



Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

Social Media as a Promotional Tool Towards Tourist Behaviour in Sarawak Tourism Campaign

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Social Media as a Promotional Tool Towards Tourist Behaviour in Sarawak
Tourism Campaign

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Except where due acknowledgements have been made, the work is that of the author alone. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

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ABSTRACT

There is no denying that the world is transitioning from traditional media to new media. The increased use of social media suggests a potentially powerful new advertising platform. A new method of advertising has emerged along with the new era of communication. Social media use has increased significantly globally over the years, as predicted, to keep up with the changes and be relevant in various industries. Social media is used by almost everyone globally including both young people and older people. The purpose of this study is to examine how Sarawak tourism campaigns uses social media platforms to influence tourist's behaviour. A combination of questionnaires and interviews with selected respondents are employed as mix methods for data collection. Based on the findings, social media is considered as an important promotional tool that acts as a dynamic platform connecting tourists with destinations, experiences, and businesses in Sarawak. The outcomes of this study provide valuable insights for tourism agencies who aim to make use of social media's promotional potential in the tourism campaigns.

Keywords: Social media, tourism industry, tourist behaviour, social media campaigns.

Media Sosial Sebagai Alat Promosi Terhadap Gelagat Pelancong Dalam Kempen Pelancongan Sarawak

ABSTRAK

Tidak dapat dinafikan bahawa dunia sedang beralih daripada media tradisional kepada media baharu. Peningkatan penggunaan media sosial sebagai platform pengiklanan baharu yang sangat berpotensi. Kaedah pengiklanan baharu telah muncul seiring dengan era komunikasi baharu. Penggunaan media sosial telah meningkat dengan ketara secara global sejak beberapa tahun, seperti yang diramalkan, perubahan tersebut menjadi semakin relevan dalam pelbagai industri. Media sosial digunakan oleh hampir semua orang di dunia, termasuk orang muda mahupun yang tua. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji bagaimana kempen pelancongan Sarawak menggunakan platform media sosial untuk mempengaruhi tingkah laku pelancong. Kombinasi di antara soal selidik dan temubual dengan responden yang terpilih digunakan sebagai kaedah campuran untuk pengumpulan data. Berdasarkan dapatan, media sosial dianggap sebagai alat promosi penting yang bertindak sebagai platform dinamik yang menghubungkan pelancong dengan destinasi, pengalaman, dan perniagaan di Sarawak. Hasil kajian ini memberikan pandangan berharga untuk agensi pelancongan yang bertujuan untuk memanfaatkan potensi promosi media sosial dalam kempen pelancongan.

Kata kunci: *Media sosial, industri pelancongan, tingkah laku pelancong, kempen media sosial*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CANFF	Culture, Adventure, Nature, Food, Festival
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
e-WOM	Electronic Word-of-mouth
MCO	Movement Control Order
MTPB	Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board
SM	Social Media
SMI	Social Media Influencer
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
STB	Sarawak Tourism Board
TDC	Tourism Development Corporation of Malaysia
UCG	User-generated content
VM2020	Visit Malaysia 2020
WOM	Word-of-mouth

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter will provide an overview of the impact of social media as a promotional tool in measuring the tourist behaviour towards Sarawak Tourism Campaigns. This chapter begins with a brief overview of the background of social media research, which is followed by a discussion of the issue of using media as a promotional tool. At the end of this chapter, the reader will be introduced to the research problem, research questions, research objectives, significant of research, key concepts, and definitions of terms used.

1.2 Background of Study

In recent years, among the most crucial social bridges for getting new experience for the consumer has been social media. Marketers are turning to social media to satisfy two equally urgent needs as businesses battle to recuperate lost sales in the event of the epidemic, provide short term outcomes with focused performance marketing strategies and develop creative digital experiences that gain long-term loyalty by adding fresh discovery, connection, and enjoyment to the consumer experience.

Social media trends change when social media platforms update their algorithms and introduce new features. Social media has a significant role in modern society. Using web-based online technologies, people can now discover and learn new information, exchange ideas, and connect with new people and organisations. It has also changed how people live today and made communication much easier.

Social media has played a significant role in modern society by allowing people to discover new information, exchange ideas, and connect individuals and organizations through web-based technologies. It will affect a person's behaviour, including what they buy, how they spend their money, and the places they visit. Social media has allowed people all over the world to express themselves and interact with one another by exchanging ideas, opinions, and thoughts.

Furthermore, technology enables individuals to build bonds with strangers, one that has been done for thousands of years. Through direct or indirect effects, recent advancements in communication technology have had an impact on the economic performance of those emerging countries. Even though consumers have moved back to the centre of the corporate world due to web-based social networking, business sees great prospects and is keen to profit in on the trend.

A remarkable achievement in social media is the impressive user base of platforms like Facebook, which boast over 1.3 billion active users, representing more than half of the world's population. Twitter, a scaled-down blogging platform, sees an average of 225 million users publishing 500 million tweets per day. You tube attracts over 1 billion users monthly, who collectively watch more than 6 billion hours of video. Additionally, there are estimated to be over 181 million blogs worldwide (Manyika et al., 2016).

Today, social media plays a crucial role in how customers interact and make decisions. The leadership process related to social media marketing is closely tied to consumer behaviour and influenced by the availability and clarity of information. Each social media platform contributes to the global dissemination, an acceptance, and exchange of knowledge from both internal and external sources. According to research by Gupta

(2020), a person's engagement and prior knowledge influences the person's behaviour which customers are most likely to exhibit when making decisions.

Technological advancements had a significant impact on the tourism industry, with social media playing a vital role in decision-making and data research to determine customer preferences. During the initial phase of holiday planning, tourists often focus their attention on social media for decision-making, including the journal appraisal of social media potential for information, knowledge exchange, and cooperation. Additionally, information posted by users on social networking sites aids travellers in making these decisions. To better understand consumer preferences, the tourism sections need to analyse comments and viewpoints on online forums such as TripAdvisor.

Travel review sites like TripAdvisor have become reliable sources of tourism information on social media, with over 150 million travel reviews and opinions submitted by more than 260 million users worldwide each month, seeking advice for their travel plans from approximately 4 million businesses. The substantial utilization rate highlights the significant impact of social media on trip planning (Bay, 2018).

1.3 Problem Statement

The use of social media in the Sarawak tourism industry utilizes social media as a promotional tool, presenting both opportunities and challenges. While it is essential to identify the specific social media tools employed in Sarawak tourism campaigns and analyse the multifaceted factors influencing tourist behaviour, there is a critical need to develop a

structured framework that delineates the relationship between the impact of social media and tourist behaviour.

This research seeks to address these gaps by identifying the social media tools used in Sarawak tourism campaigns, analysing the factors influencing tourist behaviour, and ultimately proposing a comprehensive framework that guides the effective use of social media in Sarawak tourism promotion efforts. It aims to enhance the overall tourist experience and contribute to the sustainable growth of the local tourism industry. The effect of social media as promotional platforms on tourism behaviour is a promotional method that the Sarawak tourism board should utilize to achieve its goal of promoting the Sarawak to the rest of the world.

The accessibility of consumers has increased, as have their media-related responsibilities. Consumer participation leads to the creation of user-generated content that relies on the latest advertising data. Participation from consumers leads to user-generated content that uses latest and current advertising data (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2022). A new scene with a new framework for personal connections has been developed because of the rise of social media. As Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture Sarawak said, Dato Sri Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah “We require a strong digitalization strategy to maintain our resilience as we align with the Sarawak government's digital economy agenda. The utilization of Big Data collected from our digital platforms enables us to analyze traveller behaviour and trends thereby contributing to the enhancement of our service delivery.” (Digital Initiatives, 2022)

The problem statement acknowledges the growing role of social media in shaping consumer behaviour and explores how it specifically impacts the tourism industry. By

investigating how social media promotion affects tourist behaviour and decision-making processes, researchers and practitioners can better understand the potential benefits and challenges of using social media to promote tourist destinations and attractions. This, in turn, can inform more effective marketing and promotional strategies for tourism businesses and organizations.

1.4 Research Questions

There are three main research questions that are used in this study as follow:

- i. What are social media tools used in promoting the Sarawak tourism campaigns?
- ii. What are the factors that influence tourist behaviour when visiting a tourist destination?
- iii. How can social media be used as a tool to promote Sarawak Tourism Campaigns more effectively towards tourist behaviour?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

In the process of this research, several objectives should be considered as research guidance. The purpose of the objectives is to determine the direction of the study. Among the objectives identified are as stated below:

- i. To identify social media tools used in the Sarawak tourism campaigns.
- ii. To analyse the factors that influence tourist behaviour when visiting tourist destinations.

- iii. To propose a framework on the relationship between social media impact towards tourist behaviour when promoting Sarawak Tourism Campaigns.

1.6 Significant of the Study

The findings of this study will be useful to tourists and serve as an eye-opener to audiences, particularly in the tourism industry. The information gained from this discovery and knowledge will provide locals and government representatives with a roadmap for enhancing and advancing Sarawak's digital economy. By utilizing the promotional tool, the Visit Sarawak Campaign, which was last promoted in 2019, will gain a fresh perspective for a better future. Additionally, this study will benefit researchers or relevant parties for the upcoming Visit Sarawak campaign with the slogan "More to Discover." Thus, promoting Sarawak can boost national development and spread Sarawak appeal not only throughout Malaysia but also globally.

1.7 Definition of Term/key Constructs/concepts

This study contains key concepts and construct that are related to the main topics of research. Although these constructs are discussed in detail in Chapter 2, they are briefly introduced in this early Chapter of the thesis to allow the reader to make sense of what is presented in the subsequent Chapters.

1.7.1 Tourism

The term "tourism" refers to the actions of tourists, or people who visit and stay in other countries for up to a year for various reasons, such as business, pleasure, or religious purposes.

- a. International: i. inbound, ii. Outbound: may include overnight stay(s) in country of residence
- b. Domestic (in country of residence).

In tourism industry, its establishments providing services and goods to visitors, including:

- c. Hospitality (hotels, restaurants, etc)
- d. Transport
- e. Tour Operators and Travel Agents, Attractions
- f. Additional economic sectors that cater to tourists (some of these may also offer a sizable volume of services and commodities to non-visitors, and the percentage of revenue vary. The number of visitors is crucial when assessing tourism revenue (Theobald & Theobald, 2012).

1.7.2 Social Media

Social media use, or Web 2.0 as it is more popularly known, is fundamentally changing how tourists and travellers find, read, and trust information about travel attractions and companies. Users can participate in all organizational operations with the use of Web 2.0 applications, including social networks, multiplayer online social games, and group trip planning tools (e.g., marketing, new service development). Travel experiences are consequently co-produced, co-designed, co-marketed, and co-consumed by visitors. Using social media, travellers co-produce and share two types of knowledge: user-generated content (UGC) and/or social intelligence. The latter is beneficial and has a big impact on

how travellers behave and make decisions, but it can also be used to share information and boost operations' efficiency (Sigala et al., 2012).

1.7.3 Tourist Behaviour

It is also useful to connect and distinguish the material from the broader yet clearly distinct literature addressing consumer behaviour by using the term "tourist behaviour." "Consumer" is another word that commonly appears in literature that is relevant to this volume. It describes those who are involved in the purchase and use of goods in both the public and private sectors. There are many parallels between consumer and tourist behaviour, and universities frequently offer specialized courses on this topic. Unfortunately, the word "consumer" carries certain negative connotations. Studies on consumer behaviour and the term "consumption" in general have often disregarded ethical business practices, deep community relationships, and socially responsible activities. Mainstream consumer behaviour research tends to pay little attention to sustainability issues (Pearce, 2005).

1.8 Thesis Organization Structure

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter discusses the importance of recognizing the impact of social media on consumer behaviour in tourism to provide a better explanation for the study's problem statement. Furthermore, the research objectives and research questions are formulated to address the main issue of the study's topic. Achieving these research objectives is essential to establish the relevance of this study.

Chapter 2 focuses on reviewing relevant literature related to the research topic. Commonly referred to as the literature review chapter, it plays a crucial role in establishing

the context, theoretical framework, and gaps in existing knowledge that the research aims to address. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology, explaining how the researcher conducted the study and gathered data. This chapter is critical because it details how the research questions and objectives were addressed.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the findings from Chapter 3. This chapter is often referred to as the results chapter, and its primary purpose is to present the data findings that emerged from the data analysis. It displays the research outcomes in an organized and coherent manner, often utilizing tables, figures, charts, graphs, and other visual aids to effectively present the data.

The final chapter provides an analysis and interpretation of the research findings. Frequently referred to as the Discussion and Conclusion chapter, its primary goal is to give readers a deeper understanding of the findings reported in chapter four by placing them within the context of the larger body of research and offering insights and inferences.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

Over the past few years, several scholars have asserted that social media is changing how travellers act and select their destinations due to the development of Web 2.0 and the subsequent rise in social media use (Liu et al., 2020). Despite the enormous popularity of social media, limited research has been conducted on how various influencing factors, including social media indicators, affect tourists' behaviour. Researchers can build upon or expand upon earlier work in this chapter to gain a deeper understanding of the issue and address existing knowledge gaps. This chapter provides a broad range of theories and literary sources that support the research topic.

Social media has undergone a transformative evolution, progressing from early online forums and bulletin boards to the emergence of pioneering platforms like Friendster, Myspace, and Facebook, which redefined social networking by emphasizing real identities and user profiles. Subsequent innovations, such as Twitter's microblogging's, Instagram's focus on visual content, and Snapchat ephemeral messaging, catered to changing user preferences and communication styles (Grover et al., 2022).

Social media has become an integral part of modern society, transforming the way people communicate, share information, and engage with one another. This literature reviews aims to explore the evolution of social media, highlighting key advancements, trends, and their impacts on individuals and society (Damota, 2019). The emergence of social media discusses the early platforms, such as Friendster and Myspace, which laid the foundation for subsequent developments. Researchers analysed the technological and