

University of Massachusetts Amherst
ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst

TTRA Canada 2019 Conference

TTRA Canada

Fall 9-2019

Residents as Destination Advocates: A Netnographic Exploration of Resident-Generated Advocacy through a Facebook Travel Group

Michael Lever
University of Guelph, lever@uoguelph.ca

Dr. Statia Elliot
School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Guelph

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umass.edu/ttracanada_2019_conference



Part of the [Marketing Commons](#), and the [Tourism and Travel Commons](#)

Lever, Michael and Elliot, Dr. Statia, "Residents as Destination Advocates: A Netnographic Exploration of Resident-Generated Advocacy through a Facebook Travel Group" (2019). *TTRA Canada 2019 Conference*. 14.

Retrieved from https://scholarworks.umass.edu/ttracanada_2019_conference/14

This Student poster/Prezi/video is brought to you for free and open access by the TTRA Canada at ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in TTRA Canada 2019 Conference by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.

Residents as Destination Advocates: A Netnographic Exploration of Resident-Generated Advocacy through a Facebook Travel Group

Like many destinations, Canada began this year with an increase in international visitors (Destination Canada, 2019). An attributing factor to this growth is the phenomenon of social media and, more specifically, social networking sites (SNS) such as Facebook, which emphasize a user's relationships, as supported by their conversations, identity, reputation, and presence (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011; Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017). SNS are now deeply ingrained in our social and economic lives (Usui, Wei, & Funck, 2018; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014), even surpassing traditional marketing channels in terms of importance and effectiveness (Burgess, Sellitto, Cox, & Buultjens, 2009; O'Connor, 2008; Soboleva, Burton, Mallik, & Khan, 2017). Of the most popular forms of SNS, Facebook stands out with 1.47 billion daily active users (Facebook, 2019), more than any other type of SNS. Within Facebook are a number of themed groups for users to connect and disseminate on a variety of shared-interest topics, including tourism. Residents are an important representation of the destination within these groups, by offering a more organic image as compared to information provided by destination marketers (Uchinaka, Yoganathan, & Osburg, 2019). Since tourism can be a high-risk purchase in the sense that it cannot be returned if a tourist is unhappy with it, there is a value to better understanding the determinants of SNS-based advocacy within a tourism lens. To date, few studies have explored the nuances of resident-generated advocacy through Facebook specifically.

The aim is to better understand SNS user's motivations to advocate for their place of residence as a tourist destination using the emergent methodology of netnography. Netnography adapts ethnographic research within an online setting to better understand online cultures through users' content (Mkono & Tribe, 2017) – in this case, travel-related pages within the Facebook platform. For this research, I will look at the Next Departure – Canada's Travel Community Facebook group, which is comprised of 13,500 travel-minded individuals. The membership in this group is comprised largely of Canadian residents, many of whom act as unofficial advocates for Canada to other potential travelers. Advocacy goes beyond word-of-mouth (WOM) by incorporating both intentions and behaviours, and is measured by one's social and physical advocacy, recommending behaviours, approval of others in visiting Canada, and positive WOM (Ghosh, 2018). Postings will be evaluated to identify indicators of advocacy behaviour among these residents, which include their sharing of photos/videos/GIFs, asking for recommendations, arranging get togethers with other travelers, posting about a particular feeling or activity, tagging friends, checking in to locations, starting a group poll, and tagging local events. Prior to engaging with any online content, this qualitative approach will ensure a strict adherence to the recommended ethical guidelines as outlined by the creator of this methodology (Kozinets, 2002). The data analysis process will involve coding the online data using extensive field notes as related to a user's advocacy behaviours until the point of data saturation (Mkono & Tribe, 2017).

This research will advance knowledge by offering new insights into destination advocacy behaviour through SNS. In exploring advocacy, there is a great opportunity to build upon our current understanding of the effectiveness of resident-generated content in driving interest to a destination through digital technologies. In practice, this research will offer destination marketers with a better perspective of their shifting role from information provider to facilitator in today's largely consumer-to-consumer-driven world.

References:

- Ben-Shaul, M., & Reichel, A. (2018). Motives, modes of participation, and loyalty intentions of Facebook tourism brand page consumers. *Journal of Travel Research*, 57(4), 453-471.
- Bhattacharya, S., & Dutta, A. (2016). An empirical study on the factors affecting WOM communication for branding a tourist destination. *Tourismos*, 11(1).
- Burgess, S., Sellitto, C., Cox, C., & Bultjens, J. (2009, June). User-generated content (UGC) in tourism: Benefits and concerns of online consumers. *European Conference on Information Systems*, 417-429.
- Destination Canada. (2019). Tourism Snapshot. Retrieved from https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/863-Tourism%20Snapshot%20-%20February%202019/TourismSnapshot-Feb2019_EN.pdf
- Facebook. (2019). Facebook Newsroom: Our Mission. Retrieved from <https://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/>
- Ghosh, T. (2018). Predicting hotel book intention: The influential role of helpfulness and advocacy of online reviews. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 27(3), 299-322.
- Gössling, S., & Stavrinidi, I. (2016). Social networking, mobilities, and the rise of liquid identities. *Mobilities*, 11(5), 723-743.
- Han, H., Kim, Y., & Kim, E.-K. (2011). Cognitive, affective, conative, and action loyalty: Testing the impact of inertia. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(4), 1008-1019.
- Keller, E. (2007). Unleashing the power of word of mouth: Creating brand advocacy to drive growth. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 47(4), 448-452.
- Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P., & Silvestre, B. S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business Horizons*, 54(3), 241-251.
- Kim, J., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2017). Sharing tourism experiences: The posttrip experience. *Journal of Travel Research*, 56(1), 28-40.
- Kozinets, R. V. (2002). The field behind the screen: Using netnography for marketing research in online communities. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 39(1), 61-72.
- Kwon, E., Ratneshwar, S., & Thorson, E. (2017). Consumers' Social Media Advocacy Behaviors Regarding Luxury Brands: An Explanatory Framework. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 17(1), 13-27.
- Mkono, M., & Tribe, J. (2017). Beyond Reviewing: Uncovering the Multiple Roles of Tourism Social Media Users. *Journal of Travel Research*, 56(3), 287-298.
- O'Connor, P. (2008). User-generated content and travel: A case study on Tripadvisor.com. *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism*, 47-58.
- Simpson, P. M., & Siguaw, J. A. (2008). Destination word of mouth: The role of traveler type, residents, and identity salience. *Journal of Travel Research*, 47(2), 167-182.
- Soboleva, A., Burton, S., Mallik, G., & Khan, A. (2017). 'Retweet for a Chance to...': an analysis of what triggers consumers to engage in seeded eWOM on Twitter. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 33(13-14), 1120-1148.
- Uchinaka, S., Yoganathan, V., & Osburg, V. S. (2019). Classifying residents' roles as online place-ambassadors. *Tourism Management*, 71, 137-150.

- Usui, R., Wei, X. Y., & Funck, C. (2018). The power of social media in regional tourism development: a case study from Okunoshima Island in Hiroshima, Japan. *Current Issues in Tourism, 21*(18), 2060-2064.
- Wallace, E., Buil, I., & De Chernatony, L. (2012). Facebook 'friendship' and brand advocacy. *Journal of Brand Management, 20*(2), 128-146.
- Zeng, B., & Gerritsen, R. (2014). What do we know about social media in tourism? A review. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 10*, 27-36.