trip Advisor promotes first websites consumers go to previously critical between a comprehensive range of merchandises. Product owners must take prodigious care of various types of websites as wrong word-of-mouth may ascend, but they would also revenue it as an occasion to propose comment.

## **Social Media Platforms Role on Tourism Promotion in Libya**

As a tourist destination, Libya's marketing and advertising strategies should address key issues that arise from internal and external key factors that can influence current and future tourism levels. In a country like Libya, where the tourism sector is relatively underdeveloped, a government agency must be responsible for the development and marketing of tourism. It may also be a parastatal or statutory body outside the civil service, as in the case of a large commission or agency Mill and Morrison, (1992). The National Tourism Organization (NTO) is responsible for tourism at the national level and maintains its own external offices. It is important to remember that they are not producers. Typically, they do not sell products directly to visitors and are not directly responsible for the quality of services they offer, although they usually have implications (Middleton, 2001). The tourism industry is increasingly exposed to more competitive, dynamic and global challenges Heat, (2003). According to Levine and Ianniell (2005), in the 21st century, travel and tourism are influenced by many global forces: globalization as a phenomenon has a significant impact on the global tourism industry and international events such as terrorism and war. Despite terrorist attacks, wars and natural disasters, tourism looks like a bright future and the phenomenon of globalization will continue (Holjevac, 2003).



## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology and data analysis chapter will shed light on the employed methodology to collect, organize, and process data, and then shows results of data analysis, and method justification. Moreover, this chapter shows how the employed research methodology will help to achieve the main objectives of the research which is represented in the role of social media platforms in promoting and marketing tourism in Libya.

### **Research Approach**

In the case of carrying out any research study, there are two well-known research approaches. In line with this, the research can be deductive or inductive in its nature. In the inductive research approach, the researcher starts with an evaluation for the previous different research studies from different views. The inductive research approach is focused on the derivation of themes, models, concepts previous data through that the scholar makes from this data as well as this approach is focused on testing the theory in any study or search. On the other side, the deductive research approach focused on measuring whether the obtained data is consistent with the existed theories, and assumptions determined by the researcher Thomas, (2006). In other words, the inductive research starts addressing assumptions before making a general inference, while the deductive approach starts with making general inference before addressing the phenomena. Speaking this point of view, this is an inductive research in its nature.

### **Sampling Data**

In any research or study, the scholar needs only to select a few samples to represent the overall population to the area of the study. Carrying research on all elements in any study consider time and resource consuming. In most studies, the population is very large, thus making a study to cover all elements of the study is impossible in most cases. Therefore, this study will select a convince sample that truly represents the overall population.

### **Data Collection**

There are two well-known types of data that can be employed to achieve any study purposes namely the primary and the secondary data Sapsford & Jupp, (2006). A researcher can employ both types of data and either primary or secondary. In this research, both types of data were used

### **Secondary Data**

Collection The secondary data was the first that the researcher collected in this study, the researcher revises the previous data in the domain of the study "role of social media platforms in promoting and marketing tourism. The goal was to understand the main points that been covered in this domain, the existing studies and the different research problems and their gaps. Therefore, the results and findings from the previous studies helped the researcher to create the main context of the research. Different secondary resources were



used in this research namely students papers, published students theses, websites, articles, and online books.

### **Collecting Primary Data**

The primary data was also used in this research. Different methods can be employed to collect primary data. In this study, the researcher used the survey to collect the primary data from the targeted samples. In particular, a questionnaire was developed with close-ended questions. The main reason for choosing the survey as the primary data collection tool is due to the easy to manage it and organize it especially in the case of time and resources limitation. From this perspective, the questionnaire of the study was administrated face to face with the targeted samples. The targeted samples were 160.

### **Distribution of Demographical Data of Respondents**

The targeted samples in this study were asked to indicate their demographic data namely gender, age, educational level, nationality, and their favorite social media platform. The distribution of these data is shown in the following tables:

<b>Gender Distribution</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
Male	63	52.5
Valid female	57	47.5
total	120	100.0

<b>Nationality Distribution</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
Libyan	74	61.7
Valid other	46	38.3
Total	120	100

In regard to the nationality of the respondents, the results are shown in Table above. The Libyan respondents have formed the majority of respondents 51.7% of the total sample while others nationality formed 38.3% of the total sample.

### **Analysis of the Questions of Role of Social Media Platforms in Promoting Tourism Sites in Libya**

Do social media platforms have an effective role in promoting tourism sites in Libya?



	Percent	Frequency
Yes	60	50.0
No	38	31.7
Valid don't know	22	18.3
Total	120	100

Regarding the question, if the social media platforms have an effective role in promoting tourism sites in Libya. The answers are shown in table 3.16 above. It can be said that respondents who said “YES” in regard to this question formed 50% of the total sample, respondents who said “NO” regarding this question formed 31.7% of the total sample and respondents who said “Don't know” regarding this question formed 18.3% of the total sample.

In regard to the second question of this dimension “whether Social media platforms consider an effective tool for promoting tourism sites in Libya”. The obtained results have shown that 12 of respondents were strongly agreed with this question, 55 agreed to this question, 21 were uncertain about this question, 20 disagreed, and 12 were strongly disagreed to this question. In regard to the third question of this dimension “whether Social media platforms have a positive impact on promoting tourism sites in Libya”. The obtained results have shown that 18 33 of respondents were strongly agreed with this question, 59 agreed to this question, 7 were uncertain about this question, 18 disagreed, and 18 were strongly disagreed to this question. In regard to the fourth question of this dimension “whether Social media platforms have succeeded in promoting tourism sites in Libya”. The obtained results have shown that 6 of respondents were strongly agreed with this question, 54 agreed to this question, 7 were uncertain about this question, 42 disagreed, and 11 were strongly disagreed to this question.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion Tourism sector one of the main sectors that employed social media platforms not only for promoting and marketing tourism sites over the world but also to reach the highest possible segment of end-users and customers. In line with this, with the revolution of social media platforms nowadays, the information about tourism is not anymore limited to the companies who are practicing this job only, but social media platforms have taken a very important place in this purpose and they became very effective in this context. This means that tourist destinations lost its control over the content in the public domain in regard to the price and quality of its services or products among all other factors. From this point of view, this study established a set of factors concerning the impacts of using social media platforms in tourism marketing and promotion. The study reached the results that social media platforms play a very sensitive and important role in the effectiveness of marketing and promotion among all users of these media. Additionally, social media platforms have the ability to provide users with accurate and confident information about their destinations which helped them to make accurate decisions about their destinations and tourism sites that they thinking to travel to or visit. Moreover, the users



of these platforms mentioned that since these platforms were available to the end-users it was characterized with their ease of use and provide the users of the ability to share and post their experiences and perspectives regarding the sites they visited. The study has mentioned a set of conditions that positively contribute to enriching the value of these platforms as an effective channel for tourism promotion and marketing. Namely, are the trustworthiness, stability, confidently, and reliability of these platforms.

Social media platforms represent a very effective tool to communicate and engage with tourists. It has the ability to provide tourism companies with novel chances to respond to the tourists' needs and requirements. And this can be achieved by analysing and comments and the posts on social media platforms. Social media platforms are of significant importance in promoting and marketing tourism sites over the world. Tourism companies and businesses who are still didn't employ social media effectively and may not survive long in this rapid growth world. The efficiency role of social media platforms in promoting tourism compared with other traditional channels supported this research to point out that social media platforms are among the most effective promoting tourism tools nowadays. Social media platforms became the main reference to many tourists over the world. It can be concluded that social media platforms have an effective impact on the final decision of tourists. Social media platforms have a direct impact on the final decision of tourists.

### **Recommendations**

The tourism sites and destinations must employed social media platforms to create an effective brand image that directly touches customers' thoughts. In this context, tourism sites must work continually to improve the quality of their services and products. At the same time, they should involve the users of these platforms to create a positive relationship with them. As a result, the current and potential tourists will share and post positive comments and posts about these sites which will improve their value among all tourists. The tourism sites and destinations should create a stable connection channel with their target customers and tourists by creating a page on social media platforms where tourists and tourism destinations perceive each other equally. This will facilitate the opportunity for tourism destinations to share, marketing, and promoting their contents with their customers effectively and efficiently. Moreover, creating such a stable relationship through a social media platform will provide tourism destinations with the ability to learn more about their strengths and weaknesses, thus pay more attention to enhancements. Additionally, this will enable tourism 36 destinations to be to address the complaints that arise from tourists who visited them before; this will help to create a positive brand image on social media platforms. The destinations and tourism sites should develop effective plans to using social media platforms to communicate with the public in general, and with targeted tourists in particular.

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