








Chapter 9

Social Media Usage Among Wine Tourism DMOs

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Abstract. Social media is an important tool for tourism destination promotion. The usage and the contents published on these platforms have an important role in visitors' decision-making process. Information and communication technologies are changing DMOs' markets and communication paradigm, since they allow the interaction between these organizations, visitors, and stakeholders. Therefore, social media are increasing their relevance on DMOs' marketing strategies. This purpose of this study is to analyze comparatively social media platforms' usage by six wine tourism DMOs. The results were provided by the analysis of secondary data available on these platforms and DMOs posts on the four most popular social media platforms to tourism industry: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. Results indicate that DMOs use their official accounts on these platforms on different ways. This study also reveals that Facebook is more interactive than other platforms, and YouTube achieves less engagement levels.

9.1 Introduction

Tourism sector is facing a technological revolution. The number of tourists booking online travels, accommodation, and other tourism products and services is increasing and even for those who don't buy online, at least they use Internet to search information about destination [1, 2]. Social media platforms allow to share information through the use of texts, images [3], but also short duration microfilms for tourism destinations promotion [4]. These types of contents may be important to potential visitors who are planning their travel, but also for visitors who already are in the destination and these information may improve their tourism experience [3].

Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) have as mission the representation of their destinations at the marketplace in order to attract more tourists [2]. According to

[5], DMOs have several responsibilities concerning the development of the destination. The roles more mentioned for these organizations are the marketing strategies formulation, which includes promotion activities, and the communication between tourism stakeholders from the destination. To DMOs activities, social media platforms may act as a powerful and low-cost way to overcome this challenge [6]. For [2], the use of technologies by DMOs can be an opportunity and also another challenge.

Even though there is a growing interest in social media usage in tourism industry and the existence of empirical evidences that support the strategical importance of these platforms to achieve a better competitiveness of this industry, there are few exploratory researches that are focused on the social media platforms usage by DMOs as was indicated by [6] and [7]. Although this research is also motivated by the future investigation recommendation of [8], which is to analyze the social media use by DMOs of emerging destinations.

This research has the purpose to analyze comparatively the usage of four social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube) by six DMOs that promote small wine tourism destinations. The present study aims to contribute to scientific discussion that are concerned about the use of different social media platforms to tourism destinations' promotion. Besides, it is also expected to yield some good practices to destination marketers who are interested in social media marketing.

The present article is divided into five sections. In this section, the social media thematic on tourism was introduced. In the following section, relevant literature toward this mentioned theme will be exposed. The third section will describe the methodology used to accomplish this study objective. In the fourth section, the results will be presented. Lastly, in the fifth section, the principal conclusions and contributions of this research, and the limitations and suggestions for future studies will be enunciated.

9.2 Literature Review

Social media marketing should be part of a more holistic strategy. According to [9], social media marketing has as objectives: improving sales, increase brand awareness, improve brand image and brand awareness, reduce marketing costs, and promote user interactivity on social media platforms. Social media platforms also provide an opportunity for organizations to try to understand how their consumers view their actions and organization.

Tourism is a very competitive industry, and destinations compete to attract more visitors. Internet has changed the way that potential visitors access information, the way they plan and book tourism products, and allows them to share contents about the destination [10]. Previous researches have revealed that digital channels have a significant impact in tourism sector since tourists use them to have information about the destinations [11]. For that reason, Internet presents itself as a growing promotional channel for tourism industry because it is cheaper and more efficient than traditional marketing tools [6].

Tourism industry is very intensive in information [12]. This explains that tourists' decision-making process is highly influenced by the information expressed on social media comments or reviews made by other consumers [13, 14]. Therefore, social media

plays a vital role in tourists' decision-making [12]. The use of social media platforms by tourists is changing this sector and the way how tourists research and find information, because these platforms provide the collaborative production of information about tourism destinations and organizations [15].

Social media can be extremely useful for tourism stakeholders, since they represent an information source, which allow them to understand tourists' preferences and how to respond [16].

Therefore, DMOs should engage with their tourists, which means that DMOs should encourage them to share images, videos, and other contents about the destination in order to influence other potential tourists [17].

Some studies indicate that DMOS are not using the total potential of social media, since most of DMOs are only using these platforms as promotional tool and not using them to mitigate potential customer services problems or as a co-creation place, which will allow them to gain competitiveness [6, 8, 18].

9.3 Methodology

The previous research was focused on the social media use by national DMOs. Nevertheless, this research will be dedicated to emerging wine tourism destinations. In order to have similar destinations, it was selected from Forbes (2018) list of the ten most beautiful wine tourism destinations: Douro Valley (Portugal), Franschhoek (South Africa), Saint Emilion (France), Valle de Guadalupe (Mexico), Barossa Valley (Australia), Piedmont (Italy), Napa Valley, (USA), Hawke's Bay (New Zealand), Moselle Valley (Germany), and La Rioja (Spain) [19].

From these ten wine tourism destinations, we selected six to use as sample. The information about the DMOs responsible for these six wine tourism destinations are expressed in Table 9.1. Almost all DMOs' websites are focused on a wine tourism destination, with exception of Douro Valley. This DMO is responsible for the promotion of this wine tourism destination but also for a more extensive region denominated Porto and North of Portugal. Besides, two of these six wine tourism destinations, explicitly Douro and Saint Emilion are classified as world heritage by UNESCO [20].

Data collection was done in October 2018 on social media official pages of these six DMOs in four social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter. These social media platforms were chosen for two reasons: these social media were considered important for tourism sector [12], [17], and all the selected DMOs have an official page in these social media, which allows a better comparison. Having into consideration that social media platforms have several publications by day, this research limits the period of observations to 3 months (July to September 2018).

9.4 Results

Results are presented in tables below and they are discussed in order to afford a comparative analysis.

This research follows the recommendation of [8] to describe the audience of each DMO for each social media platform. According to these authors, the social media

Table 9.1. Destinations, DMOs, and social media platforms used as sample

Wine Tourism Destinations	DMOs	Facebook page	Instagram username	Twitter username	YouTube page
Douro Valley	Turismo do Porto e Norte de Portugal	facebook.com/TurismoPortoNortePortugal	@turismo_portoenorte	@PortoeNortePT	youtube.com/channel/UCdBiRW6kEaFKpIpd4lXW5IA
La Rioja	La Rioja Turismo	facebook.com/turismodelarioja	@lariojaturismo	@lariojaturismo	youtube.com/user/Tierracomombredvino
Saint Emilion	Saint Emilion Tourism	facebook.com/saintemilionsa	@mysaintemilion	@saint_emilion	youtube.com/channel/UCZrUJiNm4xg_gItranZY1_w
Napa Valley	Visit Napa Valley	facebook.com/VisitNapaValley	@visitnapavalley	@VisitNapaValley	youtube.com/user/VisitNapaValley
Franschhoek	Franschhoek Wine Valley	facebook.com/Franschhoekwinevalley	@franschhoek_sa	@Franschhoek_SA	youtube.com/channel/UCcy6piUBEN8ipiYjmlReFng
Barossa Valley	Tourism Barossa	facebook.com/BarossaWines/	@barossawines	@BarossaWineAu	youtube.com/user/barossadirt

platform audience can be measured by the number of followers on Twitter and Instagram, the number of likes on the Facebook page, and by the total number of views on YouTube. This information is summarized in Table 9.2.

Table 9.2. Social media audience for each DMO

	Facebook page likes	Instagram followers	Twitter followers	YouTube views
Douro Valley	151,644	5,325	5,336	54,262
La Rioja	32,917	8,146	47,000	2,123,721
Saint Emilion	11,981	4,195	2,256	25,936
Napa Valley	147,274	76,500	28,700	1,791,685
Franschhoek	18,930	21,900	9,760	31,235
Barossa Valley	6,751	15,500	18,800	27,846
Total	369,497	131,566	111,852	4,054,685

Considering the total audience of the six DMOs, YouTube is the social media platform that has more audience, followed by Facebook, Instagram and, lastly, Twitter. However, it is important to have into consideration that one user may view a video several times, but users cannot follow or like a same page twice. As positive indicators related with the audience size: La Rioja DMO has the highest number of total views in YouTube, and more followers on Twitter; Douro Valley DMO has the most likes on their Facebook official page; Napa Valley DMO has the highest number of followers on Instagram. In the negative side, Saint Emilion is the DMO with less audience in Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter; in Facebook, Barossa Valley DMO has lesser audience.

In Table 9.3, the date on which each DMO has created its official account in the four social media platforms is reported. This information is important to identify the early adopters for all the four platforms.

Table 9.3. Membership dates of the DMOs for each social media platform

	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	YouTube
Douro Valley	Jan./2010	Mar./2015	Dec./11	Apr./2012
La Rioja	Sept./2010	Apr./2013	Dec./09	Oct./2008
Saint Emilion	Aug./2011	Sept./2013	Feb./10	Feb./2013
Napa Valley	Jan./2010	Aug./2012	Mar./10	Apr./2012
Franschhoek	Nov./09	May/2013	Oct./09	Feb./2010
Barossa Valley	2008	Jul./2012	Apr./10	Aug./2010

Barossa Valley DMO emerges as early adopter on Facebook and Instagram. La Rioja DMO was the first to have an official account on YouTube. On Twitter, Franschoek DMO was the earliest to develop an account on this social media platform. Saint Emilion was the last DMO to join Facebook and YouTube and Douro Valley DMO was the last to create an official account on Instagram and Twitter.

In the table below (Table 9.4) are presented the total number of posts that each DMO has published in Instagram and Twitter, and the total number of videos uploaded in YouTube on their official account. In this table, no data concerning to Facebook are expressed, since this social media platform does not make this information available to the users who view the profiles, unlike with the other three social media platforms (Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter).

Table 9.4. Total number of posts for each DMO

	Instagram	Twitter	YouTube	Total number of posts for each DMO
Douro Valley	292	15,400	74	15,766
La Rioja	355	16,800	107	17,262
Saint Emilion	696	2,679	52	3,427
Napa Valley	1,711	18,500	23	20,234
Franschoek	1,210	23,700	5	24,915
Barossa Valley	1,494	8,570	84	10,148
Total number of posts by social media platform	5,758	85,649	345	91,752

Twitter is the social media platform where DMOs post more, followed by Instagram and, last of all, YouTube. One of the reasons for YouTube to appear as the social media with the least posts is because this platform is orientated toward uploading videos, and this type of content consumes more time and money than others types of contents used on the others platforms like Twitter or Instagram. Besides, different DMOs lead total posts for each social media platform. In Instagram, Napa Valley is the DMO with the highest number of posts. In Twitter, it is Franschoek DMO who posts more. In YouTube, it is La Rioja DMO who uploads more videos.

In the following table (Table 9.5), the data collected about DMOs' activity on the four social media platforms is presented. As indicators of this activity, the number of posts made in the 3 months selected and the interactivity generated by these posts were used. The number of posts made during the 3 months was considered every post made or shared by the DMOs. Besides, a number of interactions from these posts, i.e., every likes, comments, shares, and views (in the case of videos) were considered. For social media platform, Twitter, the data was not collected for the number of interactions.

Similarly to the total number of posts, also in the period analyzed, YouTube was the social media platform less used to make publications. In fact, only La Rioja and Saint Emilion DMOs have published videos in this platform during these 3 months. Furthermore, during this period, La Rioja DMO was the one that made more posts on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. Napa Valley DMO was the one who posted more on

Table 9.5. Social media activity

	Facebook		Instagram		Twitter		YouTube	
	Posts in 3 months	Interactions	Posts in 3 months	Interactions	Posts in 3 months	Interactions	Posts in 3 months	Interactions
Douro Valley	12	15,827	0	0	8	0	0	0
La Rioja	291	294,309	28	17,479	>732	11	340,738	
Saint Emilion	60	18,373	57	11,270	128	4	622	
Napa Valley	146	8,076,312	119	106,168	363	0	0	
Franschhoek	284	211,679	96	27,629	557	0	0	
Barossa Valley	75	9,466	88	14,767	0	0	0	

Instagram. It is important to note that although Napa Valley is not the one who makes the most posts, this DMO is the one who achieved more interactivity in Facebook and Instagram. This may indicate that this DMO strategy focuses more on the quality than the quantity of their posts and seems to have success because it has more user interaction than other DMOs with more posts.

9.5 Final Considerations

Results indicate that wine tourism DMOs are using social media platforms to promote their destinations. With regard to Facebook data, there are several facts that justify to be highlighted. The first DMO to join this social network was Barossa Valley, but is the one that has the least followers. Besides, Napa Valley DMO has less followers than Douro Valley DMO, but have converted more of these followers into interactions. This best result may be explained by the fact that the Napa Valley DMO performs a larger number of posts compared to Douro Valley DMO.

In Instagram, all DMOs have lower number of followers than in the previous social media platform, what can be explained by this social network be more recent. Napa Valley DMO has the highest number of followers, more posts in the periods analyzed, as well as more interactions. On opposing, Douro Valley DMO was the least active in Instagram, since it did not perform any post in the 3 months analyzed and published fewer posts when we look all posts.

In YouTube, the first DMO to create an official page on this social network was La Rioja, and is also the one that has published more videos in total and in the period analyzed and who has more visualizations. In the opposite, Saint Emilion DMO is the last to join the YouTube. However, this last DMO and La Rioja DMO were the only ones that uploaded videos during the analyzed period. Although, Napa Valley DMO has far more views than most DMOs with more videos, which may indicate that despite publishing fewer videos, they are often viewed.

Concerning to Twitter, the first DMOs to create a page on this social media were Franschhoek and La Rioja. The last DMO has the better performance, which means that has more publications in the total and in the analyzed period and has a higher number of followers. Further, during the analyzed period, Barossa Valley DMO did not post any publication, and, similarly, Douro Valley DMO only performed eight posts. This seems to indicate a disinvestment in this particular social media by these DMOs. On other hand, Saint Emilion DMO has a lower total number of posts and a lower number of followers than these two DMOs, but performed more posts in the analyzed period, which may indicate that they are investing more on this social media platform.

This research contributes to the discussion about the social media usage by DMOs, with the innovation of being applied to wine tourism destinations. For these organizations, the results obtained leave some information to allow them to improve their effective communication using the most relevant social media platforms associated to tourism promotion.

The present research has several limitations that should be outpaced in future research. The first limitation is the sample used, since it should have a larger size, what could be suggested for future research. Second, this study utilizes only secondary data

available on the social media platforms. Hence, future studies may use primary data, such as interviews with DMOs' marketers may be interesting to have a better understanding of social media marketing strategies that can explain the data collected. Third, the present research only analyzes the social media platforms. Thus, it is proposed that future research analyzes other digital marketing tools, such as websites, that will allow gaining a better understanding of DMOs' marketing strategies.

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