

Power of Social Media Usage Over Travelers' Choice of Tourist Destination

Leslie R. Jorge-Acain, DBA¹

¹ Bataan Peninsula State University, City of Balanga, Bataan, Philippines

Correspondence: Leslie R. Jorge-Acain, DBA, Bataan Peninsula State University, City of Balanga, Bataan, Philippines. Tel: 63-932-675-0254.

Received: April 19, 2022; Accepted: May 23, 2022; Published: June 30, 2022

Abstract

Digital marketing thru the use of social media has been proven to be an effective tool to reach out to a wider audience. This study was conducted to determine the same effectiveness of social media as a medium for marketing a multi-faceted and highly diverse line of products in the tourism industry by identifying the power of social media usage over the travelers' choice of tourist destinations.

With the descriptive correlational research design applied in the study, the profile of the 397 local and foreign travelers and their social media usage were identified thru a survey questionnaire distributed and retrieved from Clark International Airport Corporation (CIAC) and surrounding areas in Clark.

Data gathered was processed using SPSS and was able to determine the association among variables using the Chi-square test; that social media usage indeed influence the traveler's choice of tourist destinations and that their prior thoughts change as they read comments and review post. It has been identified that the monthly income and occupation of respondents have an association with their social media usage concerning travel and that the social media platform they utilize has an association with their social media usage about traveling.

Keywords: digital marketing, tourism, online posting, correlation, Philippines

1. Introduction

The Tourism Industry is one of the largest industries in the world, with a direct economic impact on various sectors such as transportation, accommodation, food service, entertainment, and destinations. The growth brought by the industry has been steadily beaming upwards over the years (Global Tourism Industry-Statistics & Facts, n.d.). According to the United Nations World Tourism barometer, the International tourist arrivals grew by 7% in 2017 to reach a total of 1,322 million (UNWTO, 2018). With the growing number of travelers exploring the world, it is expected that the upward movement will continue to grow.

Along with the increasing popularity of travel over the years, the industry has evolved and utilized global changes and the advent of technology and the introduction of the internet forced the tourism industry to keep up, adapt and innovate (Bearne, 2016). With the increasing improvement of technology, the internet provided tourists with quick and easy access to information that includes travel destinations, lodging, dining options, and making reservations before departure to choose places to visit (UK Essays, 2017). Access to the internet and the capability to do online reservations paved the way for travelers to plan and manage their travels; do all the arrangements by themselves without assistance from travel agents and travel agencies. This digital travel revolution offered by low-cost carriers and competitive accommodation facilities empowered travelers to consider options that would suit their preferences. Internet became a global phenomenon and continues to change the way people purchase products (Akinbode, 2016). This changing preference and the convenience brought by online purchases resulted in a diversified way of marketing tourism products through the internet.

Tourism sectors started to consider promoting their products online. In the study of Shuuring et.al, (2017) in the United States, digital advertising in 2017 surpassed spending on television advertising while globally, particular markets allocate 40% of their media advertising budget to digital marketing. The need for digital marketing is utilized in the tourism industry wherein customers have instant access to all kinds of information on the latest offers and best prices. Today digital marketing plays a critical role in the success of each business that exists in the tourism industry. It started as a mode of communication and has evolved not just as a source of additional revenue but, to develop and maintain long-term relationships with different parties in the market. Internet users

today interact not just with each other but likewise with their preferred brands; an opportunity for brands to talk directly with their users and to know them better. (Kaur, 2017)

Digital marketing uses the internet as a main promotional medium with activities that provide companies an avenue to keep in touch with every individual follower. Social media is the collection of online communication channels that allow people and companies to create share and exchange information with people and build relationships and communities online. (Singh, 2017). Social media includes popular social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr, Flickr, and Google +. LinkedIn and a variety of social networking sites allow cross-posting. (Kallas, 2018). This according to Hendricks (2013) creates an environment where users can reach several people without person-to-person communication allowing travelers to share their experiences and provide other users with the information they may need for their travel planning.

It is in this light that the researcher pursued the study to determine the influence of social media on the traveling public in the planning and selection of their travel destinations. Through the assessment of the traveler's social media usage, the researcher wishes to find out the extent to which reviews and posts affect their destination choices and decision to select places to visit. With the globalized world engulfed with technology, geographic distances have already shrunk; allowing both foreign and local tourists to visit whichever destination they please. The question no longer lingers on whether they can do it or not but on how they will be able to do it.

With the growing trend in social media usage and the continuous growth of technology and development, it will only be a matter of time before the whole populace of the world would have access to information on internet-based communications. Bridging the geographic distances among destinations virtually would be the initial driving force for the tourism industry to reach its fullest potential. Both foreign and local travelers visiting the Philippines somehow used social media platforms in the conceptualization, planning, and execution of their visit. The study wishes to determine a correlation between the profile of the travelers, their social media usage, and its relationship to their decision to visit the country and any other places they have visited.

2. Statement of the Problem

The study aims to determine the Influence of Social Media Usage over the Travelers' Choice of Tourists Destinations. The study will seek to answer the following specific questions:

1. How may the socio-demographic profile of the respondents be described in terms of:
 - 1.1. Age
 - 1.2. Sex
 - 1.3 Civil Status
 - 1.4 Highest Educational Attainment
 - 1.5. Occupation
 - 1.6. Monthly Income
2. How may the respondents' travel profile be described in terms of:
 - 2.1 Type of Traveler
 - 2.1.1. Local Tourist
 - 2.1.2. Foreign Tourist
 - 2.2. Purpose of Travel
 - 2.2.1. Business
 - 2.2.2. Leisure
 - 2.2.3. Visiting Friends and Family
3. How may the respondents' profile in their social media usage be described:
 - 3.1. Social Media Platform Utilized
 - 3.2. Social Media Device Used
 - 3.3. Time Spent Using Social Media
4. How may the respondents' social media user profile concerning travel be described in terms of:
 - 4.1. Frequency of social media exposure

4.2. Choice of Social media profile influencing selection of travel

4.3. Information sought from social media

5. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' socio-demographic profile and their social media usage?

6. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' Travel Profile and their social media usage?

7. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' travel profile and their social media usage with travel?

8. Is there a significant relationship between respondents' social media usage and their social media usage concerning travel?

9. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' socio-demographic profile and their social media usage?

10. What are the implications of the findings to the tourism industry?

3. Literature Review

Based on the United Nations World Tourism Organization forecast, international travel would reach 1.8 billion by 2030. It is by far one of the largest and fast-growing economic sectors in the world and despite several challenges, it continues to contribute to economic growth and development (UNWTO, 2017). With billions to travel and a myriad of tourist destinations to consider from the one hundred ninety-five (195) countries in the world; 54 countries in Africa, 48 in Asia, 44 in Europe, 33 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 14 in Oceania, and 2 in North America (Worldometers, n.d.). Tourists would consider available information and assistance they can exhaust to select a destination.

Despite the considerable number of countries to visit some remain to be on the top list that receives the largest tourism visitors and Gross Development Product, among the top 10 based on the travel & tourism Economy 2017: 1. United States (\$488 billion); 2. China (\$224 billion); 3. Germany (\$130.8 billion); 4. Japan (\$106.7 billion); 5. United Kingdom (\$103.7 billion); 6. France (\$89.2 billion); 7. Mexico (\$79.7 billion); 8. Italy (\$76.3 billion); 9. Spain (\$68.8 billion); 10. Brazil (\$56.3 billion).

Several countries heavily rely on foreign visitors such as Malta; Croatia; Thailand; Jamaica and Iceland; Most of these countries are relatively poor and have small populations and economies. Iceland is one of the smallest countries and is very reliant on tourism; it receives more visitors than its entire population. By the end of 2017 tourists in Iceland exceeded the national population by seven to one, with the use of its landscapes in popular television series such as the Game of Thrones and films such as the Stellar and Star Wars (Kim, 2017).

An unknown Community in India called Dharavi which is considered to be one of the biggest slums in Asia that was featured in the popular blockbuster film 2008, Slumdog Millionaire has been receiving an increasing number of visitors from 150 visitors in 2006 to more than 150,000 visitors in 2016. Though controversies and ethical issues rose for debate, the community profited and has been giving 80 percent of the profit to slum communities (Dutt D'Cunha, 2016). Film tourism is a growing trend where the film's location makes viewers remember movie settings and some travelers choose to have their holiday in a different country specifically to see places where their favorite films were shot (Sibbel, 2016).

For a destination to appear on television or on the big screen gives a destination an added popularity and exposure to tourists. With the growing competition among destinations worldwide, it is inevitable for destination managements to look for the best way to promote and advertise their products. With the advent of social media, a simple movie review or following updates on certain television series may reach several users.

4. Methodology

The study aims to determine the tourists' social media usage and their choice of travel destinations to a personal assessment of social media platforms utilized. Descriptive correlational research design is applied to profile the respondents' social media usage and determine the relationship between the profile of the respondent, their social media usage, and social media assessment with the travelers' planning and selection of tourist destinations. Correlational study in general is a quantitative method of research in which two or more quantitative variables from the same group of participants are tested to determine relationships (Waters, 2017).

Random sampling considered the most straightforward probability sampling technique was utilized in the study. This ensures that the population is likely to have the chance to be selected as part of the sample. It has been referred

to that the simple random sampling technique eliminates the possibility of biased selection of participants. (Research-methodology.net)

The study was conducted in one of the major gateways in the Philippines; Clark International Airport (CIAC) also known as *Paliparang Pandaigdigang ng Clark*. Located in Clark Special Economic Zone, Clark Field Mabalacat City, Clark Freeport Zone Mabalacat, Pampanga.

The population of the study was foreign and local travelers visiting and leaving the Philippines. The map presents the location of Clark International Airport Corporation.

The study considered foreign and local tourists visiting and leaving Clark International Airport to establish that the respondents have traveled recently. During the conduct of the survey, the researcher with the assistance of the CIAC Trainees that directly have the access to the passengers dealt a few difficulties in completing the number of foreign respondents required. To augment the number of informants considered in the study, visible foreign travelers around the CLARK Freeport Zone area were included and foreign travelers who have visited nearby destinations within the year were randomly asked to participate in the survey online.

With the proximity of the areas considered to add to the research locale and the high probability that CIAC was utilized, the sample size considered remained to be from the data of the number of tourist arrivals gathered from Clark International Airport Corporation for both foreign and local travelers. A survey Questionnaire is used in the study as the most appropriate tool to profile the respondents' socio-demographic profile, travel profile, social media usage, and social media perceptive assessment. The structure of the research instrument was designed to easily be understood by the respondents without the researcher explaining every question and allowing the respondents to independently answer without any influence from the researcher.

5. Results and Discussion

As seen in Table 1, most of the respondents are within the age range of 25-34 years old at 36.3 %. As this group is called generation Y or the "millennial" (The Telegraph, 2018), they are known to emphasize being unique and are identified to venture into culturally rich experiences and exploration of the unknown (Fromm, 2017). The majority of the respondents are likely in this age group for a similar reason to travel to experience different cultures and escape from the workload and pressures at work.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents According to Age

| Age Range | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------|-----------|---------|
| 17 or below | 7 | 1.8 % |
| 18-24 | 86 | 21.7 % |
| 25-34 | 144 | 36.3 % |
| 35-44 | 82 | 20.7 % |
| 45-54 | 44 | 11.1 % |
| 55-64 | 19 | 4.8% |
| 65 and below | 2 | .5% |
| No data provided | 13 | 3.3% |
| Total | 397 | 100% |

Presented in Table 2 is the distribution of respondents based on sex and it can be observed that there is an equal percentage of 49.6% for both sexes. This is an indication that males and females are into traveling. Since the social changes that emerge in the middle of the twentieth century, women have become economically and socially more equal to men (Tilley, 2016). This may be the possible reason for the equality of both sexes even in the capacity and capability to travel.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents According to Sex

| Sex | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------|-----------|---------|
| Male | 197 | 49.6% |
| Female | 197 | 49.6% |
| No data provided | 3 | .8% |
| Total | 397 | 100% |

Table 3 presents the distribution of respondents based on civil status. As the table reveals, a higher percentage (49.6%) of the respondents are single while married respondents are 47.9%. But it can be observed that the difference (1.7%) is very minimal and enough to reckon that the respondents despite family status can travel; though traveling as a family is considered a major problem and an inconvenience by others, it outweighs the benefits they gain from it. (Long, 2017)

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents According to Civil Status

| Civil Status | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------|-----------|---------|
| Single | 197 | 49.6% |
| Married | 190 | 47.9% |
| Widower | 8 | 2.0% |
| No data provided | 2 | .5% |
| Total | 397 | 100% |

Table 4 presents the distribution of respondents based on highest educational attainment; data shows that most of the respondents at 69.3% are college graduates. This is an indication that travelers today are well educated. Dominated by degree holders, the fun aspect of travel and learning may be one of the motivating factors influencing the educated to travel. (Roberson, 2018)

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents According to Highest Educational Attainment

| Educational Attainment | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------|
| High School | 52 | 13.1% |
| College | 275 | 69.3% |
| Masters/Doctorate Degree | 35 | 8.8% |
| Others | 3 | .8% |
| No data provided | 32 | 8.1% |
| Total | 397 | 100% |

Table 5 presents the distribution of respondents according to occupation. Data revealed that most of the respondents at 66.2% are employed. With the educated comprising most of the respondents, it is likely that given the degree, they are employable. Strengthened by the statistics from 2016 that the employment rate was higher for those with higher levels of education (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.).

Table 5. Distribution of Respondents According to Occupation

| Occupation | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------|-----------|---------|
| Employed | 263 | 66.2% |
| Self-employed | 42 | 10.6% |
| Student | 40 | 10.1% |
| Others | 16 | 4.0% |
| No data provided | 36 | 9.1% |
| Total | 397 | 100% |

Table 6 reveals the distribution of respondents according to monthly income. Data shows that 24.9% of the respondents are on the two opposite extremes on the table with the lowest end on a 20,000 and below (US\$400 and below) income and the highest end of 60,001 and above (US\$1,200.02 and above). The result may be attributed to the data presented in Table 10, where the distribution of respondents based on the type of tourists indicates that local and foreign travelers are in proximity in number. Salary and cost of living in the Philippines compared to other countries are extremely low, this, in turn, resulted in local travelers earning way less than those from other countries. One of the many reasons why Filipinos prefer to work abroad is the low salaries offered by local companies even jobs that are sought after or in demand in certain parts of the world are paid poorly, some even leave their professional jobs in the Philippines because they are paid higher overseas in most cases. (Pinoy OFW, 2018)

Table 6. Distribution of Respondents According to Monthly Income

| Monthly Income | Frequency | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| 20,000 and below (US\$400 and below) | 99 | 24.9% |
| 20,001-30,000 (US\$400.02-US\$600) | 60 | 15.1% |
| 30,001-40,000 (US\$600.02-US\$800) | 38 | 9.6% |
| 40,001-50,000 (US\$800.02-US\$1,000) | 40 | 10.1% |
| 50,001-60,000 (US\$1,000.02-US\$1,200) | 34 | 8.6% |
| 60,001 and above (US\$1,200.02 and above) | 99 | 24.9% |
| No data provided | 27 | 6.8% |
| Total | 397 | 100% |

Table 7 presents the distribution of respondents according to the type of traveler. It can be observed that local respondents with 50.6% are higher in number compared to the foreign tourists with 49.4%. The slight difference of 1.2% may mean that both local and foreign nationals can travel in and within the Philippines. This is probably brought about by the introduction of budget airfares and DIY itineraries, making travel affordable even for low-wage earners. According to industry experts, millennials have the likelihood to rather spend their money on travel due to the realization that they cannot afford to purchase and go into the housing ladder. (Buckley, 2017)

Table 7. Distribution of Respondents According to Type of Traveler

| Type of Traveler | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------|-----------|---------|
| Local Traveler | 201 | 50.6% |
| Foreign Traveler | 196 | 49.4% |
| Total | 397 | 100% |

Table 8 presents the distribution of foreign travelers based on their place of residence. It can be observed that most of the respondents are Asian 59.7 % followed by North Americans with 30.6 %. This is probably because most of the flights in CIAC are to and from Asian countries such as Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore Macau, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates. (CLARK International Airport, n.d.) North Americans on 30.6% may be attributed to the fact that CLARK Freeport Zone used to be an American Base and is visited by retirees and in the recent agreement of the Philippines to the US Military moving to five bases in the country. (Tilgham, 2016)

Table 8. Distribution of Foreign Travelers According to Place of Residence

| Continent | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------|-----------|---------|
| Asia | 117 | 59.7 |
| Europe | 8 | 4.1 |
| North America | 60 | 30.6 |
| Oceania | 11 | 5.6 |
| Total | 196 | 100.0 |

Table 9 presents the distribution of respondents based on their purpose of travel. As seen in the data, most of the respondents with 46.9 % travel for leisure, followed by 33.8% of the respondents visiting friends and relatives. Considering the age group where the respondents fall under, they are inclined to indulge in non -business-related trips and are more into exploring destinations. Though most are employed, it can be deduced that as millennials, they are well aware of the importance of well-being and quality of life and that physical satisfaction is improved by leisure-travel-based comfort as a means to life satisfaction. (Wang, 2017)

Table 9. Distribution of Respondents According to Purpose of Travel

| Purpose of Travel | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Business | 67 | 16.9 % |
| Leisure | 186 | 46.9% |
| Visiting Friends and Family | 134 | 33.8% |
| No data provided | 10 | 2.5% |
| Total | 397 | 100% |

Table 10 reveals the social media platforms used by respondents. Based on the results, the most used social media platform is Social Networking Sites which Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google + fall under, with 63.5%. Social media sites as the top choice amongst respondents may not be surprising given the fact that Facebook with more than 1.8 Billion monthly active users' remains to dominate the social landscape in the world. (Hutt, 2017) Photo Sharing Sites with 28.2 % were mostly selected as the second choice including Instagram, Flickr, Snapchat, and Pinterest. With the proliferation of mobile phone usage, according to National Geographic (n.d.) camera phones are the most widely used kind of camera in history, capable of capturing compelling images. With mobile connectivity today, it is inevitable that netizens share photos online. (National Geographic, n.d.).

The least used platform is Publishing Websites that include WordPress and Blogger. The minimal usage may be due to the composition of the respondents as the majority are Millennials and are used to reading lesser characters that are contrary to lengthy content of articles and blogs on publishing websites. Based on the Social factor; a digital marketing agency in a study they have conducted; the average attention span of any millennial is approximately 8 seconds, though they are well trained to process and digest extremely high frequency of data, information must still be condensed to keep them interested. (Larocca, 2018).

Table 10. Social Media Platforms Used by Respondents

| Social Media Platforms | | Most Used | 2nd Choice | 3rd Choice | 4th Choice | Least Used | Others | No Data Provided |
|-------------------------|----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------|------------------|
| Social Networking Sites | F | 252 | 72 | 31 | 21 | 18 | 1 | 2 |
| | % | 63.5 | 18.1 | 7.8 | 5.3 | 4.5 | 0.3 | 0.5 |
| Microblogging Sites | F | 26 | 71 | 82 | 98 | 82 | | 38 |
| | % | 6.5 | 17.9 | 20.7 | 24.7 | 20.7 | | 9.6 |
| Publishing WebSites | F | 40 | 41 | 66 | 86 | 123 | 1 | 40 |
| | % | 10.1 | 10.3 | 16.6 | 21.7 | 31 | 0.3 | 10.1 |
| Photo Sharing Sites | F | 49 | 112 | 84 | 81 | 43 | | 28 |
| | % | 12.3 | 28.2 | 21.2 | 20.4 | 10.8 | | 7.1 |
| Video Sharing Sites | F | 32 | 79 | 102 | 70 | 87 | | 27 |
| | % | 8.1 | 19.9 | 25.7 | 17.6 | 21.9 | | 6.8 |

Table 11 shows the device used by respondents in accessing social media. It can be observed that most of the respondents with 70.3% use mobile phones. This is probably since most people today own a mobile phone due to its affordability and that 80% of the uses of mobile phones are spent on social media applications. (Shemenski, 2016). Use of computer with 20.2% may be in the case of those employed and mostly utilize their work computer during working hours. Initially, the use of social media is for external communications, but eventually, companies realized its convenience and started to adopt the use of social media in communications with the employees. Nationwide Building Society (NBS) and Nokia are two of the many companies which have been using social media for external and internal communications. (Barve, 2015)

Table 11. Social Media Device Used by Respondents

| Device | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------|------------|-------------|
| Computer | 80 | 20.2% |
| Mobile Phone | 279 | 70.3% |
| Tablet | 35 | 8.85% |
| No data provided | 3 | .85% |
| Total | 397 | 100% |

Table 12 presents the number of hours spent by respondents on social media in a day. Data reveals that 36.5% of the respondents spent 1 to 3 hours on social media, this supports the statistic that an average daily usage of social media by Filipinos is 3 hours and 39 minutes while worldwide ranges from 2 to 2 hours and 25 minutes. (Statista, 2017)

Table 12. Number of Hours Spent on Social Media in a day

| Number of Hours | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|
| Less than 1 Hour | 58 | 14.6% |
| 1 to 3 Hours | 145 | 36.5% |
| More than 3 hours | 106 | 26.7% |
| More than 6 hours | 65 | 16.4% |
| Beyond 9 hours | 21 | 5.3% |
| No data provided | 2 | .5% |
| Total | 397 | 100% |

Table 13 presents the number of times the respondents use social media on travel where 24.7% of the respondents use social media once a month, 21.4% less than once a month, and 17.1 %, 2-3 times a month in finding information about travels. The data may seem very low given the time spent by respondents on social media daily. But to analyze further, most of the respondents may utilize social media more frequently for other reasons traveling on the other hand is done lesser due to time constraints; an average American worker receives 10 days- of vacation, the Philippines offer 13 days, European countries as mandated offers 20 days per year some 25 and 30 days (Roper, 2018) with a few trips per year that may be done, respondents probably use social media for travel information only when it is time for them to prepare for their vacations to step outside their busy lifestyle to unwind and to release their stress to return to work energized and rejuvenated. (USA Today, 2018)

Table 13. Frequency of Social Media Usage on Travel

| Number of Uses | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Never | 17 | 4.3% |
| Less than Once a Month | 85 | 21.4% |
| Once a Month | 98 | 24.7% |
| 2-3 Times a Month | 68 | 17.1% |
| Once a Week | 32 | 8.1% |
| 2-3 Times a Week | 38 | 9.6% |
| Daily | 58 | 14.6% |
| No data provided | 1 | .3% |
| Total | 397 | 100% |

Table 14 shows the social media platform respondents look for that may influence their selection of destinations to visit. As seen in the table, most of the respondents look for the number of comments and reviews with 50.6% of the responses setting it as their priority of choice. This is probably because comments and reviews may equate to crowdsourcing that takes place in social media that allows the exchange of virtual content. (Paniagua & Korzynski, 2017)

It is a way of obtaining needed services, ideas, or content that is solicited from the contributions of a large group of people (Marchionis, 2018). It is now the leading process of outsourcing that shapes the way companies communicate and interact with consumers.

Table 14. Social Media Profile that Influence Respondents to Select Destinations

| Social Media Profile | | Most Used | 2nd Choice | Least Choice | Others | No Data Provided |
|--------------------------------|----------|-----------|------------|--------------|--------|------------------|
| Number of Followers | F | 78 | 123 | 160 | 7 | 29 |
| | % | 19.6 | 31.0 | 40.3 | 1.8 | 7.3 |
| Number of Comments and Reviews | F | 201 | 127 | 48 | 2 | 19 |
| | % | 50.6 | 32.0 | 12.1 | 0.5 | 4.8 |
| Online Reputation | F | 106 | 117 | 150 | 2 | 22 |
| | % | 26.7 | 29.5 | 37.8 | 0.5 | 5.5 |

Table 15 shows the information respondents seek from social media according to their choice of priority. The

leading information with 26.7% of respondents opting to prioritize in searching for details is the cost of visiting the destination. This data may mean that despite the salary range the respondents fall under, being in both extremes as seen in table 9, regardless of the amount they earn, they are still conscious of the costs the trip may entail. The respondents being mostly millennials are likely to become cost conscious in traveling not just because they have limited funds but because for them traveling is not a luxury but rather essential to life. (Charles, 2018)

What came in second in priority is the Accessibility of the Place with 19.1%. This may be surprising that respondents would look for the cost of the trip first rather than learning how accessible the place is. This data may mean that the respondents are willing to go to a certain extent in reaching travel destinations. Most commonly, unexplored, underdeveloped places are considerably cheaper than those with established roads, modes of transportation, and easy to access destinations. With the abundance of low-cost travel taking tourists to unknown places for very little money is an option, not just the low-income earners are taking but most high-income earners cover more travels by merely saving every penny. (Sullivan, 2018)

Considering the reputation of the destination/ place that may include safety of the location and the environment is third on the priority list of the respondents at 12.8%. This may mean that respondents have the trust and confidence that given the right amount and access to destinations, travelers may still insist on visiting the place despite its image.

Table 15. Information Respondents Seek from Social Media

| Social Media Profile | | Most Used | 2nd Choice | 3rd Choice | 4th Choice | 5th Choice | 6th Choice | 7th Choice | Least Choice | Others | No Data Provided |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------|------------------|
| Accessibility of the place | F | 76 | 90 | 46 | 49 | 37 | 30 | 25 | 29 | 7 | 8 |
| | % | 19.1 | 22.7 | 11.6 | 12.3 | 9.3 | 7.6 | 6.3 | 7.3 | 1.8 | 2 |
| Cost of visiting the destination | F | 106 | 82 | 66 | 38 | 33 | 18 | 27 | 10 | 7 | 10 |
| | % | 26.7 | 20.7 | 16.6 | 9.6 | 8.3 | 4.5 | 6.8 | 2.5 | 1.8 | 2.5 |
| Reputation of the Destination/ Place | F | 51 | 40 | 66 | 69 | 49 | 55 | 30 | 15 | 7 | 14 |
| | % | 12.8 | 10.1 | 16.6 | 17.4 | 12.3 | 13.9 | 7.6 | 3.8 | 1.8 | 3.5 |
| Itinerary of Travel | F | 40 | 44 | 44 | 56 | 65 | 53 | 46 | 28 | 9 | 12 |
| | % | 10.1 | 11.1 | 11.1 | 14.1 | 16.4 | 13.4 | 11.6 | 7.1 | 2.3 | 3 |
| Accommodation | F | 49 | 48 | 56 | 56 | 83 | 47 | 22 | 20 | 4 | 12 |
| | % | 12.3 | 12.1 | 14.1 | 14.1 | 20.9 | 11.8 | 5.5 | 5.0 | 1.0 | 3 |
| Food and Beverage | F | 23 | 34 | 51 | 56 | 46 | 89 | 49 | 23 | 8 | 18 |
| | % | 5.8 | 8.6 | 12.8 | 14.1 | 11.6 | 22.4 | 12.3 | 5.8 | 2.0 | 4.5 |
| Quality of Photos | F | 15 | 17 | 22 | 25 | 34 | 34 | 115 | 99 | 13 | 16 |
| | % | 3.8 | 4.3 | 5.5 | 6.3 | 8.6 | 10.3 | 29.0 | 24.9 | 3 | 4 |
| Comments and Reviews | F | 36 | 29 | 28 | 26 | 29 | 39 | 51 | 133 | 10 | 16 |
| | % | 9.1 | 7.3 | 7.1 | 6.5 | 7.3 | 9.8 | 12.8 | 33.5 | 2.5 | 4 |

Table 16 reveals the social media usage of respondents as related to traveling. It can be observed that most of the responses are in agreement with the indicators. That the respondents use social media for searching for travel destinations to visit with a mean of 5.2399., before reading social media posts respondents have positive thoughts about a particular destination and agree to a limited extent with a mean of 4.129 that they have negative thoughts about a destination. The lowest mean may be attributed to the tendency of humans to deny that something bad might happen and that human nature dictates according to a research conducted at the University of Michigan that it is particularly difficult for individuals to accept that they might stumble into a great tragedy at some point. (Learning mind, 2018)

Respondents agree that they seek information that supports their initial choice of travel destination to visit, relying on information provided on social media in times of uncertainties or doubts that influence them to change their initial choice/ preference after searching.

Most of the respondents agree that they use social media/ blogs to check information about travel destinations before deciding. Mostly changing their positive thoughts about a travel destination after reading positive comments/posts on social media strengthens the data revealed in Table 18 that most of the respondents look for comments and reviews on social media profiles. This is probably the influencing factor for most of the respondents to agree that they visit travel destinations after seeing them on social media and agree that they also share comments,

reviews/blog posts/ related articles to their peers or family via social media after visiting a travel destination. A good indication that the power of word of mouth is heightened thru technology.

Table 16. Respondents' Social Media Usage concerning Travel

| Indicators | | SDA | D | DLE | ALE | A | SA | NR | Std. Deviation | Mean | Interpretation |
|--|---|-----|------|------|------|------|------|-----|----------------|--------|---------------------------|
| 1. I use Social media for searching travel destinations to visit. | f | 3 | 1 | 0 | 61 | 160 | 171 | 1 | .82094 | 5.2399 | Agree |
| | % | .8 | .3 | 0 | 15.4 | 40.3 | 43.1 | .3 | | | |
| 2. I have positive thoughts towards a particular travel destination before reading social media posts. | f | 2 | 3 | 7 | 78 | 229 | 77 | 1 | .77853 | 4.9192 | Agree |
| | % | .5 | .8 | 1.8 | 19.6 | 57.7 | 19.4 | .3 | | | |
| 3. I have negative thoughts towards a particular travel destination before reading social media posts. | f | 15 | 43 | 48 | 119 | 106 | 62 | 4 | 1.33858 | 4.1298 | Agree to a Limited extent |
| | % | 3.8 | 10.8 | 12.1 | 30.0 | 26.7 | 15.6 | 1.0 | | | |
| 4. I tend to seek information that supports my initial choice of travel destination to visit. | f | 2 | 6 | 12 | 76 | 160 | 137 | 4 | .94044 | 5.0280 | Agree |
| | % | .5 | 1.5 | 3.0 | 19.1 | 40.3 | 34.5 | 1.0 | | | |
| 5. I rely on information provided on social media when I have uncertainties/doubts in visiting a new travel destination | f | 11 | 15 | 26 | 103 | 154 | 86 | 2 | 1.17158 | 4.6000 | Agree |
| | % | 2.8 | 3.8 | 6.5 | 25.9 | 38.8 | 21.7 | .5 | | | |
| 6. I change my initial choice/preference after searching for relevant information via Social Media Sites. | f | 9 | 13 | 28 | 117 | 149 | 78 | 3 | 1.12190 | 4.5685 | Agree |
| | % | 2.3 | 3.3 | 7.1 | 29.5 | 37.5 | 19.6 | .8 | | | |
| 7. I use social media/blogs to check out more information about travel destinations before deciding. | f | 5 | 17 | 16 | 85 | 154 | 117 | 3 | 1.11228 | 4.8198 | Agree |
| | % | 1.3 | 4.3 | 4.0 | 21.4 | 38.8 | 29.5 | .8 | | | |
| 8. I change my positive thoughts about a travel destination after reading negative comments/posts on social media. | f | 6 | 9 | 28 | 139 | 139 | 73 | 3 | 1.03996 | 4.5609 | Agree |
| | % | 1.5 | 2.3 | 7.1 | 35.0 | 35.0 | 18.4 | .8 | | | |
| 9. I change my negative thoughts about a travel destination after reading positive comments/ posts on social media. | f | 4 | 7 | 28 | 124 | 157 | 76 | 1 | .99212 | 4.6439 | Agree |
| | % | 1.0 | 1.8 | 7.1 | 31.2 | 39.5 | 19.1 | .3 | | | |
| 10. I visit travel destinations after seeing it on social media. | f | 3 | 10 | 21 | 121 | 161 | 76 | 5 | .98135 | 4.6709 | Agree |
| | % | .8 | 2.5 | 5.3 | 30.5 | 40.6 | 19.1 | 1.3 | | | |
| 11. I share comments/reviews/blog posts/related articles with my peers or family via Social Media after visiting a travel destination. | f | 8 | 15 | 22 | 86 | 147 | 118 | 1 | 1.16380 | 4.7753 | Agree |
| | % | 2.0 | 3.8 | 5.5 | 21.7 | 37.0 | 29.7 | .3 | | | |
| General Average | | | | | | | | | .68398 | 4.7116 | Agree |

Table 17 reveals the association between the respondents' socio-demographic profile and their social media user profiles. It can be observed that among the respondents' social media usage profile used as indicators, Age, Occupation, Civil Status, Monthly Income, and Highest Educational Attainment, with a p-value of .000, .021, .029, .040, and .043 respectively has an association with the choice of respondents' social media device used.

With a p-value of .013 Time spent on social media has an association with the respondents' age. This may be associated with the level of exposure every generation to technology and gadget usage.

Table 17. Association Between Respondents' Social Media Profile and their Social Media Usage Profile

| Categories | Social Media Usage Profile | Chi-square | df | p-value | Decision on Ho | Interpretation |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|----|---------|----------------|----------------|
| Age | Social Media Platforms Utilized | 27.359 ^a | 24 | .288 | Accept | No association |
| | Social Media Device Used | 43.164 ^a | 12 | .000 | Reject | Association |
| | Time Spent Using Social Media | 49.737 ^a | 30 | .013 | Reject | Association |
| Sex | Social Media Platforms Utilized | 6.954 ^a | 4 | .138 | Accept | No association |
| | Social Media Device Used | 1.739 ^a | 2 | .419 | Accept | No association |
| | Time Spent Using Social Media | 10.321 ^a | 5 | .067 | Accept | No association |
| Civil Status | Social Media Platforms Utilized | 13.577 ^a | 8 | .093 | Accept | No association |
| | Social Media Device Used | 10.781 ^a | 4 | .029 | Reject | Association |
| | Time Spent Using Social Media | 16.009 ^a | 10 | .099 | Accept | No association |
| Highest Educational Attainment | Social Media Platforms Utilized | 14.881 ^a | 12 | .248 | Accept | No association |
| | Social Media Device Used | 13.010 ^a | 6 | .043 | Reject | Association |
| | Time Spent Using Social Media | 23.413 ^a | 15 | .076 | Accept | No association |
| Occupation | Social Media Platforms Utilized | 27.657 ^a | 20 | .118 | Accept | No association |
| | Social Media Device Used | 20.980 ^a | 10 | .021 | Reject | Association |
| | Time Spent Using Social Media | 22.499 ^a | 25 | .607 | Accept | No association |
| Monthly Income | Social Media Platforms Utilized | 25.244 ^a | 20 | .192 | Accept | No association |
| | Social Media Device Used | 19.051 ^a | 10 | .040 | Reject | Association |
| | Time Spent Using Social Media | 36.204 ^a | 25 | .069 | Accept | No association |

Table 18 shows the association between respondents' travel profile and their social media usage profiles. It can be observed that the social media platform used by respondents, with a p-value of .037, has an association with the type of traveler; being local or foreign, and that the social media device they utilize is associated with their purpose of travel with a p-value of .018.

The data further reveals that the purpose of travel with a p-value of .001 has an association with the social media device used by the respondents. This is probably due to access to devices when in transit or traveling to particular places.

Table 18. Association between Respondents' Travel Profile and Social Media Usage

| Categories | Social Media Usage Profile | Chi-square | df | p-value | Decision on Ho | Interpretation |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|----|---------|----------------|----------------|
| Type of Traveler | Social Media Platform Utilized | 10.203 ^a | 4 | .037 | Reject | Association |
| | Social Media Devices Used | 3.113 ^a | 2 | .211 | Accept | No association |
| | Time Spent Using Social Media | 6.014 ^a | 5 | .305 | Accept | No association |
| Purpose of Travel | Social Media Platform Utilized | 18.432 ^a | 8 | .018 | Reject | Association |
| | Social Media Devices Used | 18.348 ^a | 4 | .001 | Reject | Association |
| | Time Spent Using Social Media | 12.825 ^a | 10 | .234 | Accept | No association |

6. Conclusions

Based on the results of the study the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The respondents are predominantly millennials mostly within the age range of 25-34 years old; male and female; single and married, well educated, employed, and earn on two different extreme ends ranging from 20,000 and below (US\$400 and below) and 60,001 and above (US\$1,200.02 and above).
2. Respondents are composed of local travelers mostly from Region 3 and foreign travelers from Asia traveling for leisure and to visit friends and family.
3. The most used social media platform is the social networking sites with the mobile phone as the most used device utilized by respondents spending 1 to 3 hours on social media.
4. Respondents use social media in relation to travel once a month with consideration to the number of followers as the primary social media profile they look for with information such as the cost of visiting a particular destination, accessibility, and reputation of the destination/ place that is likely to influence their choice of travel destination.
5. Respondents' choice of travel destinations to visit is influenced by their social media usage in relation to traveling.
6. The respondents' socio-demographic profile and social media usage profile has a significant association.
7. The respondents' social media usage in relation to traveling and the type of traveler whom they fall under has a significant association while their social media usage concerning traveling showed no significant association with the purpose of their travel.
8. The respondents' social media usage in relation to travel and the social media platform they utilized is found to have an association while the social media device used and the number of hours spent have no significant association with their social media usage relating to travel.
9. The socio-demographic profile of the respondents has no significant association with social media usage in relation to travel except for monthly income and occupation.
10. The Tourism Industry may use the findings of the study as the basis for generating appropriate marketing strategies for promoting tourist destinations utilizing social media platforms. The profiles and social media usage relating to travel identified in the study may serve as a vital tool for travel suppliers to tailor fit their product offerings and promotional activities to their prospective clientele. The Department of Tourism with its regulation and administrative mandate may also use the findings of the study to assist with the needs of the travelers and of the Philippine Tourism Industry in general.

7. Recommendations

Based on the Research Results and Conclusions the following are recommended:

1. As the data revealed most of the travelers today are millennials earning more disposable income to travel and are educated enough to spend wisely. It is recommended that travel suppliers, marketers, and advertisers create more attractive and well-thought marketing strategies that would be able to attract the interest of well-rounded and smart travelers.
2. With the utilization of CIAC for domestic and international flights having local and foreign tourists to visit, it is recommended that local government units in cooperation with DOT Region 3 strengthen the promotion of local tourist destinations in the area. With the travelers' utilization of social media, they likely are to become ambassadors of unexplored and unheard new destinations through their reviews and comments. This in turn may encourage travelers to choose destinations in Region 3 to decongest other saturated popular destinations in the country.
3. With social networking sites as the most used social media platform, it is recommended that social media practitioners maximize their potential use to include contents that travelers look for such as the inclusion of the detailed cost of visiting a destination, means of accessing the place, and highlighting the destinations potential to build a good image. With the travelers' frequent use of social media thru their mobile phones spending numerous hours on it, investment in mobile phone-friendly content is recommended for a marketer, local government units, and travel suppliers to consider.
4. As identified, the cost of visiting the destination is given higher priority than the accessibility and reputation of a particular destination it is recommended that local government units and travel suppliers consider promoting affordable travel even in underdeveloped destinations as travelers see the difficulty of reaching a destination part of the adventure. Such exposure may provide the destination an opportunity to be seen and supported by the Department of Tourism once recognized to have potential.
5. Based on the gathered data, it has been concluded that the travelers' choice of tourist destination is influenced by the use of social media in relation to traveling; it is recommended that the use of social

media be a staple means of communicating with the market. That travel suppliers and local government units may consider the creation of a position in the organization specifically to act as an administrator of a webpage and or as an online front liner, adapting to the changing needs of the market that is now venturing into the virtual world.

6. Learning that socio-demographic profile and social media usage profile has a significant association, it is recommended that both profiles be considered in the creation of online content; to stay as neutral and generic as possible to cater to a more varied segmentation.
7. Since social media usage relating to travel is found to have an association with the type of travelers and social media platform utilized; it is recommended that social media practitioners and marketers be more conscious and sensitive in creating posts and reviews that may not be suited to netizens having varied demographics, traditions, and culture; the ethical soundness of every content must be secured responsively.
8. This study was able to determine the relationship or association with its variables, but it is recommended that future researchers conduct a study that would determine the level of association among each of the variables presented. A deeper understanding of this may add further assistance to the Tourism Industry stakeholders to better create a more effective tool for using social media as a platform in helping travelers decide where to go next. It is likewise recommended that future researchers include the identification of the specific industry or field of work respondents are associated with to further determine other factors this study was not able to explore. Inclusion of such may be used to tailor-fit marketing strategies that may be suited to the expertise of the netizens as future travelers.

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