


**THE IMPORTANCE OF USER-GENERATED CONTENT IN TOURISM EVENTS FOR CREATING ENGAGEMENT**

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article history:</b>  <b>Received:</b> December, 02<sup>nd</sup> 2023  <b>Accepted:</b> March, 11<sup>th</sup> 2024</p>	<p><b>Objective:</b> The objective of this study is to investigate engagement with the aim of knowing the impact that user-generated content has on it.</p>
<p><b>Keywords:</b>  Engagement;  Satisfaction;  Tourism;  User-Generated-Content.</p> 	<p><b>Theoretical Framework:</b> Laroche et al. (2012) revealed that social networking communities promote shared awareness, society's obligation, rites and traditions, trust, and customer loyalty. A year later, Brodie et al. (2013) specified the reach of consumers in online participation suggesting that consumers with a good level of engagement present greater loyalty.</p> <p><b>Method:</b> The methodology adopted for this research comprises Extensive field work was carried out by administering a questionnaire to tourists who visited the events during the holiday week. Data collection was carried out through questionnaires and social network studies.</p> <p><b>Results and Discussion:</b> The results obtained revealed the strong relationship between variables, especially between engagement and user generated contents.</p> <p><b>Research Implications:</b> The results may be applied and influence practices in the field of tourism and also in other fields.</p> <p><b>Originality/Value:</b> The study makes a specific contribution to literature, because the proposed model is innovative especially with the introduction of engagement as a mediator variable, as well as to use and compare two methodologies, questionnaires and Twitter, for the same tourism event.</p> <p>Doi: <a href="https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2024.v9i3.4546">https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2024.v9i3.4546</a></p>

**A IMPORTÂNCIA DO CONTEÚDO GERADO PELO USUÁRIO EM EVENTOS TURÍSTICOS PARA A CRIAÇÃO DE ENGAGEMENT**

**RESUMO**

**Objetivo:** O objetivo deste estudo é investigar o engajamento com o objetivo de conhecer o impacto que o conteúdo gerado pelo usuário tem sobre ele.

**Referencial Teórico:** Laroche et al. (2012) revelaram que as comunidades de redes sociais promovem a consciência partilhada, as obrigações da sociedade, os ritos e tradições, a confiança e a fidelidade do cliente. Um ano depois, Brodie et al (2013) especificaram o alcance dos consumidores na participação online sugerindo que consumidores com um bom nível de engajamento apresentam maior lealdade.

**Método:** A metodologia adotada para esta pesquisa compreende um extenso trabalho de campo realizado através da aplicação de um questionário aos turistas que visitaram os eventos durante a semana de feriados. A coleta de dados foi realizada por meio de questionários e estudos em redes sociais.

**Resultados e Discussão:** Os resultados obtidos revelaram a forte relação entre as variáveis, especialmente entre o engajamento e os conteúdos gerados pelos usuários.

**Implicações de Pesquisa:** Os resultados podem ser aplicados e influenciar práticas na área do turismo e também em outras áreas.

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**Originalidade/Valor:** O estudo traz uma contribuição específica para a literatura, pois o modelo proposto é inovador principalmente com a introdução do engajamento como variável mediadora, bem como por utilizar e comparar duas metodologias, questionários e Twitter, para um mesmo evento turístico.

**Palavras-chave:** Compromisso, Satisfação, Turismo, Conteúdo Gerado por Usuários.

## LA IMPORTANCIA DEL CONTENIDO GENERADO POR EL USUARIO EN EVENTOS TURÍSTICOS PARA CREAR COMPROMISO

### RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** El objetivo de este estudio es investigar el engagement con el objetivo de conocer el impacto que tiene en él el contenido generado por los usuarios.

**Marco Teórico:** Laroche et al. (2012) revelaron que las comunidades de redes sociales promueven la conciencia compartida, las obligaciones de la sociedad, los ritos y tradiciones, la confianza y la lealtad del cliente. Un año después, Brodie et al (2013) especificaron el alcance de los consumidores en la participación en línea, sugiriendo que los consumidores con un buen nivel de compromiso presentan una mayor lealtad.

**Método:** La metodología adoptada para esta investigación comprende un extenso trabajo de campo mediante la administración de un cuestionario a los turistas que visitaron los eventos durante la semana festiva. La recolección de datos se realizó a través de cuestionarios y estudios de redes sociales.

**Resultados y Discusión:** Los resultados obtenidos revelaron la fuerte relación entre las variables, especialmente entre el engagement y los contenidos generados por los usuarios.

**Implicaciones de la Investigación:** Los resultados pueden aplicarse e influir en las prácticas en el campo del turismo y también en otros campos.

**Originalidad/Valor:** El estudio hace un aporte específico a la literatura, debido a que el modelo propuesto es innovador especialmente por la introducción del engagement como variable mediadora, así como por utilizar y comparar dos metodologías, cuestionarios y Twitter, para un mismo evento turístico.

**Palabras clave:** Compromiso, Satisfacción, Turismo, Contenido Generado por el Usuario.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have revolutionize the state of marketing, advertising, and promotions (Hanna et al., 2011). These social platforms continue to play an increasingly influential role in the social and economic aspects of the tourism industry. In the new social media-driven business model defined by customer connectivity and interactivity (Hanna et al., 2011). Individuals use these platforms to search, find, and read about tourist locations and events, and have a higher degree of trust in the content than in conventional marketing material (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). For this reason, the amount of digital information available to individuals is ever-increasing (Khan et al., 2015). These kinds of data contain heterogeneous attributes about users from multiple venues, for the reason researchers need to filter out the data relevant in order to conduct more specialized studies (Khan et al., 2023).

Media has catapulted company and consumer contact from the traditional Web 1.0 model to the highly interactive Web 2.0 world (Hanna et al., 2011). Therefore, most marketers are using social media to develop loyal fans (68%) and gain marketplace intelligence (66%)

(Stelzner, 2014). Additionally, there has been little background study that determines the participation of consumers in the exchanges and the possible impacts of such participation on other consumer behaviours (Bigné et al., 2013)

## 2 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to analyse how it influences satisfaction and engagement in the user generated contents of a tourist destination in the social network, specially on Twitter during one event. The research comes from the previous literature and offers the added value of relating in this process the engagement and satisfaction to the user generated contents using different methodologies.

## 3 DEVELOPMENT

Opinions can be about anything, e.g. a product, a service or a company (Khan et al., 2015). Public opinion data can be used to determine public awareness, to predict outcomes of events, and to infer characteristics of human behaviors (Cody et al., 2016) thus, a social network is an ideal source for spotting the information about societal interest and general opinions (Khan et al., 2015).

The analysis of user activity then moved to the use of online social networks as a source of data information (Khan et al., 2023). Media has catapulted company and consumer contact from the traditional Web 1.0 model to the highly interactive Web 2.0 world (Hanna et al., 2011). Therefore, most marketers are using social media to develop loyal fans (68%) and gain marketplace intelligence (66%) (Stelzner, 2014). Additionally, there has been little background study that determines the participation of consumers in the exchanges and the possible impacts of such participation on other consumer behaviours (Bigné et al., 2013)

Therefore, a significant 90% of marketers said that social media is important to their businesses (Stelzner, 2014).

### 3.1 HYPOTHESIS

We propose a model based on three related variables: engagement, satisfaction and user generated contents. All from the field of tourism and events with a look from social networks.

As part of the services sector, tourism has inevitably been associated with the evolution of new technologies (Bigné et al., 2008). With this, tourists are changing the way in which travelers and tourists search, find, read and trust, throughout the tourism sector (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Just as Anderson et al. (2004) investigated the long-term effects of customer satisfaction and concluded that satisfying consumers makes recommendations to others and therefore secures future income (Kobylanski, 2012). With this it is argued that:

H1: Tourist satisfaction has a direct influence with user generated contents in Social network.

Users of social networks that are subject to information influence are expected to show a greater need to acquire information and guidance from contacts with greater knowledge, which will facilitate their engagement in the user-generated contents of social networks (Chu & Kim, 2011). Therefore, it is proposed that:

H2: Tourist Engagement has a direct influence with user generated contents in Social network.

Laroche et al. (2012) revealed that social networking communities promote shared awareness, society's obligation, rites and traditions, trust, and customer loyalty. A year later, Brodie et al. (2013) specified the reach of consumers in online participation suggesting that consumers with a good level of engagement present greater loyalty, empowerment, connection, emotional attachment, trust, and above all satisfaction. With this it is argued that:

H3: Tourist satisfaction has a direct influence with Tourist Engagement.

### 3.2 RESEARCH METHOD

Two methodologies were carried out simultaneously in a particular event of one week duration, the "Fira d'Onda" festivities in the "Valencian Community, Spain".

We conducted our studies in two independent settings (1) the Marina d'Or, which is a popular tourist destination close to Castellon, Spain, and (2) the "Fira d'Onda" festival, which is held in the town of Onda, in the Valencian Community, Spain. Both studies were conducted over one week (Easter 2016 in the case of Marina d'Or, and in the final week of October 2016 for the Fira d'Onda festival). In each case we conducted a questionnaire based survey which we analysed using structural equation models (SEM), and simultaneously collected and analysed conversations related to the event/destination which were being published on the Twitter social network. Our aim is to determine the extent to which Twitter can be used to

complement traditional public opinion surveys, ideally as a dashboard indicator accompanied by solicited feedback. (Cody et al., 2016) Regarding the survey, we collected a total of 282 valid questionnaires from visitors to Marina d'Or, and 215 at the Fira d'Onda.

The participants were presented with a set of questions related to each of the variables being analysed. Participants were asked to express their opinions by indicating their position on each question on a scale anchored at 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). In order to design these questions properly, we followed the approach of several authors who have proven the goodness of the scales used in previous researches. Concretely, for satisfaction: Echtner and Ritchie (1991); Baloglu and McCleary (1999); Bloemer and Oderkerken-Schröder (2002); Gallarza et al. (2002); Kim and Richardson (2003); Beerli and Martín (2004). For engagement: Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), Sprott et al. (2009). And for user generated contents: Zeithaml et al. (1996), Bloemer and Odekerken-Schröder (2002). During the same periods, we monitored the conversations taking place on Twitter by downloading and analysing the relevant tweets. These were identified by selecting those which included the hashtags #marinador and #firadonda, along with a number of related search terms. The datasets were converted into a network using the NodeXL Social Network Analysis software. Then, the Clauset-Newman-Moore algorithm (Clauset et al., 2004) was applied to identify different clusters of users in the network who are strongly connected (i.e., those who mention, reply to, or re-tweet each other's messages). This process highlighted the most important users, their level of influence, and how closely the users were connected to one another. We then conducted a semantic analysis on the conversations that could be identified as visitors, rather than organisations who were promoting the destination, focussing in particular on the polarity of opinion expressed in the conversation threads.

Extensive field work was carried out by administering a questionnaire to tourists who visited the event during the holiday week of the town of Onda (Castellón) from 21 to 30 October 2016. In these questions participants have to express their opinion In order to design these questions properly, we have followed several authors who have proven the goodness of the scales used in previous researches. In this methodology we have used the structural equation model (SEM).

Also during the week of festivities they were sought in the social network Twitter all the people's comments.

## 4 RESULTS OR FINDINGS

On the one hand, we have been demonstrated the strong relationship between variables, especially between engagement and user generated contents.

The analysis of the data obtained in the questionnaires was carried out using the EQS 6.3 program. From the measurement of the variables (satisfaction, engagement and user-generated contents) and the number of items used for each scale, as well as the references used, the instrument was validated by first contrasting the model with a confirmatory factor analysis structural equation.

After processing and filtering the Twitter datasets as described above, we analysed 105 tweets written by Marina d'Dor visitors, and 298 from Fira d'Onda visitors. Of those from which a polarity could be discerned, 95% of the Marina d'Dor, and 98% of the Fira d'Onda messages could be classified as positive, thus reinforcing the findings of hypotheses H1 and H2, i.e., that visitors' satisfaction and engagement did in fact result in positive feedback being posted online, at least on the Twitter platform

Moreover, comparing both methodologies we can see that the data are related.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The study makes a specific contribution to the literature - the model is innovative especially with the introduction of engagement as a mediator variable, in addition to incorporating an analysis of social media content into the model validation. Additionally, the part investigated with Twitter gives us a greater vision of the results obtained. Building a large-scale social network for millions of users with bidirectional following relationships is a time-intensive and potentially infeasible process due to the rate limits on accessing information from the Twitter (Jurgens, 2013). Although we acknowledge limitations to the current research, we believe that the current findings regarding reasons for SNS usage will prompt researchers to include such motivational types of variables in future SNS studies (Davenport et al., 2014). Although not only can tweets anticipate survey responses (Cody et al., 2016) is an important part to complement is study through surveys. The study of the role of social networks in marketing is an incipient area of investigation in tourism that must be thoroughly explored in order to understand the complex environment in which tourism firms and destinations operate (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014).

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