

## What is the Motivation of Travellers? An investigation of quotes on TripAdvisor's facebook page

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### ABSTRACT

Travel motivation and social media are two concepts widely gained much attention in tourism literature. This paper aims at investigating motivation of the travellers regarding their quotes shared on social media. Content analysis method was applied to understand TripAdvisor travellers' motivation. Krippendorff's Alpha as a reliability analysis was calculated as 0.87. The findings of this study suggest that novelty/adventure and knowledge/intellectual are two major travel motivations among TripAdvisor travellers. Five of seven travel motivation factors are push factors in the current study. However, travel motivations for females are found to be entertainment, prestige and social interaction while males' travel motivation is to escape and rest. The findings of the current study are important for both tourism managers and academicians to better understand travel motivation of people on social media. It is expected that the results of this study help tourism businesses and destinations to understand travellers' opinions and enhance their awareness of customer needs. Thus, the current study contributes to an understanding of the factors that influence peoples' travel motivation. Further researches can employ the same method via different social media platforms. In addition, they can be employed for larger sample size and tourism and hospitality consumer decision-making contexts.

**Keywords:** Travel motivations; Social media; TripAdvisor; Facebook.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Digital travel sales worldwide have experienced rapid growth in recent years. The global online travel market surpassed 765 billion US dollars in 2017 and is forecasted to reach near \$2 trillion by the end of 2026 (Zionmarketresearch, 2018). Thanks to the digital world, representing various forms of online travel review websites and social media websites, consumers are allowed to travel more with travel-related information easily (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). However, today, one of the most effective digital media platforms is social media since it lets users share the information as texts, photos and videos. Unsurprisingly, there are 3.2 billion active social media users around the world in 2018 (WeAreSocial, 2018).

Travellers share their travel-related experiences, reviews, photos and videos on social media. This sharing process helps other travellers to be informed (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Informational shares on social media have a positive effect on improving hotels' reputation and perception of quality compared with an emotional appeal (Cervellon & Galipienzo, 2015). As a digital tool of the day, social media affects the purchasing behaviours of travellers while planning their travels (Leite & Azevedo, 2017). European Parliamentary Research Service' study (2015) found that 82% of respondents read consumer reviews before shopping and 77% of travellers rely on these positive reviews when making travel plans (Trustpilot, 2018).

One of the critical issues in the decision-making process is to understand travellers' motivations (Frochot & Morrison, 2000). According to a study (Gretzel, 2007), the main motivation to write online reviews among respondents who post/write online reviews is to help others by sharing their own positive experiences.

Travel motivation and social media are two concepts widely gained much attention in tourism literature. There are numerous papers about travel motivation including push and pull motivations (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Baloglu & Uysal, 1996), the role of

motivation in visitor satisfaction (Devesa et al., 2010), travel motivation and demotivation within a politically unstable setting (Farmaki et al., 2019), explaining the variances of the motivations (Jang & Wu, 2006). In addition, there are many types of research about social media in tourism (Leung et al., 2013; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014; Sotiriadis, 2017). Besides, there are little research about both motivations and social media. Also, they are all about motivation to use social media and motivation to share the online travel-related contents and information on it (Huang et al., 2010; Murphy et al., 2010; Enter & Michopoulou, 2013; Leung & Bai, 2013; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Schuckert et al., 2015).

The goal of this research is to investigate the motivation of travellers with quotes on social media. First, the quotes of the travellers on the Facebook page of TripAdvisor are collected. Then, the quotes searched by counting the words with gender and type of photos. Not only travel motivation but also social media are well-researched in tourism. However, this research contributes for a better understanding of the motivation of tourists with investigating the quotes of travellers which are shared on social media by them. Yet, no attention has been paid to investigating the quotes of travellers on Facebook regarding their travel motivation shares.

The current paper is organized by the following steps: First, travel motivation and social media in tourism are explained. Second, the data collection and analysis methods are explained and justified. Then, findings are presented and discussed. Finally, the paper concludes with limitations and recommendation for further research and practical implications of the study.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

There are many factors which are likely to affect the motivations. In contrast, these motivations can be barriers for travellers (Roby, 2014). Undetermined motivations of the travellers have become even more vital over the last two decades because of competitive tourism market (Blichfeldt & Kessler, 2009). However, social media has radically changed the tourism industry both for travellers and businesses. So, it becomes clear that understanding travel motivation and social media use in tourism is vital for increasing competitiveness of destinations and businesses. In this part of the study, the topics of travel motivation and social media in tourism literature are studied.

## 2.1. Travel motivation

The fundamental determinant of travellers' behaviour is motivation. Many travel motivation studies base on Maslow's five-stage hierarchy of needs theory (1943). These needs are ordered as physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. However, travel motivation is vital to understand travellers' behaviour and decision-making process (Farmaki et al., 2019) and positively affects tourists' revisit intention (Huang & Hsu, 2009). Travel motivation helps tourism firms predict travellers' needs and expectations (Kluin & Lehto, 2012), and understand their target group. Hence, travel motivation may be differentiated by travellers' age, gender and nationality (Baloglu, 1997; Kozak, 2002; Jönsson & Devonish, 2008) as target groups. Decision-making process is likely to be more complex for some travellers (Marques et al., 2018). This complexity which is difficult for both consumer and businesses may be reduced by understanding travellers' motivation. Tourism business could better satisfy travellers' wants and needs regarding considering their motivational factors (You et al., 2000).

Travel motivations are generally studied on two concepts as push and pull factors (Dann, 1981; Oh et al., 1995; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). For destinations and tourism businesses, it is crucial to understand the push and pull factors of travel motivations to create an effective destination development and marketing activities (Oh et al., 1995; Jang & Cai, 2002). Therefore, travel motivations regarding push and pull factors are an important tourist assessment for a destination (Correia et al., 2013).

Pull factor resources are almost tangible meanwhile push factor resources are intangible. Various research about the push and pull factors have been studied in the light of understanding travel motivation. The study of Wong et al. (2017) about Malaysia's second home retirement tourism program revealed five push and seven pull motivation factors. They underlie the push factors as prior overseas experiences, overseas retirement dream, unfavourable political and security, escapism, health improvement and also pull factors as amenities and facilities, leisure lifestyle, being active, cost and economics, conducive environment, people and communication, socialization. Jang & Cai (2002) found six push factors and five pull factors associated with British outbound travellers. The push factors are a novel experience, escape, knowledge seeking, fun & excitement, rest & relaxation, family & friend togetherness and pull factors are a natural & historic environment, cleanliness & safety, easy-to-access & economical deal, outdoor activities, sunny & exotic atmosphere.

Oh et al. (1995) studied these two factors for overseas pleasure travel for an Australian sample. Their study revealed that the pull items were historical/cultural, sports/activity, safety/upscale, nature/outdoor, inexpensive/budget and pull items were knowledge/intellectual, kinship/social interaction, novelty/adventure, entertainment/prestige, sports, escape/rest. These push and pull factors are relevant in the current paper, while these factors provide a framework for identifying travellers' motivations on social media.

## **2.2. Social media and tourism**

Travellers' opinions are very important to understand why they travel. Social media creates opportunities for this level of travel services (Buhalis & Foerste, 2015), and for travellers to share their experiences (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Social media websites are cheap tools to get rich consumer feedbacks for tourism destinations and businesses (Pan et al., 2007). This platform creates new media and lets users share travel-related information (Li & Wang, 2011; Leung et al., 2013). Social media can be implied as information sources in this digital age. Tourism businesses use social media to increase engagement among consumers (Harrigan et al., 2017).

Facebook as a communication tool has the most active user among social media websites in the world. There are 2.1 billion active Facebook users around the world in 2018 (WeAreSocial, 2018). Facebook wall posts help tourism businesses or destinations to create user engagement and information distribution (Leung et al., 2013).

Online consumer review websites such as TripAdvisor are unique and important travel information sources (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Especially, positive online reviews from other travellers affect the other potential consumer decisions and this situation gains an online reputation to the travel firms (Banerjee et al., 2017). Travellers create unlimited information about their travel to help other travellers (Amaro et al., 2016) online review websites. Thanks to online review sites, people have the opportunity to share their positive or negative opinions. These reviews are important for potential consumers while the decision-making process (Sparks & Browning, 2011). According to Agag & El-Masry (2017), trust affects consumers' attitude, perceived risk, and intention to buy travel online. Today, the most effective reputation tool is the online reviews shared by other travellers (Cheng et al., 2019). Zhao et al. (2019), point out that travellers' participation in reviews positively affects their overall satisfaction.

It is crucial that tourism businesses promote their social media addresses to increase

their online reputation. According to Sohail & Al-Jabri (2017), travellers use social media if they know about this platform. Wattanacharoensil & Schuckert (2015) reveal that global airports should use social media to engage users and develop a more positive image. This image for tourism businesses and the destination is crucial for increasing their competitiveness (Cardoso et al., 2019). Thanks to posts such as texts, photos and videos on social media, it is possible to increase online reputation for the destinations and tourism businesses. However, photos and videos as visual posts strongly reflect travellers' interest regarding their travel activities (Stepchenkova & Zhan, 2013). Thus, in the competitive environment, destinations and tourism businesses could take advantages by following posts of their target group. The photos which are uploaded by travellers provide their recommendation, opinion and motivation. The photos that especially contain a theme on social media (Deng & Li, 2018) are effective online tools to promote tourism destinations and tourism businesses (Li et al., 2018). Leung et al. (2017) reveal that more than one-third of the photos are uploaded to social media within one week and many tourists express that they upload the photos on the same day taken if free Wi-Fi was provided.

Like photos and videos, textual posts are important on social media. Tourism businesses should analyse the textual information which is shared by the users on their own social media websites and, the other travel-related social media websites in a competitive environment (He et al., 2013). It is vital to understand why and how travellers use social media for the tourism businesses (Alizadeh & Isa, 2015) but furthermore, it is important to understand people's travel motivation via social media because this social media is a good platform for the travellers to express themselves (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010).

This study examined the travel motivation of TripAdvisor travellers regarding their quotes on Facebook. Specifically, the current study attempts to answer the following research question: What is the motivation of travellers regarding their quotes shared on social media?

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Design**

This paper has examined people's travel motivation through a qualitative method. Data were collected using document analysis. The document analysed was the official and verified Facebook address "TripAdvisor-Cities I've Visited (@CitiesIveVisited)" which

included 227 photographs accompanied by quotes (posted between 26 May 2016 to 23 Oct 2018).

### **3.2. Data collection and analysis**

Content analysis was used as a technique to identify the people's reasons to travel based on their quotes on the abovementioned website. Krippendorff (2004) explained the content analysis as "... *works of art, images, maps, sounds, signs, symbols, and even numerical records may be included as data—that is, they may be considered as texts ...*" (p. 19). In addition, by employing user reviews, social media sites "*can be a useful tool in monitoring the competitive environment of a destination and provide valuable customer feedback that is richer and more detailed than Likert response survey measurements*" (Pan et al., 2007, p. 42). Facebook has been studied because it is well-known and most-used social media website in the world. TripAdvisor posts their travellers' quotes about travel motivation as a photo on their official Facebook address. TripAdvisor travellers explain why they travel on these posts. For example, TripAdvisor traveller says that "I travel because it awakens all my senses". These quotes were researched in the current study. The posts were collected starting from 26 May 2016 which were about the theme entitled "I travel because...".

Data were collected from 25 October to 10 November 2018. Travellers' all of the quotes shared on the Facebook wall were published from 26 May 2016 to 23 Oct 2018 were saved into an Excel worksheet. The data was written on this worksheet individually and then coded. There were 227 quotes between these dates. It was supposed that travellers made these quotes thanks to their travel experiences. The researcher wrote the quotes on photos posted by travellers. And two independent specialists helped to categorize the quotes and photos. Before starting coding a categorization matrix was created based on the theoretical model defined by Oh et al. (1995) was used. Accordingly, some of the factors were defined as push factors i.e. knowledge/intellectual, kinship/social interaction, novelty/adventure, entertainment/prestige, and escape/rest and other were pull factors which included historical/cultural, sports/activity, safety/upscale, nature/outdoor, inexpensive/budget. After three judges coded the quotes independently an inter-rated reliability analysis was conducted using Krippendorff's Alpha coefficient (Krippendorff, 2004; Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007). The initial comparison yielded 0.87. It is above the minimum criterion (0.80). Later coders came together to negotiate on the disagreed codes. Finally, both coders had consensus on all codes and the resulting

motivational orientations were defined using frequencies and percentages in tables.

#### 4. RESULTS

As mentioned above, there were 227 quotes of travellers. In terms of gender, 169 (74.4%) of travellers were females and 58 (25.6%) were males. The genders were removed from the names of travellers. Table 1 presents the travel motivations of travellers. Because some quotes contained two travel motivation factors, it was analysed as first and second travel motivation.

**Table 1.** First travel motivation frequencies (n=227)

Travel Motivations	Frequency	Percentage
Novelty/Adventure	96	42.3
Knowledge/Intellectual	94	41.4
Escape/Rest	15	6.6
Kinship/Social Interaction	12	5.3
Entertainment/Prestige	4	1.8
Historical/Cultural	3	1.3
Nature/Outdoor	3	1.3
Total	227	100.0

Source: author

As shown Table 1, main motivation factor of TripAdvisor travellers is novelty/adventure (42.3%) and knowledge/intellectual (41.4%) followed by escape/rest (6.6%) and kinship/social interaction (5.3%). Novelty/adventure factor includes being adventuresome, finding excitement, and rediscovering themselves. Knowledge/intellectual also includes experiencing new and different lifestyles, experiencing a foreign destination, learning new things, and increasing knowledge (Oh et al., 1995). TripAdvisor travellers emphasize novelty, adventure and knowledge, intellectual in their travel experiences. It can be inferred that people mostly travel because of novelty, adventuresome, knowledge and intellectual factors. In addition to first travel motivation factors, some quotes contain one more travel motivation factor. They are seen in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Second travel motivation frequencies (n=50)

Travel Motivations	Frequency	Percentage
Novelty/Adventure	19	38.0
Knowledge/Intellectual	14	28.0
Historical/Cultural	5	10.0
Entertainment/Prestige	4	8.0
Escape/Rest	4	8.0
Kinship/Social Interaction	2	4.0
Nature/Outdoor	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: author

Only 50 quotes contain a second travel motivation factor. As can be seen in the table above, most of the used travel motivation is novelty/adventure (38%) and knowledge/intellectual (28%). They are as same as first travel motivation factors. TripAdvisor shares the travellers' quotes as a photo on its Facebook address. So, understanding the photos' content may be important for marketers. The photo description categories are outlined in Table 3. These photo categories shared by TripAdvisor travellers were taken from a study by Stepchenkova & Zhan (2013).

**Table 3.** Frequencies of photo categories

Photo Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Nature & Landscape	112	49.3
Outdoor/Adventure	49	21.6
Leisure Activities/ Tourism Facilities	27	11.9
Way of Life	16	7.0
Architecture/Buildings	9	4.0
Archaeological Sites	9	4.0
Festivals & Rituals	3	1.3
Food	2	0.9
Total	227	100.0

Source: author

As seen in Table 3, nearly half of the photos' category is about nature & landscape which includes mountains, deserts, beaches, seas and lakes, etc. Following category is outdoor/adventure (21.6%) regarding boating, hiking, trekking, horse riding, fishing, eco-tourism, etc. The other photo category is leisure activities/ tourism facilities

(11.9%). Because only travellers' name and their quotes are written on posted photos, it is only possible to analyse the distribution of travel motivation according to the gender as seen in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Distribution of travel motivation according to the gender

Travel Motivations		Gender		Total
		Female	Male	
Historical/Cultural	Count	2	1	3
	% within motivation travel	66,7%	33,3%	100,0%
Nature/Outdoor	Count	2	1	3
	% within motivation travel	66,7%	33,3%	100,0%
Knowledge/Intellectual	Count	73	21	94
	% within motivation travel	77,7%	22,3%	100,0%
Kinship/Social Interaction	Count	11	1	12
	% within motivation travel	91,7%	8,3%	100,0%
Novelty/Adventure	Count	70	26	96
	% within motivation travel	72,9%	27,1%	100,0%
Entertainment/Prestige	Count	4	0	4
	% within motivation travel	100,0%	0,0%	100,0%
Escape/Rest	Count	7	8	15
	% within motivation travel	46,7%	53,3%	100,0%
Total	Count	169	58	227
	% within motivation travel	74,4%	25,6%	100,0%

Source: author

As shown in Table 4, female travellers' motivation is entertainment/prestige (100,0%) followed by kinship/social interaction (91,7%), knowledge/intellectual (77,7%) and novelty/adventure (72,9%) by comparing with male travellers. However, male travellers' motivation is escape/rest (53,3%) by comparing with female travellers. It can be pointed out that females travel for entertainment, prestige and social interaction while males travel for escape and rest.

## **5. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION**

This paper has reported on an investigation of the motivation of the travellers. The quotes of travellers on TripAdvisor's Facebook page as a social media tool was used to research it. This current study applies to analyse unstructured text content on the Facebook page of TripAdvisor. The findings have identified some interesting aspects of their travel motivations.

According to the results of the current study, novelty/adventure and knowledge/intellectual are two major motivations for travel. Although it is mostly thought that tourism is related to mass tourism such as sea, sand and sun, most of the travel motivations are about novelty, adventuresome, knowledge and intellectual factors. This situation reveals peoples' changing travel decisions. Destinations and tourism businesses need to be sensitive to the posts on social media and motivational factors defined by travellers.

In the current study, five of seven travel motivation factors are push factors (97.4%). Other factors are pull factors (2.6%) as well. The results of the study reveal that the push factors are the most important factors for travel motivation. This implied factor helps destinations and tourism businesses to determine which factors they should emphasize their marketing strategies. Relevantly, according to Wong et al. (2017), push motivations display a stronger influence on the travellers' overall satisfaction.

Travel motivations for females are entertainment, prestige and social interaction while males' travel motivation is to escape and rest. Jönsson e Devonish (2008) found in their study there were no significant differences between tourist motivations and gender. The segmenting the travel motivations according to the socio-demographic situation of travellers is a valuable pattern (Bieger & Laesser, 2002).

### **5.1. Practical implications**

Tourism managers, therefore, should analyse the motivation of travellers to get a better understanding of their behaviours and preferences. Managers of tourism businesses can better evaluate the travel motivation of tourists on social media. They can organize their marketing strategies such as positioning, advertising accordingly. The results of the current study not only help tourism managers' understanding travel motivation of people through social media but also help practitioners understand the fine nuances of how consumers can be influenced via social media and how their decision can be changed.

In addition, this research is an attempt to help tourism professionals on how to execute their social media strategies and design more effective social media pages. Clearly, managers should notice the differences among travel motivations in the relative importance of push and pull factors for their marketing programs.

## **5.2. Limitations and recommendation for further research**

The study's scope is travel motivation of travellers through social media. While the results of this study provide information regarding the content analysis of travel motivation of posting photos of travellers on social media, there are some limitations to the study. First, this analysis addresses a very small sample of quotes and photos available on social media. Second, there are other possible social media sites to use. Further researches can employ the same method via different social media addresses. In addition, they can be employed for larger sample size and tourism and hospitality consumer decision-making contexts.

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